

AIR | OBSERVER

the biannual journal of the 137th special operations wing



AIR-X
AEROMED
EXERCISE

KADENA
137th AIRMEN
TRAIN IN JAPAN

END OF AN ERA

AIR OBSERVER

the biannual journal of the 137th special operations wing

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ON THE COVER

A KC-135 Stratotanker from the 137th Air Refueling Wing, Oklahoma City, refuels an F-16 Fighting Falcon from the 138th Fighter Wing, Tulsa, during a joint Oklahoma Air National Guard training mission May 4, 2015.

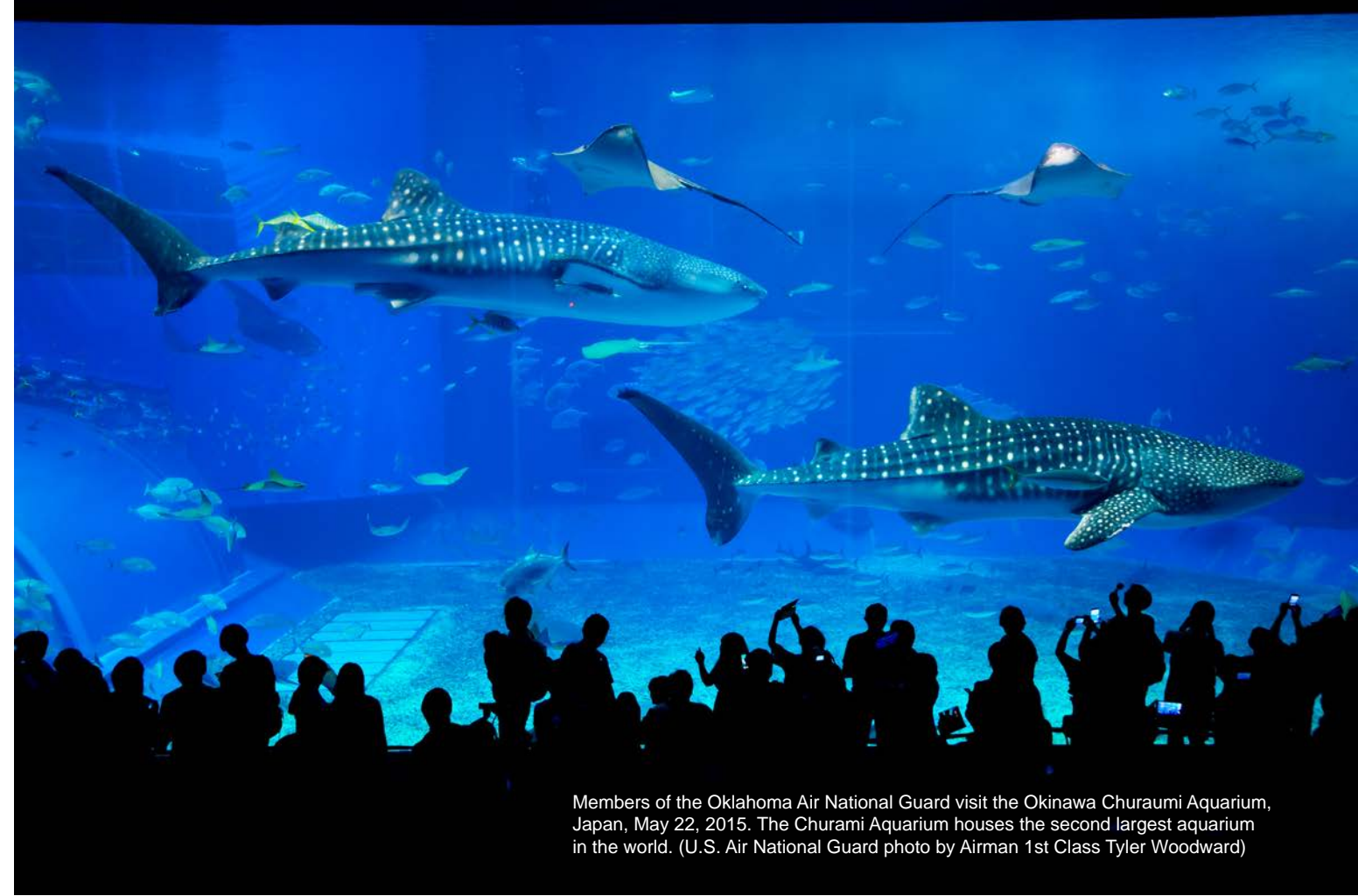
PHOTOGRAPHER: Master Sgt. Mark A. Moore

(Image available on www.dvidshub.net)



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Members of the Oklahoma Air National Guard visit the Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium, Japan, May 22, 2015. The Churami Aquarium houses the second largest aquarium in the world. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Tyler Woodward)

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WING COMMANDER

Col. Devin R. Wooden



The past 13 1/2 years have been unlike any other in the 137th Air Refueling Wing's proud history. Since September 11, 2001, our wing has served with distinction while simultaneously navigating a multitude of changes. Selflessly, we have supported multiple deployments in support of the Global War on Terror, answered the call of our neighbors during Hurricane Katrina and, after 34 years of C-130 flying, expertly transitioned into a benchmark KC-135 wing with impeccable inspection results. Once again, we are facing a transition in mission that will bring its own set of challenges. As I look back on the qualities that have made this wing so successful, none are more important than our perseverance, infectious optimism, and unparalleled teamwork.

Fortitudine Vincimus - Through our perseverance we prevail. Perseverance, endurance stamina... whichever you prefer, is a key ingredient to our past success and will play an even greater role in our future. History reveals that effective leaders have a high level of energy, stamina, and the ability to deal with stress. As a leader of Airmen, you are the foundation of your unit's ability to persevere.

Perseverance requires stamina. If you fail to maintain your own stamina, then you will be unable to summon the energy needed to work long hours, deal with adversity, or make good decisions out of ambiguous information. Therefore, taking care of your well-being is essential. More importantly, because members of your unit will take their cues from your behavior, it provides an easy opportunity to lead people.

Perseverance produces another key ingredient to effective and resilient units-optimism! Finding creative solutions to seemingly insurmountable problems is a difficult task during the best of circumstances. It is even more challenging when operating in uncertain environments.

Uncertainty, fear, exhaustion, and mental fatigue are inevitable realities of units striving to achieve the highest levels of performance. Uncertainty, if left unchecked, can and will erode the resiliency of even the greatest units.

So the importance of maintaining an optimistic attitude when leading people through the challenges of change cannot be overemphasized. But, before you can instill optimism in others, you need to find it within yourself. You can do this by investing in relationships vertically up and down the chain of command and horizontally through associated peer-to-peer mentoring. This will allow you to more quickly identify the challenges ahead and better understand where you fit in potential solutions.

However, optimism does not mean we should paint a rosy, unrealistic expectation that all will be smooth sailing. Optimism means that the desired outcome is not in doubt; somehow, the team will succeed in the long run. However, in the more immediate term, problems will be inevitable. However, through perseverance, optimism, and effective teamwork, we will overcome those short-term problems and attain our long-term goals. By doing this, we will strengthen our endurance, grow confident in our optimism and be a more formidable team against even greater challenges ahead.

COMMAND CHIEF

Chief Master Sgt. Stephen L. Rosebrook



While talking to a group of NCO's and Airmen after a recent town hall visit, I was asked what my thoughts were on the uncertainty of our future with regard to the upcoming changes and challenges to our wing here at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base. As I paused to formulate my response, I couldn't help but think about the past 13 1/2 years, and how they have shaped our wing and prepared us for our future major command and mission realignment. My response was short and sweet, as well as a plagiarized answer, "Fortitudine Vincimus - Through our perseverance we prevail." The perseverance of the members of the wing has been and will be the key to success for Will Rogers.

Perseverance is defined as "the continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure or opposition." I can think of no other term that better defines a singularly distinctive characteristic of the men and women here at Will Rogers. Since September 11, 2001, the men and women of WRANGB have continually met each challenge with a steady resolve, a professional patience and, most importantly, a non-wavering perseverance from deployments in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom to hurricane relief support either from Will Rogers or on the ground. You as guardsmen have continued to rise to each and every challenge whether transitioning from a 34-year C-130 mission to a KC-135 refueling mission, preparing for a multitude of inspections, or supporting our fellow Oklahomans during ice storms and tornado recovery efforts. Over the next several years, I expect no less of an effort will be given than what has historically been displayed over the past decade and a half.

Additionally, leadership in the coming years will be as - if not more - important as years past. As last year's motto "Leadership at all levels regardless of rank" stated, each of us has a responsibility to our flights, squadrons, groups and wing. Those responsibilities include communicating both up and down the chain efficiently and effectively, fostering relationships and continuing to build on them, never passing up an opportunity to mentor one another, and continually staying apprised of not only mission requirements, but the health and well-being of each other. Mental fatigue, exhaustion, civilian employer requirements, and a multitude of other issues can easily erode the qualities that have enabled this base to not only persevere over the past several years, but to thrive and continue a tradition of success started by those who went before us.

While there are some unknowns ahead of us, there are several things that are certain. The men and women of this wing will continue to rise to every challenge and set a standard for all others to follow. Thanks for what you do.



FILL'R UP | Master Sgt. Andrew M. LaMoreaux

A KC-135 from the 137th Air Refueling Wing refuels an F-16 from the 138th Fighter Wing. Oklahoma National Guard Assistant Adjutant General, Air Force Brig. Gen. Gregory L. Ferguson, flew back seat in the fighter to observe a refueling mission.



JAG

Maj. Christopher A. Eason

While watching the widely viewed recent town hall video played by the command, it is easy for someone relatively new to the Oklahoma Air National Guard, such as myself, to observe that the individuals at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base have persevered through challenging times over the past 10 years and have much to be proud of. There is no doubt that more challenges lay ahead with the transition to the new mission and the new major command.

Judge Advocates General, among other duties, advise commanders who are addressing the myriad of legal issues that come with poor decisions made by some Airmen.

Perseverance is steadfastness in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving the goal. From a legal perspective, perseverance is most often observed as commanders make tough disciplinary decisions and Airmen try to recover after making bad decisions. In advising commanders at WRANGB, and representing Airmen from other Guard components who have been accused of misconduct, perseverance from the Airmen is key for getting back on the right track. We all make mistakes, some worse than others, but many can be overcome.

While on active duty I served full time as a military defense counsel where I engaged with defendant Airmen. When reflecting on how the defendant Airmen arrived in their situation, they often responded, "one decision at a time."

While the commanders are making the necessary command decisions regarding discipline, the service member is presented with necessary and important decisions that affect them and the command. From here, the service member's goal is to earn back the trust of the commander and those in the unit who were let down with their ability to persevere. Similarly, the interest of the command – to promote good order and discipline, to foster an environment of excellence that is conducive to mission accomplishment – also requires perseverance.

The necessary accountability and correction for those Airmen that choose to engage in misconduct will likewise require an unwavering commitment to achieve the rehabilitation process.

As a new member assigned to WRANGB, it took no time to conclude that I have the privilege of being part of the OKANG. The 137 ARW JAG's commitment to provide on-time, on-target legal advice to commanders should and must be met with perseverance from the service member. As evidenced by the town hall video I saw upon first transitioning to the OKANG, there is no doubt that the men and women of WRANGB will accomplish the mission, whatever that mission may be. The question for the individual Airman who finds him or herself in trouble is: will you find your way back onto the path to grace? The answer: perseverance is the key.

CHAPLAIN

Capt. Joseph D. Baker

Once upon a time, two brothers who lived on adjoining farms fell into conflict. It was their first serious rift in 40 years of farming side by side, sharing machinery, and trading labor and goods as needed without a hitch.

Then, the partnership fell apart. It began with a small misunderstanding and grew into a major disagreement. Finally, it exploded into an exchange of bitter words followed by weeks of silence.

One morning there was a knock on the older brother's door. He opened it to find a man with a carpenter's toolbox.

"I'm looking for a few days' work" he said. "Perhaps you would have a few small jobs here and there. Could I help you?"

"Yes," said the older brother. "I do have a job for you. Look across the creek at that farm. That's my neighbor – in fact, it's my younger brother. Last week, there was a meadow between us, but he took his bulldozer to the river levee and now there is a creek between us. Well, he may have done this to spite me, but I'll go him one better. See that pile of lumber curing by the barn? I want you to build me a fence - an 8-foot fence - so I won't need to see his place anymore. Cool him down, anyhow."

The carpenter said, "I think I understand the situation. Show me the nails and the post-hole digger and I'll be able to do a job that pleases you."

The older brother had to go to town for supplies, so he helped the carpenter get the materials ready then was off for the day.

The carpenter worked hard all that day... measuring, sawing, nailing...

About sunset, when the farmer returned, the carpenter had just finished his job. The farmer's eyes opened wide, and his jaw dropped.

There was no fence. It was a bridge... a bridge stretching from one side of the creek to the other! A fine piece of work, handrails and all - and his younger brother was coming toward it, his hand outstretched.

"You are quite a fellow to build this bridge after all I've said and done," said the younger brother.

The two brothers stood at each end of the bridge, and then they met in the middle, taking each other's hand. They turned to see the carpenter hoist his toolbox on his shoulder.

"No, wait! Stay a few days. I've a lot of other projects for you," said the older brother.

"I'd love to stay on," the carpenter said, "but I have many more bridges to build."

As we endeavor to persevere through a new mission, there are some natural problems that will inevitably occur: fighting, relationship issues, disagreements, and stubbornness. We have to make a choice like the brothers. We can either fight and get nowhere, or build bridges and come together with a common goal.

Are you a fighter or a builder?



OKLAHOMA AIR NAT'L GUARD

WILL ROGERS

ANG BASE

FAMILY REUNION | TSgt. Caroline E. Essex

Members of the 137th Maintenance Group pose together after a "last supper" June 6, 2015, at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base in Oklahoma City. Current, former and retired members from the group gathered together for a final group shot before the wing transitions to its new mission.



PUBLIC AFFAIRS

1st Lt. Jennifer L. Lavin



Knowing your role in the bigger picture is an important aspect to being effective. This truth will become increasingly important in the days ahead as we begin our transition into Air Force Special Operations Command. In the public affairs arena, that role is often defined by the commander's priorities, goals, and preferences. That is why I was so excited when I first heard Col. Wooden speak about public affairs in context of our upcoming transition. He said, "as a commander, I need four people around me so that I can make the best decisions possible — public affairs, JAG, finance, and the chaplain."

The commander went on to explain how he needs the spiritual guidance of a chaplain to stay centered, financial and legal guidance to stay out of jail, and public affairs guidance to communicate his message of perseverance through our airman stories. "Public Affairs out front," as he put it.

With all of the important jobs on base, it may seem counterintuitive to put public affairs out front. After reflecting on this statement, I believe that the reason this makes sense really deals with the character of our members. Having served the majority of my 18 year career with the 137th, I have witnessed the selfless, self-sacrificing family mentality that each member of this unit possesses. These qualities make us resilient and effective, but also reluctant to formally share with others the amazing things that we do.

I highlight the word "formally" because we live in an age of social media. Most of us engage informally through social forums such as Facebook or Twitter. Whether we recognize it or not, these instant information mediums allow all of us to become public affairs representatives for our Wing and the Air Force. It is, therefore, incumbent on all of us to understand our role, be intentional with our posts, and vigilant to avoid sharing sensitive information. That should not stop us, however, from informally telling our stories or allowing public affairs to formally tell the story.

Telling these stories may not seem exotic or exciting to us, but for others these stories provide a window into our world, highlighting the impact that we make every day in our community and demonstrating the contributions we make abroad. These stories are even more remarkable given the challenge of changing major commands and mission.

As we move forward, public affairs will continue to fulfill our role as public ambassadors for the commander and each member of the wing, being sure to tell your stories of excellence through perseverance.

I am confident that as we grow to understand our new mission, we will all come to fully understand our role and learn to lean on each other for expertise and support. As for public affairs- we will continue to be out front telling your story and demonstrating our Wing motto — "Fortitudine Vincimus."

GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

Tech. Sgt. Jason I. Becker - Maintenance



As the beginning of our new mission draws near, we also move solemnly toward the end of our aircraft maintenance operations. The past few months involved mixed emotions for many of us. I have spoken with maintainers who are extremely excited for what our new mission will entail; however, I have also heard from numerous others who find it tough to imagine working anywhere else.

I can recall encountering maintainers with the same feelings when I joined the unit as a crew chief seven years ago. The unit had recently transitioned from the C-130 to the KC-135 and with that came feelings of apprehensiveness. This should come as no surprise. Change is difficult for every one of us in some way. Much like trying to break a bad habit, it is taxing to try and alter long-held beliefs, feelings, and ways of doing business.

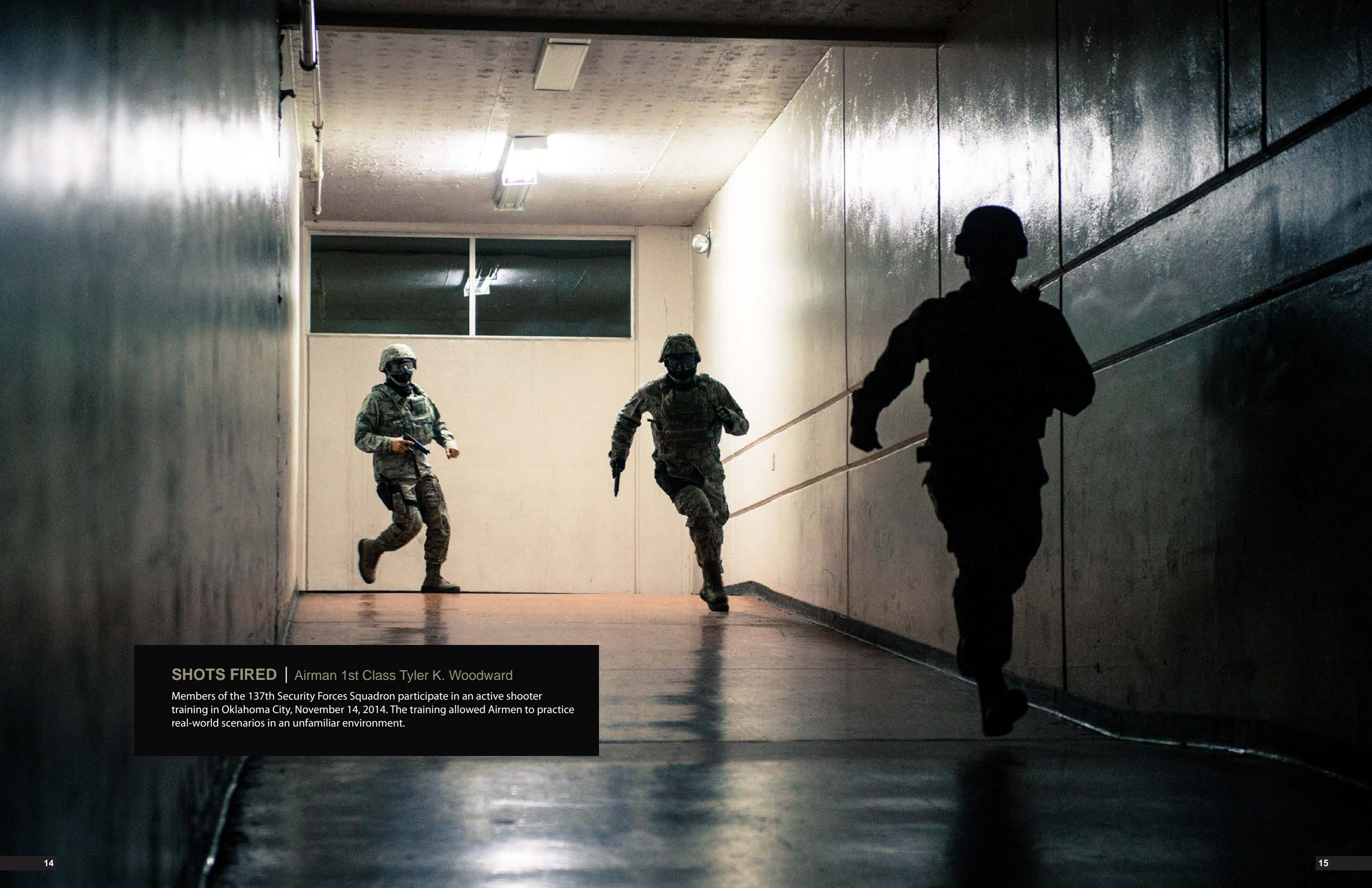
For many, it was demanding to face the adversity of transitioning to a new airframe, a new workplace and, for some, a new career. If that was not enough, the unit also had the arduous task of modifying our long-standing culture in order to minimize the complexities that came in associating with our Air Force Reserve brethren. We actively engaged in new business practices, and we delved into unfamiliar areas with ambition. We consistently strove to learn all we could, and we continued to grow within the confines of our new mission.

The most important thing is that we never gave up in our endeavor for success. Through dedication and determination, we surpassed many expectations and have gone above and beyond in this transition rather than merely accepting mediocrity.

I do not discuss our previous transition success to evoke a feeling of melancholy, but to make a point that we can succeed in the newfound mission that has been set before us. One of the great things about our previous transition is that we learned and honed the skills of adaptation, overcoming adversity and, most of all, perseverance.

A majority of our maintainers have spent most, if not all, of their careers within this unit and are capable of passing these necessary skills for success down to younger airman. This should invoke confidence that we will yet again succeed through their mentorship and leadership. We also need to realize that many of the skills needed for a successful transition are naturally within us due to the nature of our jobs. We consistently get the job done safely, and we get it done right. These traits we exemplify every day will help see each and every one of us through this new transition.

We must always remember to never give up when times get tough or seem uncertain. Change is inevitable, thus we must be determined to continue moving forward, persevering, and maintaining our core values no matter what lays ahead. If we do that, we will succeed no matter what life throws our way.



SHOTS FIRED | Airman 1st Class Tyler K. Woodward

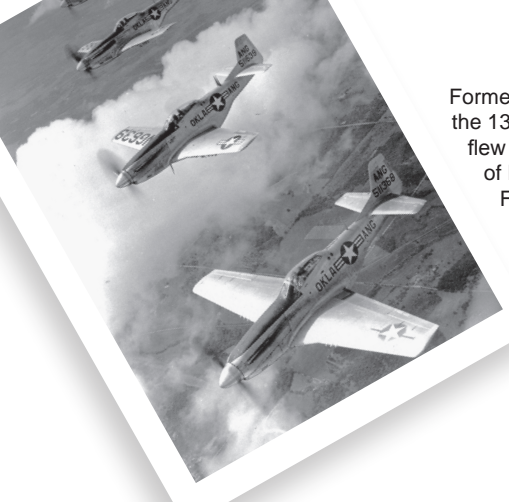
Members of the 137th Security Forces Squadron participate in an active shooter training in Oklahoma City, November 14, 2014. The training allowed Airmen to practice real-world scenarios in an unfamiliar environment.

A CHAPTER CLOSES AND A NEW ONE OPENS



A WING RETROSPECTIVE by Col. Douglas D. Hayworth

U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Mark A. Moore



Formed in February 1947, the 137th Fighter Group flew P-51 Mustangs out of Max Westheimer Field in Norman, Okla., until a tornado destroyed most of its facilities in 1949.



The group moved to Will Rogers Army Air Field in Oklahoma City and began flying the F-86 Sabre in the late 1950s.



The 137th Military Airlift Wing transitioned to a Tactical Airlift Wing in 1974 and flew different versions of the C-130 until 2007.

Later this spring, when the 185th Air Refueling Squadron closes down tanker operations, another chapter in the Wing's long and illustrious history will come to an end. This chapter features the KC-135 aerial refueling mission and the Wing's first step into the nuclear response arena.

Beginning with the federal recognition of the 137th on December 18, 1947, the 137th has flown several different aircraft and several different types of missions. The first aircraft were 25 factory-fresh P-51 Mustang fighters, which flew a fighter mission that later transitioned into a tactical reconnaissance mission. After returning from activation during the Korean Conflict in 1953, the 137th transitioned to the jet powered F-80 and flew a fighter-bomber mission. The year 1958 brought the faster F-86 Sabre and the fighter interceptor mission intended to combat Soviet bombers. In April 1961, a significant change came when the wing mission changed to military airlift and the 137th received the C-97. The C-97 was also used to fly the "Talking Bird" airborne command and control mission. The airlift mission continued as the 137th received the C-124 in 1968 and the C-130A in 1974. In 1979, the 137th received eight factory-fresh C-130H aircraft and continued to provide worldwide military airlift until September 2007.

Our latest chapter began with the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC). In that legislation, the 137th was directed to transfer its C-130 aircraft, transition to the KC-135 aerial refueling mission, relocate the 185th flying squadron and the entire Maintenance Group to Tinker Air Force Base and create the first ever Air Reserve Component (ARC) association

between the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC). The new association utilized aircraft owned by AFRC's 507th Air Refueling Wing. For the first time in the Wing's history the 137th did not own the aircraft we flew and maintained. The ramp at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base was empty. Air Mobility Command continued to be our Major Command but the tanker mission was a fundamental change from the "down in the dirt" C-130 mission.

Transitioning from a high-intensity flight environment, where low altitude and formation flying skills were required (often under night vision conditions), to the high altitude environment of the tanker was a major culture change. It also meant the loss of the navigator, flight engineer and loadmaster crew positions and the addition of boom operators. The tanker mission also moved the 137th into the world of nuclear response. For the first time in decades, the 137th took on an "alert" mission.

For maintainers, the tanker mission shifted the focus of maintenance from turbo-prop engines to fanjet engines and reduced the size of deployments. Fewer maintainers were needed and the workload shifted from propeller and gear box maintenance to hydraulics and electronics.

For all, the association honed interpersonal skills. Suddenly, how well you interacted and worked with other people was as important as your AFSC skill. This teamwork skill was highlighted in maintenance where everyone worked toward the common goal of providing aircraft to meet the daily flying schedule, no matter which side the aircrew came from. The stamp

of approval for this teamwork came in 2010 when the maintenance team received an Excellent rating on its first combined inspection.

Another area where that attitude of excellence is evident is in our flight safety. In the 55 years since the last Class A, or fatal, accident in 1960, the 137th has amassed a phenomenal flight safety record. Prior to the KC-135 refueling mission, the 185th flying squadron had compiled a total of 205,784 hours without a Class A accident. As of March 31, a total of 14,690 accident free hours flown in the KC-135 has increased that total to 220,474! When that total is combined with the other flying squadrons who have been a part of the 137th, the total reaches an Air Force best of over 600,000 accident free flying hours.

Through all of the aircraft and mission changes during the Wing's history, there is one common thread: excellence. To be more specific, it is excellent people willing to do whatever is required to be the best. When the 137th faced challenges such as mission changes, natural disasters, or high deployment tempos, those excellent people always surged to meet the need. That attitude has resulted in successful missions, deployments, domestic responses, and inspections.

In the future, the KC-135 and the refueling mission will be looked at as the "transition" chapter in the 137th's history as the mission that took us from tactical airlift to special forces work. It will also be a source of pride as we reflect on the accomplishments, challenges overcome and quality workmanship that made it a success. **A0**



In 2008, the 137th Air Refueling Wing was partnered with the 507th at Tinker Air Force Base. They worked together for almost eight years to operate and maintain KC-135 Stratotankers.

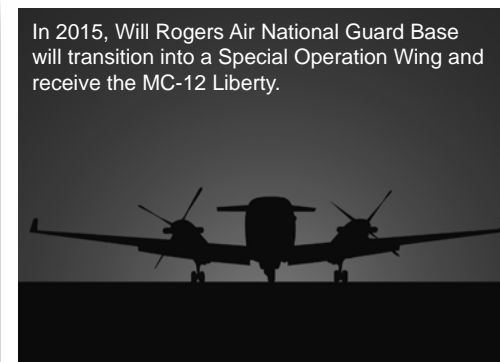
...and the next chapter begins.



An F-16 pilot looks up at the fuel boom of a 137th Air Refueling Wing KC-135 during a refueling mission.

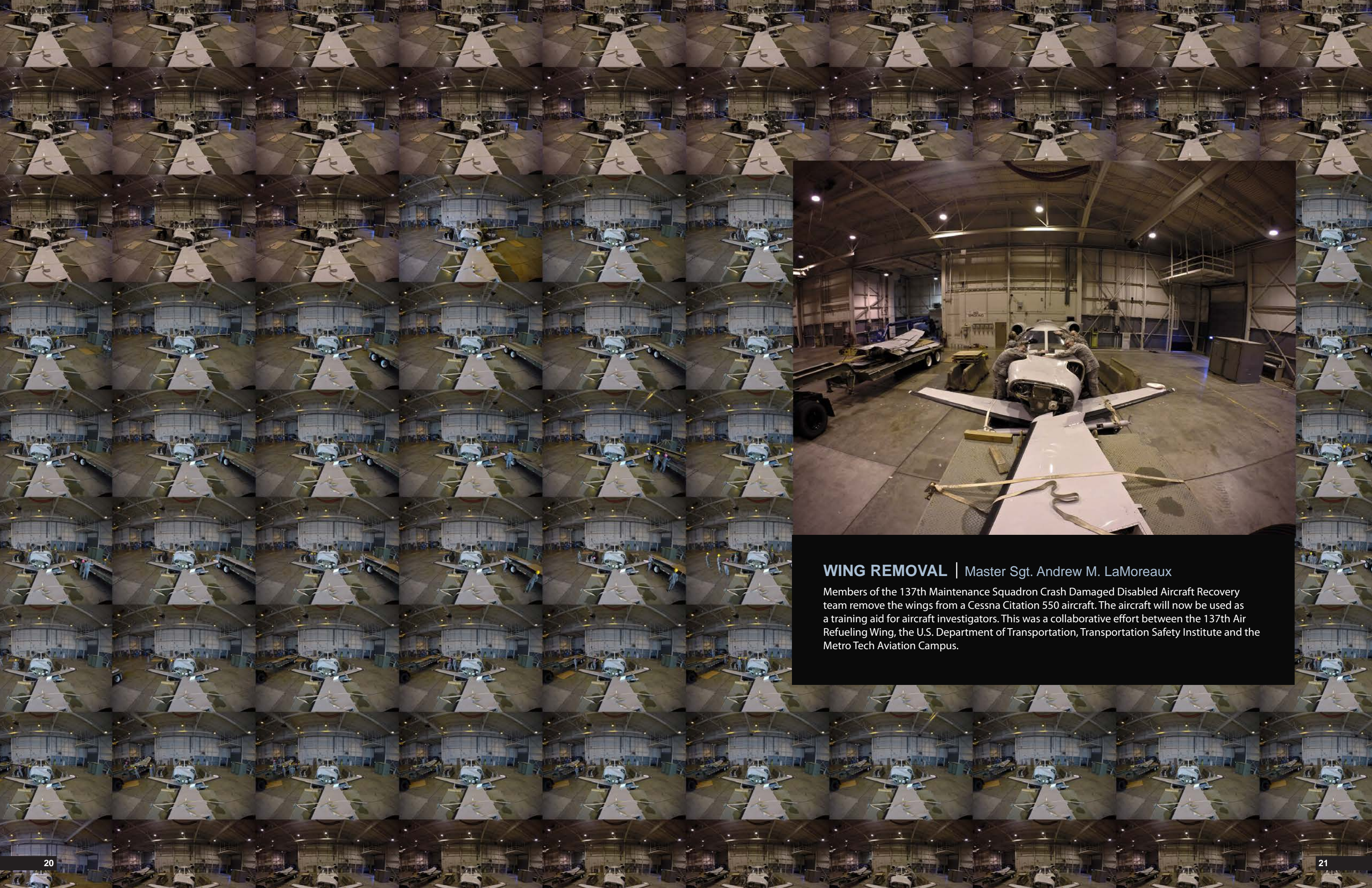


A B-2 stealth bomber refuels behind a 137th Air Refueling Wing KC-135.



In 2015, Will Rogers Air National Guard Base will transition into a Special Operation Wing and receive the MC-12 Liberty.





WING REMOVAL | Master Sgt. Andrew M. LaMoreaux

Members of the 137th Maintenance Squadron Crash Damaged Disabled Aircraft Recovery team remove the wings from a Cessna Citation 550 aircraft. The aircraft will now be used as a training aid for aircraft investigators. This was a collaborative effort between the 137th Air Refueling Wing, the U.S. Department of Transportation, Transportation Safety Institute and the Metro Tech Aviation Campus.

KADENA AIR BASE

THE 137TH FORCE SUPPORT SQUADRON AND LOGISTICS READINESS SQUADRON SUPPORT THE 18TH WING

Introduction by Senior Airman Kasey M. Phipps

嘉手納飛行場

Surrounded by stunning landscapes and the storied heritage and culture of Okinawa, Japan, Will Rogers Airmen from the 137th Force Support Squadron and the 137th Logistics Readiness Group trained alongside active duty Airmen from the 18th Wing, Kadena Air Base, Japan.

Despite the approximately 7,000-mile distance between Okinawa and Oklahoma City, 137th Air Refueling Wing personnel learned and strengthened skills that translate to higher efficiency and increased readiness both stateside and for deployed locations. In addition, Airmen experienced firsthand the ins-and-outs of the largest combat wing and force support squadron in the U.S. Air Force.

On the cusp of the mission change, 137th guard members experienced opportunities uniquely provided by an active duty base. Whether refueling aircraft or signing off on flight kitchen tasks, Airmen caught a glimpse of the Wing's future.

Many members were exposed to deployment-specific responsibilities for the first time in their young careers, while more experienced personnel reoriented themselves with tasks just in time to spearhead the realigned mission.

Checklists aside, all Airmen gained valuable knowledge and confidence that will lead and carry a new heritage – one that starts with a mission as unique to the 137 ARW Airman as the islands of Japan.

LOGISTICS

Airmen assigned to the 137th Logistics Readiness Squadron received valuable training beyond checking boxes for training records this year.

The 137th LRS Fuels Management Flight sharpened their skills and refocused their purpose with the 18th LRS at Kadena Air Base, Japan. It is the largest LRS and one of the busiest flight lines in the Air Force: managing over 2,000 customers and 5.5 million gallons of jet fuel each month.

“Coming to Kadena Air Base was such a big thing for us,” said Capt. Sean Doll, the officer in charge of the 137th Materials Management Flight. “It gave [fuel specialists] the opportunity to actually fuel planes, see what a live flight line looks like, and get back into the swing of POL (Petroleum Oil and Lubricant).”

Fueling aircraft on a daily basis does not sound like much, but for new guard members - like Senior Airman Isaac Bates, 137th LRS fuels specialist - it's like hearing tall tales from a seasoned, senior non-commissioned officer about the “good-ol’ days.”

The guardsmen of the 137th have persevered through the transition from the C-130 Hercules to the KC-135 Stratotanker as a result of the Base Relocation and Closure commission in 2005. Will Rogers Air National Guard Base was partnered with the 507th Air Refueling Wing, Tinker Air Force Base, as part of this assignment. As a result, the fuels management flight had few opportunities to get hands-on experience.

Limited access to aircraft “takes a little bit out of the job,” said Bates.

“That’s half of it - fueling aircraft. We do what we can. We may get a bird or two out there on our ramp and get to train some people on it.”

The fuels management Airmen maintained their positive attitudes and took advantage of every available training opportunity.

Training can be monotonous even with the best equipment and facilities, but worse when done without a sense of personal purpose.

“I was not fortunate to be here for [fueling the C-130’s], but I am looking forward to the new mission that we are getting,” said Bates. “We are all excited so we can get more experience.”

Will Rogers is slated to transition to the MC-12 Liberty this summer. The Senate Armed Services

Committee recently voted to advance the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for the 2016 fiscal year, solidifying the Wing’s future to fuel up for a new fight.

“They maintain the trucks and they look at the fuel, but they haven’t had that purpose, that real mission... bringing the MC-12 is huge!” said Doll. “We are going to have a mission again, and that’s what it’s all about.”

The MC-12 provides intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) support to our ground forces.

With the new mission, the next generation of Oklahoma Airmen will create new memories with this new aircraft. **A0**



Senior Airman Isaac Bates, a fuels specialist with the 137th Logistics Readiness Squadron, refuels a KC-135 Stratotanker at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan, May 2015. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Tyler K. Woodward)

READINESS

by Senior Master Sgt. Jun Kim



F O R C E S U P P O R T

by Airman 1st Class Tyler K. Woodward



Senior Airman Ozell Littleton III, a journeyman in Force Support Squadron, programs a door lock at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, at Japan's Shogun Inn during a two-week, temporary assignment in May 2015, in support of the 18th Force Support Squadron. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Tyler K. Woodward)

More than 20 Airmen from the 137th Force Support Squadron, performed readiness training at Kadena Air Base, Japan, in anticipation for the transition to Air Force Special Operations Command.

The Airmen were temporarily assigned to Kadena AB for two weeks in May to support members the 18th Force Support Squadron, the largest force support squadron in the Air Force.

"The training at this location is very valuable because it's very fast-paced," said Staff Sgt. Stephen Strong, 137 FSS kitchen supervisor. "When they brought us in, we had to learn fast and stay on that pace."

Guardsmen worked alongside active duty Airmen to gain and share experiences in a variety of occupations, including: lodging, customer service, fitness, dining facilities and recreation.

Airmen with the 137 FSS were quickly trained and placed in working roles throughout the base.

"Having our Airmen work on an active duty base really gives them exposure to things they don't get to do on a UTA (unit training assembly) weekend," said Capt. Paul Blankenship, 137 FSS personnel officer. "You can't duplicate that on a guard base. The training they receive here is really invaluable."



Staff Sgt. Shawn McCarther, 137th Force Support Squadron, prepares athletic equipment in the Risner Fitness & Sports Complex at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan. McCarther is one of 20 members in the 137 FSS who were temporarily assigned to Kadena in May 2015 to support the 18th Force Support Squadron. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Tyler K. Woodward)

Young Airmen fulfilled in-depth training requirements for deployment and mission readiness. Whether working with new software, computer training or in the flight kitchen, guardsmen were given opportunities to lead, regardless of their rank.

"A lot of them have been asked to work outside of their comfort zones," said Blankenship. "Putting them in a position to think outside of the box and look out for someone besides themselves is an opportunity for them to grow as leaders."

Temporary deployments work as a two-way street. Both units improve from the interaction with one another. The 18th FSS accepted Oklahoma guardsmen with the expectation of a mutual benefit.

"I've been downrange with some awesome guard units," said Dieckmann. "I think that's what we all stand to gain from this is working together closely. We are all incredibly valuable in what we do to support the big Air Force mission."

The 18th FSS utilizes over 2,400 members to operate at 479 locations in five time zones within two different countries and three major commands.

"There's a lot of different facets of our career field here in Kadena," said Master Sgt. Georgette Dieckmann, 18 FSS marshal dining facility manager.

Airman 1st Class Starla Johnson, member of the 137 FSS, completed her first temporary duty assignment at Kadena Air Base. With the new experience, Johnson hopes to make a positive impact at WRANGB.

"Being here for these two weeks has really opened my eyes," said Johnson. "Hopefully, I can take what I have learned here to [Will Rogers Air National Guard Base] and improve functions."

As they return to Will Rogers, 137th FSS Airmen bring new experiences, skills and ultimately, added value to the AFSOC transition. **AO**



DEPLOYMENT PREP | Airman 1st Class Tyler Woodward

Airman 1st Class Ashley Tiu, member of the 137th Logistics Readiness Squadron, builds a training bag for an in-processing Airman at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base, Oklahoma City.

AIR-X

TRAINING FOR 137 AES

by Airman 1st Class Brigette A. Waltermire



Senior Airman Heather Knighten, Aeromedical Evacuation Technician with the 137th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, observes critical patients before take-off on a C-130 during Air-X, simulated disaster relief training, April 24, 2015, in College Station, Texas. The 137 AES was partnered with multiple military and government agencies in Texas to train for relief efforts during a hurricane scenario. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Brigette Waltermire)





Capt. Maria Jiménez, a cardiac ICU physician with the Chilean Air Force Hospital; Tech. Sgt. Sandy Aguilar-Sanchez and Staff Sgt. Edith Lazano, respiratory therapists for the 147th Reconnaissance Wing Medical Group critical care air transport team; and Lt. Col. Richard Bradley, Texas Air National Guard CCAT physician, construct an electrocardiogram during Air-X, simulated disaster relief training, April 25, 2015, in College Station, Texas. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Brigette Waltermire)

“In a perfect world, disaster response would be run very smoothly. But, it’s called disaster for a reason.”



The 137th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron participated in hurricane disaster relief training, Air-X, April 23 – 25, 2015, throughout Texas.

They were partnered with multiple civilian and military agencies across the state, including a Texas Air National Guard Critical Care Air Transport Team, a Chilean Air Force Hospital intensive care unit, and the 137th Air Refueling Wing Medical Group out of Will Rogers Air National Guard Base in Oklahoma City, to train aboard C-130s for patients in need of evacuation and medical treatment.

This mission was unique in offering Airman the opportunity to work with different units and train them how to navigate shared spaces and work around other agencies. They began prepping the C-130s for loading patients and storing the equipment used by both CCAT teams, such as IV pumps and ventilators. The next two days of Air-X were spent in the air, helping simulated victims with a variety of mock-injuries sustained during the disaster scenario.

Air Force Maj. Chris Lane, the 137 AES officer in charge during this operation, commented that AES is built as a plug-and-play operation, able to integrate into any scenario. The 137 AES has been on a deployment rotation since 9/11 and is called to action about every 15 months in addition to its national disaster mission.

The 137 AES has been recognized for its ability to respond to hurricanes and be there for whoever needs them, whether it’s the national command authority or state and local agencies, said Lane. “It’s very rare that we have to tell someone to go,” said Lane. “Usually, we have volunteers who want to raise their hand and say, ‘I’ll go and do the job.’”

Lane believes this attitude is a direct reflection of the quality of leadership and people within the squadron.

“We have a 96 percent survival rate in aeromedical evacuations throughout the last two wars, which is unprecedented,” said Lane. “So if we can get to them, then we’ll get them out safe and back to their families.”

The CCAT team from Texas was on board to run through treatment of critical care patients who needed cardiac assistance and were observed by the Chilean team. AES members were tasked with treating ambulatory patients, a term used to describe patients who can walk on their own, and non-critical patients being transported on a litter.

"Patients are patients," said Lane. "We adapt ourselves to whatever the scenario brings, so in many ways I think aeromedical evacuation is ideally built for this. We're highly trained and professional enough to integrate into that with very little prep work."

Capt. Maria Jiménez, Chilean Air Force Hospital cardiac intensive care physician, had gone through CCAT training earlier this year in Dayton, Ohio. She said knowing the equipment and using it during a real emergency are very different things, but that it helped to know protocols and how to operate the machines before having to apply her training to an actual scenario.

"It's great just to feel comfortable about where everything is," said Jimenez. "You know the equipment, so your mind is focused on how to help the patient," she said.

Time is of the essence for critical patients, and CCAT teams hardly ever operate independently, so it is vital to have a system in place before applying it in real life, according to Air Force Lt. Col. Richard Bradley, Texas Air National Guard CCAT physician.

"We almost always are working in partnership with an AE team," said Bradley. "The more training we can do together before a real event occurs, the more we'll be better able to mesh together when disaster strikes."

The 137 AES knows how important it is that they are able to handle multiple agencies during a disaster from its experience in responding to hurricanes such as Katrina, Gustav and Ike.

"In a perfect world, disaster response would be run very smoothly," said Lane. "But, it's called disaster for a reason."

The Chilean CCAT team observed the American unit before putting their own experience into practice.

"They're trying to see how we function, so whenever they have a disaster in their country they're able to know the standards we have also," said Tech. Sgt. Sandy Aguilar Sanchez, 147th Medical Group CCAT team, respiratory therapist.

Lt. Col. Oscar Zambrano, commander of Group 9 in the Chilean Air Force, said that the exercise was better than he anticipated because he was able to see how military and state agencies train together to help

people in a disaster.

The scenario for the Chileans is slightly different, as they are used to dealing with earthquakes and volcanoes, according to Zambrano, but still beneficial for his team to see different protocols and workflows that are a huge part of America's large-scale, life-saving process for troops and citizens. Lane believed it was beneficial for all parties to partner with a foreign military unit since it gave everyone the opportunity to see what air evacuation means to different nations.

"Aeromedical evacuation is, in my mind, Air Mobility Command's most valuable mission," said Lane. AO



An oxygen monitor is tested by a 137 AES flight nurse before an air evacuation during Air-X, simulated disaster relief training, April 25, 2015, in College Station, Texas. The monitor was used on critical patients, a term used for patients who could not walk on their own, while in the air during a hurricane scenario. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Brigette Waltermire)



Tech. Sgt. Stephanie Tatum and Senior Airman Avery Keller, 137th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron flight crew, strap down necessary equipment for patient transportation during Air-X, simulated disaster relief training, April 24, 2015, in College Station, Texas. The 137 AES was partnered with multiple military and government agencies in Texas to train for relief efforts during a hurricane. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Brigette Waltermire)



THUNDER CONTROL

COMMAND POST

by Senior Airman Justin M. Creech

Information is the name of the game for Command Post at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base. It is the commander's right-hand when it comes to dealing with potentially sensitive or urgent information that affects the base.

Whether it is notification of a deployment, damage to government property, or criminal activity involving a Guardsman that results in media interest, Command Post is the primary communications focal point to ensure the proper contacts are alerted.

"We are the reporting agency for the base," said Master Sgt. Barbara Baldwin, Command Post superintendent. "We are the eyes and ears for the

commander."

The most important notifications Command Posts can receive is an Event/Incident Report (OPREP-3). OPREP-3 reports are the first indication to senior leadership that possible immediate response actions may be required. An example of an incident that requires immediate action is a media report about criminal activity involving a Guardsman associated with the 137th Air Refueling Wing.

"Let's say an individual associated with our base is arrested, and it's reported he's with the 137th" said Baldwin.

Command Post has 15 minutes to gather as

much information as possible about that incident before sending a report to the National Guard Bureau in Washington, D.C., according to Baldwin.

"The Bureau can ask questions about the report then we have one hour to send a typed hard copy report," said Baldwin. "The wing commander must approve that report before we can send it."

Command Post is also responsible for notifying on-base agencies when deployment notifications are sent out from higher headquarters so they can begin preparing. Depending on the situation, units can be given as little as 72-hours' notice of a deployment.

Command Post was at Tinker Air Force Base

in Oklahoma coordinating the refueling of the KC-135 stratotanker planes and its maintenance crews. Upon returning to Will Rogers, the team had to completely rework and restore the flow of information and the process for how it was reported to Command Post.

Command Post operated 24/7 while at Tinker AFB, but will most likely operate differently at Will Rogers. Baldwin said they are ready to handle whatever responsibilities the MC-12 brings their organization.

"This is the first time the 137th has had a fully-manned, full-time Command Post," said Baldwin. "Right now we are re-building our operation, but we will be ready when the mission gets here." **AO**

The 137th Air Refueling Wing Communications Flight provides a type-1, wideband, multiband, multimission radio that blocks frequency disruption and plays a key role in tactical operations.

The AN/PRC-117F(V)1(C) radio uses very high frequency (VHF) and ultra-high frequency (UHF) to provide its communication range. The Broadband Area Global Network (BGAN) terminals provide satellite-based wideband beyond-line-of-sight communications.

"You can do point-to-point satellite

communication with the radio," said Senior Airman Travis Oder, a radio frequency transmissions technician with the 137th Communications Squadron. "You can get a long frequency range that way."

The PRC-117G, the latest model of the radio, is capable of electronic counter-counter measures (frequency hopping) which prevents enemy forces from blocking the frequency that Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) Specialists use to communicate with pilots while downrange. A feature called "time of day" is what allows the radios to quickly and accurately change frequencies.

"Time of day" is calculated from Zulu time, which

is the term used for Universal Coordinated Time. UTC is the time at longitude zero degrees and zero minutes; the longitudinal line that separates East from West in the world geographical coordinate system. Zulu time allows TACPs to stay on the same frequency as pilots who are traveling through numerous time zones.

"The GPS pulls the time in for them," said Tech. Sgt. Fred Moreton, joint terminal attack controller, 146th Air Support Operations Squadron. "So, the time of day is calculated by the radio."

The ability to stay on the same frequency with the pilot allows TACPs to do the most important part of their job, which is calling in air strikes.

"This is how I interface with the pilot," said Senior Airman Kevin Shears, radio operator maintainer and driver for the 146th ASOS. "Unless we are sending something to them with a digital computer, this is how I

communicate with them. It's really my lifeline in the field."

Which frequency the TACPs use, between VHF and UHF, depends on the tactical situation and environment they are in.

"The Army uses line-of-sight frequencies a lot," said Moreton. "They are low-end frequencies, so that's why we use them when we work with the Army."

Another key feature is the radio's encryption module, which certifies the PRC-117G to transmit secure information.

"What encryption does for us is it puts us on a secure network that allows us to talk to the aircraft without worrying about other people listening in," said Moreton. **A0**

COMMUNICATION

AN/PRC-117F(V)1(C)

by Senior Airman Justin M. Creech



U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Andrew M. LaMoreaux

A NEW ERA BEGINS



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