

# AIR | OBSERVER

the biannual publication of the 137th special operations group



# CITIZEN AIRMEN

AIR COMMANDOS WHO IMPACT THEIR COMMUNITIES, IN AND OUT OF UNIFORM

# AIR OBSERVER

the biannual journal of the 137th special operations wing

JAN/FEB/MAR/APR/MAY/JUN 2018  
Vol. 04 / No. 01

www.137sow.ang.af.mil

WING COMMANDER  
Col. Devin R. Wooden

WING COMMAND CHIEF  
Chief Master Sgt. Stephen L. Rosebrook

## WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

PUBLIC AFFAIRS CHIEF  
Capt. Micah D. Campbell

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SUPERINTENDENT  
Senior Master Sgt. Andrew M. LaMoreaux

PHOTOJOURNALIST  
Tech. Sgt. Caroline E. Essex  
Tech. Sgt. Trisha K. Shields  
Staff Sgt. Kasey M. Phipps  
Staff Sgt. Brigette A. Waltermire  
Staff Sgt. Tyler K. Woodward

BROADCAST JOURNALIST  
Senior Airman Jordan E. Martin  
Airman 1st Class Alex N. Kaelke

KNOWLEDGE OPERATIONS MANAGER  
Senior Airman Caitlin G. Carnes

WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE  
5624 Air Guard Drive  
Oklahoma City, OK 73179  
(405) 686-5227  
usaf.ok.137-sow.list.pa@mail.mil



## ON THE COVER

The Airmen featured in this photograph are posed in attire that represents the hobby or profession they do when they are not wearing the uniform. This photograph, as well as the articles and other photos in this Air Observer, strive to tell the story of the unique duality of a guardsman. Airmen of the 137th Special Operations Wing not only contribute to the mission of the wing, but also strengthen the missions of their communities, families and workplaces.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Staff Sgt. Tyler K. Woodward



# facebook

LIKE THE 137TH SOW WING COMMANDER ON FACEBOOK

@137thSOWCommander

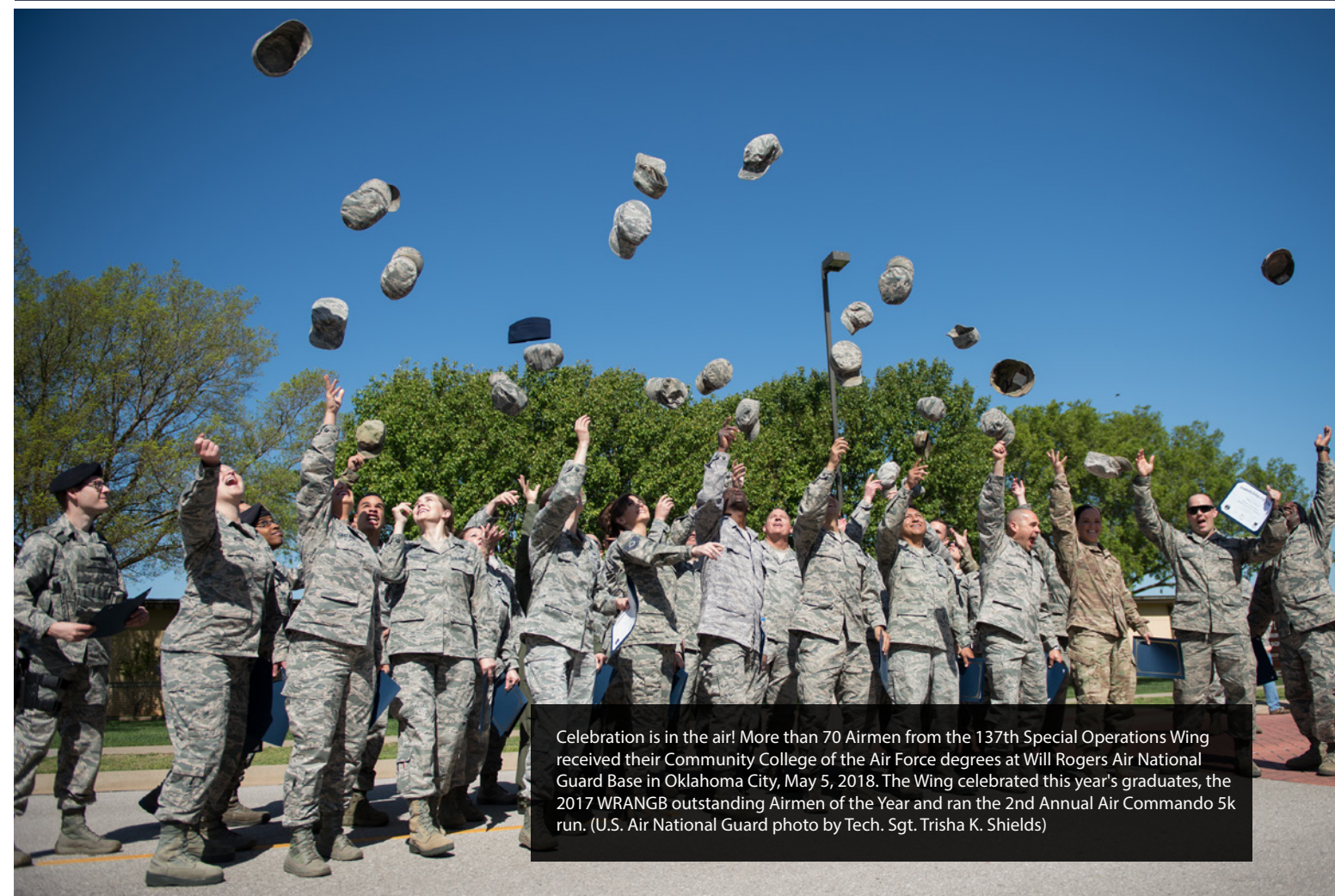
Like Follow Share

Send Message

WWW.137SOW.ANG.AF.MIL

# JANUARY 2018 - JUNE 2018

Volume 4 Number 1



Celebration is in the air! More than 70 Airmen from the 137th Special Operations Wing received their Community College of the Air Force degrees at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base in Oklahoma City, May 5, 2018. The Wing celebrated this year's graduates, the 2017 WRANGB outstanding Airmen of the Year and ran the 2nd Annual Air Commando 5k run. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Trisha K. Shields)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 04 | **JOURNAL ENTRIES**  
Wing Commander and Guest Contributor
- 08 | **JOURNAL ENTRIES**  
Operations Group and First Sergeant
- 12 | **JOURNAL ENTRIES**  
Logistics Readiness and Force Support
- 16 | **CITIZEN AIRMAN** - FOREWARD
- 18 | **STUDENT PILOT** - SENIOR AIRMAN LILY WHEELAND  
Wheeland studies in her civilian life to soar in her military career.
- 20 | **RANCHER and ADMINISTRATOR** - COL. KEITH REED  
Reed nurses Zebu, directs five county health departments and commands a group at the 137 SOW.
- 22 | **SPRINT CAR DRIVER** - TECH. SGT. SHANE SELLERS  
Sellers balances the speed of semi-pro driving with military life.
- 24 | **TEACHER AND COACH** - TECH. SGT. AMANDA STANLEY  
Stanley mentors students, athletes and Airmen.
- 26 | **ARTIST** - TECH. SGT. ARELIA ROCKER  
Rocker studies and practices art when she's not serving as a trained defender at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base.
- 28 | **FIREFIGHTER** - AIRMAN 1ST CLASS LOGAN CHRISTENSEN  
Christensen fights fires inside and outside the base's gates.
- 34 | **SECTION PROFILE** - CIVIL AIR PATROL
- 38 | **EQUIPMENT PROFILE** - DEBRIS CLEARANCE PACKAGE

facebook www.facebook.com/137SOW



## WING COMMANDER COL. DEVIN R. WOODEN

### Citizen Airmen — All in.

For the first two-thirds of my military career, I have a particular scene that will forever be etched in my mind. It's 0600 on a clear, sunny day. It's Saturday, and I'm blousing my trousers, lacing my boots and searching for my cover to head off to this month's drill. As I drive there, I can't help but notice cars are filing into the local parks and soccer fields, there is a line outside the local coffee house, neighbors are strolling outside to fetch their morning paper and others are taking advantage of the quiet streets to catch a morning jog. Over the next 48 hours, I attend roll call, required briefings and an awards presentation. I train to keep up my qualifications with my fellow Airmen and review this year's annual training plan. Sunday evening after I return home, my spouse will brief me on all I missed, like the girls' cheer competition, the Sunday message at church and the upcoming week's family agenda. Monday, I don a different uniform to head off to my civilian job cognizant that others are doing the same. As we pull into our normal parking spot and head into work or school without complaint, fanfare, or the expectation of a thank you for how we spent our weekend, we're all in. The greatest compliment we can receive: a simple thank you for your service.

Your civilian employers, who often employ several guardsmen and reservists, know that they must account in staffing for the fact you, a Citizen Airman, might be called up for extended service. They worry how they will possibly fill your shoes if you are called to serve. I know, because I hear it through members of our community, chamber partnerships and honorary commander programs. They know you as the woman giving the presentation who is polished and professional, has a grasp of all the facts and gives praise to her team for the results — a skill you have honed as a communication network specialist in the Air National Guard. They know you as the gentleman whose co-workers seem to trust his counsel and seek his advice on matters involving relationships in the office — a skill he perfected as a first sergeant in the Air National Guard. They know you — and they love you! They're all in. The greatest compliment we can give them: thank you for your support.

We have guardsmen and reservists in all 77 counties within our state. Our citizens see members in uniform hundreds of miles from any active duty station or base. We are America's militia, we are the face of our nation's call to service, and it takes all of us: our members, our families and our employers. This Air Observer is a tribute to everyone who is "all in" in supporting our Citizen Airmen, in and out of uniform. Thank you — ALL of you!

## GUEST CONTRIBUTOR DEPUTY CHIEF WADE GOURLEY OKLAHOMA CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

In my 29 years in law enforcement, I have been asked many times why I chose this career. The answer for me is somewhat complicated, because it is not a career path I planned on taking. One of the best quotes I have heard regarding this profession is people do not choose police work, it chooses them. This is true in my case. I took a class in my sophomore year at the University of Oklahoma, which was an introductory study of law enforcement leadership. The class was taught by a former police officer who had great stories to accompany his teaching points during each session. As I sat through a semester, I knew my career choice could only be law enforcement.

Throughout my career I have worked in many areas of the department. In each area I have developed leadership skills and had opportunities to learn the way different divisions, units and City departments work together to accomplish the daily mission of keeping Oklahoma City safe. What is most interesting about my career path is the assignments I least wanted seemed to be the ones where I learned the most and still provide a solid foundation for my decision-making today.

As I moved through the ranks to my current position, I traveled around the country and had the opportunity to meet with other leaders. During these meetings I learned some things that make an organization a success and others things that leaders found were not so successful. Both have extreme value and have helped guide me in all my different jobs within the department. Probably one of my most challenging and rewarding assignments came as the commander over the Tactical Unit. This specialized group did not need a leader who micromanaged and made all the decisions. The team leaders and operators drove the mission and provided the plan of action when resolving complicated and dangerous issues. When the operators have a vested interest in the mission, they are more likely to succeed because they believe in the plan. My job was simply to control the pace and provide the necessary resources to allow them to safely accomplish their mission.

Recently, I had the opportunity to become a part of an Honorary Commander program, in which I was fortunate enough to be assigned to Col. Devin Wooden and the 137th Special Operations Wing. I am very impressed by the leadership style used within the organization and the Air Force Core Values. These values drive the day-to-day operations of the Air Force, and I am looking for ways to incorporate something similar within the police department. I look forward to my assignment over the next year and learning all I can from the outstanding men and women who drive the mission of the 137th.



**FAMILY GATHERING** | Airman 1st Class Rachel Yates

The MC-12W sits alongside its Air Force Special Operations Command siblings at Hurlburt Field, Florida, May 3, 2018. The family reunion was part of the Secretary of the Air Force's AFSOC immersion visit at Hurlburt Field, Florida, May 2-4, 2018.





## OPERATIONS GROUP

### 1ST LT. ROBERT J. AHERN

I joined the Oklahoma Air National Guard in February of 2001. The years since have been full of deployments, good times, friendships and even tragedies. I have come to realize that I am not only part of a unit, but an amazing family of Citizen Airmen.

I enlisted with the 137th Maintenance Squadron, where I initially worked as a crew chief on the C-130 Hercules. I really enjoyed my time in maintenance, and had many great experiences traveling the world while working on an aircraft with the people who remain my friends to this day. On a flight to Uzbekistan, I met my wife Abbey, who was also enlisted in the squadron at the time and sat directly across from me.

We got married in 2006 and soon after started a family. We had two happy and healthy daughters (Dylan, now 9, and Harper, 7), but when Abbey was pregnant with our third daughter, our lives changed forever.

Our daughter Annie was diagnosed with anencephaly, a terminal birth defect. We were crushed, and while we were making plans for our daughter's birth and her death, we had the unwavering support of our Guard family. Annie passed away the very same day she was born. In the wake of her death, so many burdens were lifted by the Guard community. Funeral expenses were taken care of, meals were brought and we never felt alone.

Annie became Oklahoma's very first newborn infant organ donor when she died, and our experience with her organ donation led us to become active volunteers and advocates for organ and tissue donation. We attend a variety of events around the Oklahoma City area to educate and encourage people to register to become organ and tissue donors. This involvement has brought great emotional healing to me and my family.

My wife and I have decided to celebrate Annie's 5th birthday this year by honoring her legacy of giving. We are planning and hosting a large fundraising event and all donations will go to fund work to empower marginalized women, support the refugee community, address food insecurity and support OKC public schools and teachers.

We have since had two more daughters (Iva, 3, and Margaret, 9 months) and I am now a pilot. Life is busier than ever!

The Guard has taught me so much in the past 17 years. I have a great respect for my fellow Airmen and the battles we all face on and off the clock.

I am proud to be a part of our mission and this amazing group of Citizen Airmen.

## FIRST SERGEANT

### MASTER SGT. STEPHEN J. HARWELL



In 2014, I competed in my first bodybuilding competition. However, the ground work for that moment had been instilled years prior. As a kid, my dad would take me to the gym with him to work out. I hated every second of it, but I hated sitting there waiting for him to be done, even more. So I did what I could, which at 10 years old wasn't very much.

In my 20s, I joined the military. My first base was Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico. Though I had been lifting on my own and doing what dad had taught me, I was still a few pounds overweight for a promotion. My command decided I needed to be on the weight management program, so off to the doctor I went. When I arrived, the doctor wouldn't sign off for me to be on the weight management program and insisted on a "body fat adjustment" – a waiver. As the paperwork was processed, I continued to lift with no particular goal other than to be able to do my job as a firefighter. When the time came to finalize the paperwork, command requested one more weigh-in and tape. I had gained a few pounds but lost some body fat. Barely passing, I was given my promotion on the spot. I continued to train off and on over the course of the next 10 years, scraping by with passing physical scores.

In the spring of 2013, I met my wife Kristin. Our first date was a noodling trip on the Red River. We didn't catch anything, but I knew any woman who would get up before the sun to drive to a river and watch me stick my arm in a hole to try to catch a fish was in fact a keeper. Kristin had been a competitive body builder for years, and we began to train together. Being the guy I was, it was extremely difficult to take "corrections" on lifting from a female, but I came to realize she knew more than I did. We talked in depth about competitions and the discipline required, and I was certain that I would never have what it takes to compete. I told her that I wanted to do it just once, like a bucket list item. She said she would help me.

I made the commitment to compete in a show in 2014. With her help, I was able to do what I had set out to do. She cooked all of my food and prepped all of my meals. When I didn't want to do cardio, she made sure I did. She supported and believed in me even when I didn't believe in myself. I competed twice in 2017 and, with my wife by my side, I finished with three first place finishes, a second and an overall win in that first competition. In the second competition, I finished first, second and third in three classes.

Now, physical fitness isn't just a requirement for the Air Force, it's a lifestyle for me. It allows me time with my wife, keeps me in my top physical and mental shape, and gives me a level of dedication that I can apply to everything in my life.



**#WINNING** | Staff Sgt. Timothy D. Moore

Members from the 137th Special Operations Wing pose in front of an MC-12W during the first fully-integrated deployment for their new manned intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance mission. The Airmen left in the fall of 2017 in support of Operation Freedom Sentinel, an operation with a mission to work with allies and partners on Resolute Support and continuing counterterrorism operations against the remnants of Al-Qaeda to ensure the security of Afghanistan.



## LOGISTICS READINESS

CAPT. SEAN R. DOLL

I was sitting in an intermediate level officer course surrounded by 13 of my active duty Air Force peers. As I sat in the room and took the opportunity to listen to all of the amazing experiences that my peers have had, I realized that although my specific experiences are different, I have similar experiences that have broadened my life and my career.

We had a lieutenant colonel guest speaker who spent an entire year working with FedEx as part of a career development opportunity. As I listened to the skills and abilities that he gained by working in the civilian sector and the impact that it has had on his career, I realized that the majority of our guardsmen have the same experience without having to be selected for it. The perspective that guardsmen have when merging their military and civilian life is amazing. Speaking for myself, the things that I learned while managing three different Walmart stores have been invaluable to me in filling the role that I have in the 137th Special Operations Logistics Readiness Squadron.

The other thing that strikes me as being different between my active duty peers and myself is what our family lives look like. Many of the people in my class have never spent more than two years in a single place. As a guardsman, I can see exactly how blessed I am to be able to set up roots in Oklahoma City. These roots have allowed my wife and me to build a family. In addition to my two boys (8 and 9), my wife and I recently decided to begin fostering other children. Our first placement was two beautiful twin girls who are 2 years old, which has been a blessing and a challenge. Talking with my active duty peers, many of them said that they would love to be able to do something like this, but are unable to because of frequent station changes.

Being a guardsman is great. Having the ability to blend civilian and military worlds is the Guard's biggest strength. We have the ability to create a link to our community in a way active duty cannot. We also have the ability to add a different perspective and skill set to accomplishing the mission of the military. The important thing is to understand that we all have a part in executing the mission. We need our active duty brothers and sisters just as much as they need us, and together we make a stronger Air Force.

## FORCE SUPPORT

STAFF SGT. EBONY D. CAROTHERS



When I made the transition from Active Duty to the Oklahoma Air National Guard over two years ago, I faced more than one major life change. Not only did I experience adjusting from active duty to traditional guardsman, but also the change from full-time government employee to full-time student. I had the option to completely separate from the military and live as a civilian, but becoming a guardsman offered me the opportunity to maintain a familiar and central aspect of my identity — my role as an American Airman.

I started the journey of obtaining my Doctor of Physical Therapy degree at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center six months after I joined the 137th Special Operations Wing. The fast-paced, exacting classes were challenging, and yet comparable to my different, yet similar military training as a Mandarin Chinese linguist several years earlier.

As Airmen, we are all familiar with the notions of key duties, leadership, followership, and the whole Airmen concept — ideals that are instilled in us from the beginning of our careers. Those ideas followed me into my venture as a civilian and a student.

My new civilian "key" duties were straightforward: to fulfill my performance expectations of learning and excelling at the material presented to me. I could have easily told myself that the demands of my new program were a sufficient undertaking and justifiably been proud with my academic efforts. Yet, my experience with the military had shown me that I was capable of much more. So I sought out opportunities where I could excel as a leader, follower and member of the community. I served as a member and officer in several student associations, volunteered for countless community service and outreach events, and attended academic and professional social events.

During my one-year tenure with a project called Empowering Patients through Inter-professional Collaboration, I was provided with ample experiences that led to my professional and personal growth, which I would have never had if I had been content to just do my time and pass my classes. Instead, I was presented with new opportunities to help improve people's health, make new friends, and increase my confidence in my capability as a leader, a team member, and a clinician.

All of these outcomes were results of following values impressed on me by the military: excelling at my key responsibilities, seeking out leadership and followership opportunities, striving to display core values through personal and professional development, and participation in the community around me.

**WON AND NOT DONE** | Staff Sgt. Tyler K. Woodward

Two MC-12Ws taxi under a ceremonial water arch signaling their return from a six-month deployment in support of Operation Freedom Sentinel at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base in Oklahoma City, April 9, 2018. The ceremony marked the successful completion of the Wing's first operational deployment as part of Air Force Special Operations Command.







# CITIZEN AIRMEN

Every day, Will Rogers Air National Guard Base Airmen use their passion and skill to better the families, workplaces and communities around them.

The U.S. Air Force uniform represents the integrity, service and excellence these Airmen have sworn to, but it does not define the instances in which these characteristics shine.

Whether mentoring a room full of students, bottle feeding a calf, piloting an aircraft, building a racecar from scratch, fighting back flames, or exploring expression through painting in a living room, the same conditions that make these men and women dedicated Airmen also make them devoted and selfless citizens.

Underneath the uniform is a set of specialized skills, interests and experiences unique to each individual wearing it.

The civilian world is a hardening ground for the abilities of the Airman.

The military world is a proving ground for the desire of the citizen to serve.

Without the citizen, the Citizen Airman lacks the passion to serve all of us.

Without the Airman, the Citizen Airman lacks the legacy to lead our country forward.

# CITIZEN AIRMEN

## SENIOR AIRMAN LILY WHEELAND



story and photography STAFF SGT. KASEY M. PHIPPS

Lily Wheeland, an aviation management student at the University of Oklahoma (OU) in Norman, Oklahoma, walks along the fence of the flight line before boarding a PA-28-161 Warrior II at OU's Max Westheimer Airport also in Norman, Oklahoma, May 18, 2018. Wheeland is also a senior airman and part of the commander support staff at the 137th Special Operations Civil Engineering Squadron at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base in Oklahoma City.

**H**igh above the stop-and-go traffic of Interstate 35 through Norman, Oklahoma, oblivious to the daily commuters and congestion below, Lily Wheeland flies over the frustrations and the chaos — literally.

"I like being in the sky," she explained. "I love being in the clouds. I've always said my spirit animal is a bird."

Worlds different from her military job at the 137th Special Operations Wing as commander support staff in the 137th Special Operations Civil Engineering Squadron, Wheeland is an Aviation Management major at the University of Oklahoma. She's attended the University since fall of 2015 and changed her major from advertising to aviation management in the fall of 2016.

"I've always wanted to be a pilot, but I've always been so practical with everything that I do," she said. "One day, I decided I was just going to go for it. I'll see what happens. And I loved it."

Wheeland is now a junior at OU with 137.5 flying hours and a private pilot rating. She most frequently flies the PA-28-161 Warrior II, a four-seat, single-engine aircraft used for training flights. She is also working towards her instrument rating, followed by her commercial rating.

"I fly because I eventually want to be a military and commercial pilot, but I also just really like it," she said.

Her love of flying began at 14 years old when she went on a flight with her dad, a former active-duty flight engineer, and his Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps cadets.

"It was just going to be a hobby then," Wheeland recalled.

Wheeland was first apprehensive about being behind the yoke in the air. Now, Wheeland's demeanor toward flying has changed since that first class at OU.

"It's night and day," she explained. "I used to shake when I was about to take off and now it's just relaxed and chill. It's just repetition and knowing your stuff. The more you do anything the more comfortable with it you become."

Now, part of her passion for being in the air is the tough and exacting nature of controlling an aircraft.

"It's challenging, but I feel like it's something you can really master," she said. "I really want to be a pilot. I know that I love it and anything new will be scary, like a new job or career, but that's with everything."

With a taste of flight and two more years of school to go, Wheeland won't be letting off the throttle any time soon. She said she hopes to one day fly the MC-12W for the 137th and go on to flying for a commercial airline, but she is not picky.

"I think having flying hours makes me more competitive for military positions," said Wheeland. "I think I'm building a better package if I have more hours and a rating or two. It helps to get me ready for flight school, but I'll fly anything I can — anything with wings." **AO**





Keith Reed, a rancher and regional health director, interacts with some of his herd of miniature zebu cattle, which he raises with his wife Kelly, on his ranch in Tecumseh, Oklahoma, April 28, 2018. Reed is also a colonel and commander of the 137th Special Operations Medical Group at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base in Oklahoma City.

story and photography TECH. SGT. TRISHA K. SHIELDS



# CITIZEN AIRMEN

## COL. KEITH REED

**A**t 4:00 a.m., the silence of the countryside is interrupted by footsteps crunching through the leaves. Keith Reed makes his way through the trees to his barn. Two 15-pound miniature zebu bottle calves greet him — anxiously awaiting their morning meal.

“Knowing these animals are dependent on us to take care of them keeps us engaged and very active outside of work,” said Reed. “I think that is an important part of a healthy lifestyle.”

Over the past eight years, since their children left the nest, Reed and his wife Kelly have raised a miniature zebu breed of cattle standing full grown around 38 inches tall. Starting their herd with two heads and growing it to about 20, Kelly has taken on much of the responsibility of caring for the animals. However, this morning she is out of town.

“We don’t take on more work than Kelly can handle by herself,” said Reed. “But I think I have more trouble keeping up with everything when she is gone!”

This breed originated in India and can be traced back more than 3,000 years. Reed said that since their children moved away they have enjoyed the cattle keeping them company.

“I always enjoy watching the calves being born, and then seeing them stand — or try to — for the first time,” said Reed. “It reminds me of how fragile life can seem, yet be so resilient when given a chance.”

As the sun rises, Reed heads to his office at the Cleveland County Health Department where he serves as the Regional Director for five county health departments including Cleveland, McClain, Garvin, Grady and Murray. He oversees communicable disease control, clinics providing preventative healthcare, community partnership programs, and health inspectors among numerous other responsibilities of public health that impact people’s daily lives.

“Give me a scenario of your day and I will probably be able to link many things to public health,” said Reed. “If we are doing our job correctly, you will never realize we are behind the scenes looking out for your best interests.”

Mark Braley, veteran services coordinator for Cleveland County, said Reed’s work in the public health department is far-reaching.

“He’s a big deal,” said Braley. “He influences policy throughout the state of Oklahoma. He’s not afraid to speak up and get things done, yet manages to make time for everyone.”

Back at home, Reed’s day is not over until he takes time to feed his bottle calves one last time. He gives credit for his success to his employees and Kelly.

“The only reason I can balance all this is my wife, and I am thankful she is supportive beyond reason,” said Reed. “I feel I have three families: my home family, my guard family, and my public health family. I am truly enriched by all of them and I thank God for that blessing.” **AO**

# CITIZEN AIRMEN

## TECH. SGT. SHANE SELLERS



Under a dimming sky, red dirt gusts through a rusty chain link fence and across the landscape of squawking speakers, cursing drivers, waving flags, roaring engines, blurring cars and cheering fans.

For Shane Sellers, the life of a sprint car driver can be hectic.

"These race cars require more work than my 40-hour a week job," he said. "I'm constantly in the shop, constantly doing maintenance, saving money and going to races. It's a big balance, and it's hard to do."

During his 12-year career, Shane has tried to balance the fast pace of racing life with being a traditional guardsman at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base.

"There were nights that I'd pull in at 3 a.m. or 4 a.m. from the race track," said Shane. "I'd have to get up at 5 a.m. and come into drill. I've always had to find balance in that."

Shane said he's never been alone though. In fact, he's always had someone in his corner that knew more about his tunnel-visioned life than anyone possibly could — his father.

Robert Sellers, a retired master sergeant from the former 137th Maintenance Squadron, began driving and learning the ins-and-outs of the racing world while serving at WRANGB in 1988. He learned firsthand how to balance his racing life during his 21-year career in the Oklahoma Air National Guard.

"I grew up watching my father," said Shane. "He's my idol and my hero."

In 2006, Shane began his guard career as an avionics specialist working on the C-130 Hercules. The skills he acquired at the 137th during this time opened the door for a career as an electronics technician with the Federal Aviation Administration; a job he's held since 2008.

"My Guard career has always been great because I've always worked with great people," said Shane. "When you're surrounded by good people, it makes life a lot easier. I owe a lot to them. If it wasn't for the Guard taking me in, giving me a trade to learn, giving me the structure and guidance I needed, I wouldn't have the civilian career I do now, which helps to pay for a very expensive hobby."

Now a fitness supervisor for the 137th Special Operations Force Support Squadron, Shane enjoys the balance that the Guard provides.

Securing the steering wheel inside his 1,500-pound sprint car for another race, Shane tightens the safety harness over his shoulders and ignites the 800-horsepower engine. His father helps push the car into position before the race. The lights change from red, to yellow, to green.

Shane starts another race, but never alone. AO



Shane Sellers, a sprint car driver, awaits the start of a race at the Red Dirt Speedway in Meeker, Oklahoma, April 27, 2018. Sellers is also a technical sergeant and fitness supervisor from the 137th Special Operations Force Support Squadron at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base in Oklahoma City.

story and photography STAFF SGT. TYLER K. WOODWARD



Amanda Stanley, an assistant track coach for discus, shotput and pole vault at Southmoore High School in Moore, Oklahoma, speaks to the Southmoore head boys and girls track coach, Shanon Atkinson, during a track meet at Moore High School in Moore, Oklahoma, April 27, 2018. Stanley is also a technical sergeant and an aerospace medical technician with the 137th Special Operations Medical Group at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base in Oklahoma City.

# CITIZEN AIRMEN

## TECH. SGT. AMANDA STANLEY



Amanda Stanley felt a presence racing up behind her, heard the labored breaths and impact of feet on the track ... that last sprint was all it took. Another racer entered her periphery. She knew — she started her final kick too early. She had been beaten.

"I remember having an interview with a newspaper [after that race]," recalled Stanley. "I was like 'You know, it's all good, I made a mistake, and I get to correct it. She [the winner] didn't do anything wrong so she has nothing to fix. I'm going to get her.' That's my whole strategy right? Now, I know what to do."

And she did it. Stanley beat her competitor at the state championship.

Stanley was recruited by the University of Oklahoma out of high school. She had gone to the Junior Olympics twice and earned 11 all-state titles plus eight state championships for track and field, and three all-state titles for cross country.

"My job was to chase people down, and so people really didn't like when I would hang out behind them," she said. "I got them in my sights and just ran. I just kept pushing."

Though now a jokingly self-dubbed "has been," Stanley still "knows what she's talking about" and uses her knowledge and motivation to push others to learn and grow.

Stanley challenged herself to grow professionally after the company she worked for in communications shut down. She decided to find a job that was always needed and thought nursing or teaching would be rewarding. She joined the Air National Guard as a medic, but decided to teach as a civilian.

She earned a bachelor's in history and passed the certification process to become a teacher in Oklahoma. She started teaching and coaching at Mustang High School and earned her master's in administrative leadership at that time as well.

This past year, Stanley started teaching and coaching at Southmoore High School to pursue her dream of becoming an athletic director for a school.

"Being around sports all my life, I've always known that that's something I want to keep in my life," she said.

When she began teaching eight years ago, it was so she could coach, but Stanley has since found that her students' learning is as important in her career as sports. She now seeks to learn for the sake of learning so that she can then pass that knowledge to others.

"That was kind of a 'Wow, I-didn't-see-that-coming' moment," she said. "Anyone I can reach, I try."

Rather than focusing on reaching a finish, she now strives to continue growing intellectually and hopes to push her students to learn beyond the final stretch to the end of the semester. Achieving that goal is not without its frustrations, but the payoff is its own win.

"Them [the students] just being ready to be taught, that's a great feeling," she said. "It happens often, probably not as often as you'd want, but it does happen. They'll have their own input on it, and I'll be like 'Yes, you've got it!'" **AO**



# CITIZEN AIRMEN

## TECH. SGT. ARELIA ROCKER



story and photography STAFF SGT. KASEY M. PHIPPS

**B**orn an “Okie” from Oklahoma, but raised in Iowa, Arelia Rocker experienced racial tension unlike anything she imagined.

“High school wasn’t the greatest time in my life,” Rocker recalled with an ironic laugh. “It was just a different culture. I lived in Iowa at the time, and I experienced things that I never experienced in Oklahoma, even now.”

Her answer to that tension? Mental escape through art.

Rocker’s artistic expression began when she was seven or eight years old. Her mom, now a U.S. Army Reserves colonel working at the Pentagon, would come home and draw after a stressful day of work.

“I would watch her and just see what she was doing, because I was curious,” said Rocker, now in the 137th Special Operations Security Forces Squadron after serving her first stint in active duty. “I became fascinated by it, so she gave me my first watercolor set when I was 12 years old.”

To this day, Rocker said her mom keeps as many of her pieces as she can in a book, which is filled largely with acrylic paintings. Rocker’s mediums of choice now are beeswax and oil paint as well as caulking.

“I like the feeling of it,” Rocker said simply. “I’m a textures person, and I was introduced to beeswax during my [final class]. I just continued to go with it.”

With an Associate in Arts degree in Fine Arts from Rose State College in Oklahoma City, a few classes for her bachelor’s degree under her belt and a membership to the Mid-Del Art Guild, Rocker said her art serves as an outlet for stress, much like it was for her mother, and also works as a training ground for skills she uses in her job with the Guard.

“Art is a great tool for problem solving,” she explained. “When you run into something or get stuck, which happens in any job or whatever you do in life, you have to figure out how to make it work. By taking art classes, I would just let my brain go, and eventually I’ll work through it.”

As the Security Administrator at the 137th Special Operations Security Forces Squadron, Rocker does her job surrounded by her artwork on the walls. As the only African-American female in her art guild, Rocker said she wants to now inspire fellow Oklahoma Airmen and black artists by representing the 13 All-Black towns of Oklahoma in paintings.

“It’s something I really have a passion for right now,” she said. “It’s not something that’s often talked about. The towns are an important part of our history, especially for Oklahomans. It actually conveys a face and identity to other people. Maybe those other people are other black artists who need inspiration or just people who need to see a different cultural perspective.” **AO**

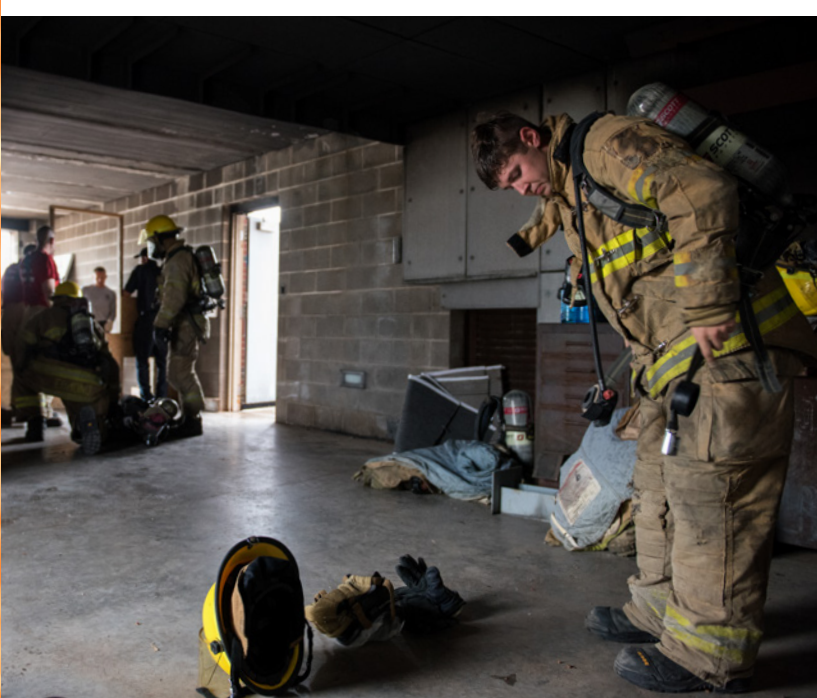


Arelia Rocker, an artist and member of the Mid Del Art Guild, paints the edge of her canvas while sitting in her living room at home near Oklahoma City, May 15, 2018. Rocker is also a technical sergeant and security administrator at the 137th Special Operations Security Forces Squadron at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base in Oklahoma City.



Logan Christensen, a cadet for the Edmond Fire Department (EFD), suppresses a fire during a flammable liquid and gas training scenario at the EFD Training Academy in Edmond, Oklahoma, May 25, 2018. Christensen is also an airman first class and a firefighter in the 137th Special Operations Civil Engineering Squadron at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base, Oklahoma City.

story and photography SENIOR MASTER SGT. ANDREW M. LAMOREAUX



# CITIZEN AIRMEN

AIRMAN 1ST CLASS LOGAN CHRISTENSEN

## “OKLAHOMA IS BURNING.”

That was how Gary McManus, state climatologist for Oklahoma, described a 2014 wildfire near Guthrie, Oklahoma, that killed one, saw temperatures reach triple digits and burned approximately 3,250 acres.

In nearby Crescent, Oklahoma, population 1,542, Logan Christensen experienced this large-scale natural event by accompanying an emergency medical specialist, neighbor and mentor to the scene.

“He took me on a couple of calls that he went on, and I got to see one of the biggest fires I think in Oklahoma history,” said Christensen. “It was in Guthrie a couple of years ago [May 2014], and I can’t remember how many departments it was, but it was quite a bit. I got to see what it was like on the frontline of the fire and got to see all the helicopters dump a ton of water.”

This proved to be an important moment in fueling Christensen’s desire to become a firefighter. As a cadet for the Edmond Fire Department Training Academy in Edmond, Oklahoma, and a fire protection specialist at the 137th Special Operations Wing in Oklahoma City, Christensen now knows what it takes to battle different types of fires head-on and the responsibility of answering rescue calls.

“Whenever I have a lot of adrenaline, my body just really starts to slow itself down,” said Christensen. “I’m freaking out inside, but I try to really calm myself and kinda slow it down, try to just think. I’ve always kinda been calm any time there is an emergency. I guess it’s just my body’s natural reaction – just to kind of slow everything down, just take it one step at a time.”

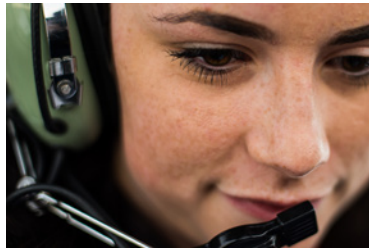
After graduating high school in 2014, Christensen completed two years of study at Oklahoma State University toward a degree in fire protection systems and fire ecology before joining the Oklahoma Air National Guard. As a junior Airman and a civilian cadet, Christensen learned quickly that he has mentors at his own level all the way to his station chiefs.

“It’s important for young firefighters to understand that they are part of a team and that everything we do as firefighters is done as a team,” said Senior Master Sgt. Todd Lambert, 137th Special Operations Civil Engineering Squadron fire protection chief. “We are only as strong as our weakest link. You never leave your partner, and your partner will never leave you. Teamwork is essential to every aspect of what we do on the fireground.”

In mid-June 2018, Christensen will complete his training as a civilian firefighter and begin a long career where he will be regularly exchanging one type of uniform for another while serving his local community, state and nation.

“I’ve always wanted to serve,” said Christensen. “I tried the Guard and fell in love with it. So here I am, and I’m planning to serve until I retire.” AO

CITIZEN AIRMEN  
**ABOUT THE PHOTOS**



Lily Wheeland, an aviation management student at the University of Oklahoma (OU) in Norman, Oklahoma, inspects the gauges of a PA-28-161 Warrior II at the University of Oklahoma's (OU) Max Westheimer Airport in Norman, Oklahoma, May 18, 2018. Wheeland is also a senior airman and part of the commander support staff at the 137th Special Operations Civil Engineering Squadron at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base in Oklahoma City.



Keith Reed, a rancher and regional health director, and his wife, Kelly, manage a small herd of hungry miniature zebu cattle on their ranch in Tecumseh, Oklahoma, April 28, 2018. Reed is also a colonel and the commander of the 137th Special Operations Medical Group at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base in Oklahoma City.



Shane Sellers prepares his sprint car for an upcoming race at his maintenance shop in Tuttle, Oklahoma, May 3, 2018. Sellers is also fitness supervisor with the 137th Special Operations Force Support Squadron at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base in Oklahoma City. He has no formal training when it comes to building sprint cars. Instead, the majority of his education has been "on-the-job" training from his father in the shop or at the track on race day.



Logan Christensen, a cadet for the Edmond Fire Department (EFD), takes the lead position suppressing a fire during a flammable liquid and gas training scenario at the EFD Training Academy in Edmond, Oklahoma, May 25, 2018. Christensen is also an airman first class and a firefighter in the 137th Special Operations Civil Engineering Squadron at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base, Oklahoma City.



This photograph features an alternate cover for the Air Observer journal featuring Citizen Airman from Will Rogers Air National Guard Base, May 20, 2018. The Airmen posed in attire that represents the hobby or profession they do when they are not wearing the uniform. From left to right: Tech. Sgt. Amanda Stanley, Senior Airman Lily Wheeland, Tech. Sgt. Shane Sellers, Tech. Sgt. Arelia Rocker, Col. Keith Reed and Airman 1st Class Logan Christensen.



Amanda Stanley, an assistant track coach for discus, shotput and pole vault at Southmoore High School in Moore, Oklahoma, writes an event assignment number on a track and field student's hand before the start of a track meet at Moore High School in Moore, Oklahoma, April 27, 2018. Stanley is also a technical sergeant and an aerospace medical technician with the 137th Special Operations Medical Group at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base in Oklahoma City.



This is a painting of an African American woman created by Arelia Rocker, an artist and member of the Mid Del Art guild, with melted crayons in warm colors, like red, orange and yellow. Rocker is also a technical sergeant and security administrator at the 137th Special Operations Security Forces Squadron at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base in Oklahoma City.



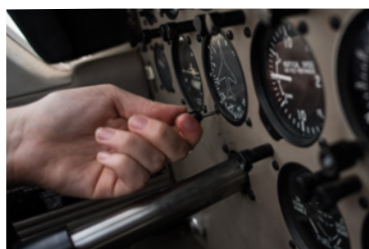
Sellers studies the track during an earlier sprint car race from atop a concrete pylon at the Red Dirt Speedway in Meeker, Oklahoma, April 27, 2018. Throughout the night, Sellers found the best vantage points to get a glimpse of the ever changing track conditions and so he could make optimum performance-based adjustments to his sprint car.



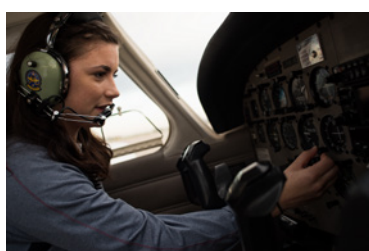
Christensen walks the shoreline as cadets from the Edmond Fire Department Training Academy practice a shallow water search-and-rescue at Lake Arcadia as part of the water rescue portion of the course in Edmond, Okla., May 18, 2018.



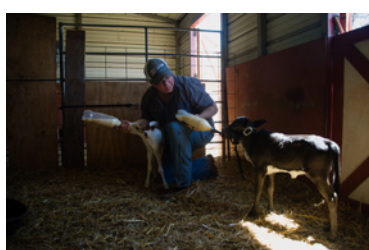
Wheeland poses for a photo in front of the Warrior II on the flight line at the University of Oklahoma's Max Westheimer Airport, May 18, 2018. Every morning before classes start, staff members from the University of Oklahoma tow the several Warrior II aircraft out of their storage hangar and into their parking spots for the incoming students.



Before flying, Wheeland first attended ground school, which she said was more than enough to convince her to switch her major from advertising with an aviation minor to going all in with a major in aviation management. Here, she manually adjusts the gauges of a Warrior II aircraft while still on the ground at Max Westheimer Airport, May 18, 2018.



Wheeland tests the displays and equipment of the Warrior II with ease at the Max Westheimer Airport, May 18, 2018. Wheeland admitted that she was afraid of flying when she first got to the flying portion of her classes – so much so that she would begin shaking before take off.



Reed is backed into a corner by two hungry calves during feeding time on his ranch. He has been raising a herd of miniature zebu cattle with his wife over the past eight years.



A mother miniature zebu cow relaxes with her calf in the shade of Reed's ranch, May 23, 2018. Zebu's originated in India and can be traced back more than 3,000 years.



Reed meets with employees, who he fought to retain amidst budget cuts last year, at Cleveland County Health Department in Norman, Oklahoma, May 8, 2018. Reed is the regional director for five county health departments in Oklahoma.



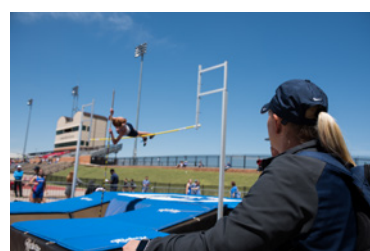
Sellers talks with his father after a sprint car race at the Red Dirt Speedway in Meeker, Oklahoma, April 27, 2018. Sellers drew an unfavorable starting position at the beginning of the night and was unable to come away with a win. However, he passed more cars than any other driver during the race and locked down a fourth place finish.



Sellers slides into a turn traveling roughly 80 mph during a sprint car race at the Red Dirt Speedway in Meeker, Oklahoma, April 27, 2018. Nearby in the race pit, Sellers' family and team watched as he meticulously worked his way through the other cars and jockeyed for his preferred line.



Sellers secures his helmet before a sprint car race at the Southern Oklahoma Speedway in Ardmore, Oklahoma, May 18, 2018. Before each race, his team pushes his sprint car to the track with an all-terrain vehicle.



Stanley observes one of her high school athletes during their vault at a track meet at Moore High School in Moore, Oklahoma, April 27, 2018. Stanley vaulted alongside the athlete for a short time while she was developing her coaching technique.



Stanley coaches one of her Southmoore High School discus athletes before they throw during a track meet at Moore High School in Moore, Oklahoma, April 27, 2018. During practice, Stanley would help athletes gauge distances and learn the requirements for their class standing.



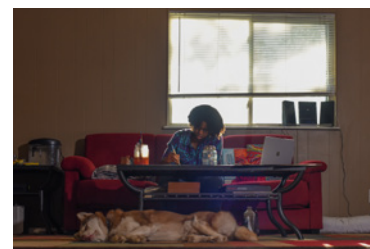
Stanley smiles at her world history class during a section review the day before a test at Southmoore High School in Moore, Oklahoma, April 26, 2018. She used an interactive quiz program that allowed her to project questions relevant to the subject onto a screen while students tried to select the correct answer faster than their fellow students to get more points.



Rocker prepares her brush as she paints on the coffee table in her living room, May 11, 2018. The painting, which was created using acrylic paints and caulking, was inspired by the posing of a well-known African American ballerina and merged Rocker's love for trees with themes of strength in African American women.



Sun pours through a window to highlight the hand of Rocker as she roughly outlines the shape of a woman while painting in her home, May 15, 2018. Rocker not only paints using a variety of media, but she also assembles her canvases by hand.



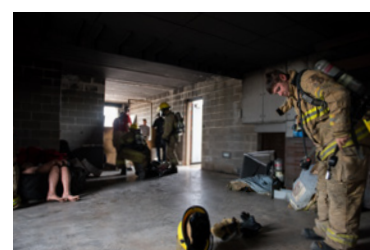
Rocker sits painting in her living room while her dog, Kato, lounges in front of the coffee table, May 15, 2018. Rocker often creates a relaxing atmosphere while she paints, complete with candles, incense and her pets.



Christensen sprints back to his team as part of a team vehicle extrication exercise at the Edmond Fire Department Training Academy, Edmond, Oklahoma, May 2, 2018. The cadets used the "Jaws of Life" rescue tool to dismantle an automobile.



Christensen fights to stay afloat during swiftwater rescue training scenario at Riversport OKC in Oklahoma City, May 18, 2018. The cadets learned survival techniques for real-world rough water rescues.



Christensen gears up for a rapid intervention team scenario during the Edmond Fire Department Training Academy in Edmond, Oklahoma, May 15, 2018. The cadets learned techniques to rescue fellow firefighters in a visually impaired environment.





**IT'S A STATE AFFAIR** | Staff Sgt. Tyler K. Woodward

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin poses for a group photo after receiving the Thunderbird Medal from Maj. Gen. Michael Thompson, Adjutant General for the Oklahoma National Guard, at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base in Oklahoma City, May 16, 2018. Governor Fallin held a state cabinet meeting in the newly renovated Professional Development Center before visiting with 137th SOW Air Commandos and learning about the unique capabilities they bring to combatant commanders serving abroad.

# CIVIL AIR PATROL

Oklahoma City Composite Squadron (SWR-OK-113)

Total Force Partners, U.S. Air Force Auxiliary and Air Commando Teammates Always Ready

**"I PLEDGE THAT I WILL SERVE FAITHFULLY IN THE CIVIL AIR PATROL CADET PROGRAM, AND THAT I WILL ATTEND MEETINGS REGULARLY, PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN UNIT ACTIVITIES, OBEY MY OFFICERS, WEAR MY UNIFORM PROPERLY, AND ADVANCE MY EDUCATION AND TRAINING RAPIDLY TO PREPARE MYSELF TO BE OF SERVICE TO MY COMMUNITY, STATE, AND NATION."**

In August of 2015, the U.S. Air Force expanded its definition of total force to not only include active duty, guard and reserve Airmen, but also civilians and auxiliary members.

More than 100 of those auxiliary members in the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) hold a weekly meeting at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base (WRANGB) in Oklahoma City — a meeting that has happened there for more than 10 years.

"It's amazing how few people know about it, but it's really an interesting organization," said Capt. Rob Allen, former commander of the Oklahoma City Composite Squadron. "It provides a lot for youth. It parallels with the Junior Reserve Officers' Corps, but we have the availability to teach students to fly."

CAP is a federally supported, non-profit organization that serves as the official civilian auxiliary of the Air Force. The organization was congressionally chartered in 1941 with three primary missions: cadet programs, aerospace education and emergency services.

"CAP is really life-changing," Allen said. "I've spent hours and hours and hours engaged with it and watched youth develop, grow and move into positions of control, both in CAP and in the military. They're always ready and typically ahead."

Cadets range in age from 12 to 21, and senior members can start at 18 years old. Every member is a volunteer, but the organization and structure of CAP mimics that of the regular Air Force.

"The CAP is organized precisely as the Air Force is," continued Allen. "We're an auxiliary of the Air Force, so the Air Force is our mother organization. We emulate, the best we can, the makeup and organization of a squadron."

The Oklahoma Wing has about nine Cessna 182s and 172s for the squadrons in the wing, of which the Oklahoma City squadron has access to two or three at a time. They are based primarily out of Sundance Airport in Oklahoma City but also the Max Westheimer Airport in Norman, Oklahoma.

These aircraft allow the CAP to aid emergency services and agencies in several different ways.

"Our primary mission, outside of aerospace education and cadet service, has really been airborne photography," said Allen. "We'll take photographs following a disaster, like hurricanes, tornados, floods and fires."

Most recently, the Oklahoma CAP served during Hurricane Harvey in Texas, capturing thousands of images for FEMA, who used them to assess damage, analyze traffic and document stranded citizens in need of assistance.

CAP also conducts search and rescue for downed Air Force aircraft, escorts for drones through heavily populated areas and training for Air Force pilots.

"CAP makes a three-pronged impact, and those three prongs are the three stated missions," said Allen. "One is emergency services. We respond more affordably to a search and rescue or downed aircraft than the Air Force could. The youth cadet program impacts the community because of the emphasis on character, leadership and just that military structure, and the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) focus for youth is a great resource for teaching youth about aerospace topics and helping them get comfortable."

One former Oklahoma City cadet, now senior member, Senior Airman Valeria Powell, is an aviation resource management specialist with the 137th Special Operations Support Squadron and has served at WRANGB since November of 2015. She's been in CAP for 9 1/2 years and is now the deputy commander of cadets for the Oklahoma City Squadron.

"When I was in the fifth grade, I'd get counted absent in class, even when I was present," said Powell. "I was just so quiet. In CAP, I was still quiet, but excellence became very important to me. I love learning about leadership and found my command voice and confidence, while still keeping the positive traits, like listening, from being quiet."

Many cadets, like Powell, learned to pilot a plane before they could legally drive a car alone.

"It's a great organization, and I could preach about it forever," said Allen. "Just what it allows its youth to do is amazing in and of itself. It's such a broad and intense program with a cadet-led leadership corps."

For the squadron, the support of WRANGB has helped to keep the organization going; but, for WRANGB, the presence of CAP is a reminder that we're all part of the total force.

"We've been grateful to have the space, but it's really been a wonderful working relationship," finished Allen. **AO**

story STAFF SGT. KASEY M. PHIPPS



photography STAFF SGT. TYLER K. WOODWARD

## HURRICANE HARVEY | Courtesy of Louisiana Civil Air Patrol

Heavy flooding threatens residences just north of Lake Charles on the Cacasieu River in southwest Louisiana after Hurricane Harvey made its second landfall in the state, Aug. 30, 2017. This photo is one of the 498,397 images taken by CAP members, including those from the Oklahoma Wing, for FEMA and other emergency response agencies during last year's hurricane season as part of their emergency response mission.



# DEBRIS CLEARANCE PACKAGE

137TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS CIVIL ENGINEERING SQUADRON ALWAYS READY TO CLEAR A PATH FOR EMERGENCY DOMESTIC RELIEF AND SEARCH-AND-RESCUE OPERATIONS

Oklahoma is not shocked by natural disasters. Whether it's a tornado barreling through neighborhoods or an ice storm crippling power lines, nothing stops Oklahomans from breaking through the rubble and persevering in the face of extreme circumstance.

With the help of the Debris Clearance Package, a comprehensive debris removal unit, members of the 137th Special Operations Civil Engineering Squadron at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base in Oklahoma City provide rapid emergency disaster response capability to the state of Oklahoma.

In the hours following a disaster, debris clearance is one of the most timely and complicated activities in post-disaster operations.

The Debris Clearance Package allows service members to clear away brush, debris and fallen power lines to establish command posts and paths in and out of disaster ridden areas.

"The Debris Clearance Package is extremely valuable to local authorities," said Master Sgt. Daniel Norton, Debris Clearance Package noncommissioned officer-in-charge. "Fire trucks can't get into a storm ravished area if there are trees laying across the street. If a tornado or heavy winds come through, we can clear a route."

The Debris Clearance Package consists of two primary parts—personnel and equipment. The 137th SOCES sends an initial seven person response team with specialties ranging from electricians and carpenters to plumbers and heavy equipment operators. When the call comes in, they can be out of the gate in two to three hours and are sustainable in the field for up to 36 hours. They are followed by 14 more technicians to relieve and continue the work for as long as needed.

"We are completely self-sufficient. We bring tents, bottles of water, and fuel cans," said Norton. "So really the only thing we have

to get is a set of orders, a few boxes of MREs and we're out the door."

The members of the 137th SOCES are trained and ready for whatever disaster might strike Oklahoma and its residents.

The Debris Clearance Package has an arsenal of specialized equipment that include a concrete saw, axes, shovels and chainsaws. The package also comes with two tracked loaders that can pick up and move a fallen tree from a roadway like a dog with a bone. This allows local authorities to quickly establish mobile command posts.

They also come equipped with six high-powered lights and generators, which enables them to provide around-the-clock assistance. Their equipment is routinely maintained, inspected and ready to use in a real world situation.

"We are constantly training," said Norton. "We're ready to roll out at a moment's notice."

Oklahoma residents and guardsmen alike look back on past events like the 2013 tornado that tore through Moore, Oklahoma, recognize that living in Oklahoma is not "if" but "when" the next natural disaster will happen.

"We are Citizen Airmen," said Norton. "In an emergency environment, we are able to take care of our families and neighbors by getting them back to normalcy as soon as possible. We're here to lead the way." AO



story SENIOR AIRMAN JORDAN E. MARTIN

photography STAFF SGT. TYLER K. WOODWARD



CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

**AIR|OBSERVER**  
the biannual journal of the 137th special operations wing

NEXT ISSUE DECEMBER 2018