

AIRLIFTER

SOONER

October 2012



Photo courtesy of Air Force

Left to right, Capt. Michael Thomson, Maj. Jody Griffin, Lt. Col. Aaron Wardlaw, Senior Master Sgt. Keith Werner and Airman 1st Class Frank Pappalardo stand in front of a KC-135 Stratotanker at the transit center at Manas, Kyrgyzstan, Aug. 31.

Deployed 137 ARW crew assist jet pilot

**By Capt. Martha L. Petersante,
376th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs**

TRANSIT CENTER AT MANAS, KYRGYZSTAN — In August, when this crew from the 137th Air Refueling Wing stepped into their KC-135R “Stratotanker” and departed the transit center at Manas, Kyrgyzstan, they believed they had

begun another “normal” day over Afghanistan.

This day, however, proved to be anything but normal as the crew found themselves in a unique situation acting as a literal wingman to a much smaller fighter jet in trouble.

Capt. Michael Thomson, a pilot who was acting as an observer during this mission, said the day was

“standard operations” in their assigned area. As they prepared to support their last scheduled fighter aircraft of the day, they received a radio transmission from the lead aircraft.

“The lead pilot explained they were engaged in a troops-in-contact scenario and my wingman will be

see CREW page 3,

Set yourself up now for future success



**By Col. Jon Scott,
137th Operations
Group Commander**

It is now time to reflect on our wing’s great success on the ORI and NORI. Receiving an excellent rating on both was a large undertaking, and you all deserve to pat yourself on the back for a job well done.

As we reflect, I hope you remember that those scores didn’t come about by knowledge of the game, but by preparation.

The Wing postured itself for success by preparing through multiple OREs and Self Generations Exercises. Our next major inspection is approximately two

years away giving you some time to “Posture Yourself for Success.”

With some self reflection, ask yourself if you have done all you can to complete and learn from your Professional Military Studies. The time is now to lean forward and complete those PME courses available to you.

Being content, or unprepared for that next level of advancement is NOT posturing yourself for success.

The mindset of those future promotions being way down the road or unavailable should not discourage you from completing PME. Changes of both ranks and manning documents in the Air National Guard and the Wing have been fast and furious at times and you want to be ready for the next great opportunity.

A great quote to remember is “Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.” The Wing exercised time and time again to “Posture themselves for Success.”

This would be a great time to take care of your own well-being and “Posture Yourself for Success.”

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**TRICARE Reserve Select
monthly premium payment notice:**

Monthly premium payments must be made by either recurring Electronic Funds Transfer or recurring Debit/Credit Card (Visa/MasterCard only) beginning no later than January 1, 2013. Contact your TRICARE regional contractor immediately to set up your automatic monthly premium payments, if you have not done so already.

If you do not establish one of these automated payment methods,

you and/or your family’s coverage will be terminated. Contact information for your TRICARE regional contractor can be found at www.tricare.mil/contacts.

Airmen urged to reenlist, extend current enlistments before MilPDS upgrade:

Air Force officials are urging Regular Air Force Airmen who are eligible to reenlist or extend their current enlistment in December and early Jan. 2013 to complete these personnel actions through the myPers website, <https://mypers.af.mil>, and their base military personnel sections or force support squadrons by Nov. 15 to avoid processing delays and military pay issues.

af.mil, and their base military personnel sections or force support squadrons by Nov. 15 to avoid processing delays and military pay issues.

MilPDS is the primary records database for personnel data and actions that occur throughout every Airman’s career. MilPDS is also used to initiate Airman pay actions, maintain Air Force accountability and strength data and support a host of interactions with other Air Force processes and systems that rely on personnel data.

137th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs Staff

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For consideration, all submissions must be provided to the PA Office, at 137ARW.PA@ang.af.mil or in Bldg. 1046, 686-5227, no later than 10 a.m. Saturday of drill weekend. The PA Office distributes the Airlifter ten months each year according to training needs.

PA Officer: 2nd Lt. Jennifer Lavin; NCOIC: Senior Master Sgt. Kevin Tucker; public affairs specialists: Senior Airman Patricia Baker, Airman 1st Class Kasey Phipps; photographers: Tech. Sgt. Roberta Thompson; videographer: Master Sgt. Jun Kim, Airman Dustin Wheeler.

CREW from page 1,

up for gas shortly,” Thomson said.

“The lead moved into position, received the needed fuel, and returned to the battle space. Then we waited for the other jet.”

As the Stratotanker’s refueling crew awaited the second jet, concern began to build. The second jet had not shown up as planned, and time was slowly passing.

Lt. Col. Aaron Wardlaw, an aircraft commander for the 137 ARW, made several attempts to contact the second jet.

Right after his communication attempts, he saw the jet aircraft move around his 9-o’clock position and maneuver to the refueling position behind the tanker.

The crew heard something barely audible and crackling over the tanker’s radio. Knowing something wasn’t right, Senior Master Sgt. Keith Werner, a boom operator for the 137 ARW, isolated radio contact with the fighter jet’s pilot.

This helped establish clearer communications.

“How are things going?” Werner said.

“The only thing working on this jet is my engine,” said the fighter pilot.

“Not the reply you want to hear at altitude over hostile territory,” said Airman 1st Class Frank Pappalardo, another boom operator who was assigned to observe the flight.

After the words echoed through the KC-135, the crew immediately began a closely coordinated multitasking dance to gear up for potential emergency procedures.

“By asking ourselves, what can we do and how can we support — we prepared for any scenario and ensured we were able to provide immediate support,” Wardlaw said.

While taking on the initial fuel load, the stricken pilot told the crew he had engaged with troops on the ground and requested the boom operators look his jet over for any possible battle damage.

The two boom operators checked the fighter for damages, as the tanker pilot, Wardlaw, and the co-pilot, Maj. Jody Griffin, also a member of the 137th ARW, maintained safety and flying operations.

Wardlaw and Griffin ensured that the aircraft did not enter any airspace in bordering countries while main-

taining fuel transfer to the fighter aircraft at the same time.

The team worked to provide a stable platform to support the fighter off their wingtip within the assigned airspace at a constant speed and altitude.

As the team worked in-flight emergency scenarios, the common theme remained, “He needs help—we’re all he’s got right now. We have to deliver,” Wardlaw said.

The Stratotanker’s crew delivered during crunch time, guiding the aircraft through a series of specific maneuvers to reset the on-board flight computers and allowing the pilot to regain functional use of communications and navigational instruments.

“It’s all about taking care of your own,” Wardlaw said. “While we may operate different platforms, ultimately he’s a fellow Airman who needed our help on a bad day.”

Thomson said the tanker crew didn’t do anything special that day. They just provided a little extra support and fuel while coordinating command and control information.

“It’s our ability to provide air refueling that ensures a continued, minimal response time for direct support of coalition service members on the ground,” Thomson said. “That makes us all one team.”

Maj. Gen. Myles Deering, the adjutant general for Oklahoma, said, “This is yet another example of the high level of professionalism among members of the Oklahoma National Guard. Every member of this crew should be commended for their bravery and quick action which likely saved the life of a fellow American.”



Photo courtesy of Air Force

Lt. Col. Aaron Wardlaw and Maj. Jody Griffin, 137th Operations Group



Photo by Senior Airman Patricia Baker

Staff Sgt. Matt Dodge, a firefighter for the 137th Civil Engineering Squadron, helps his wife Iris don firefighter protective gear while at the base Family Day Sept. 15.



Photo by Airman 1st Class Kasey Phipps

Justin and Tyler Vakulick, sons of Master Sgt. Wade Vakulick, a heavy equipment operator for the 137th Civil Engineering Squadron, climb in and out of a fire truck displayed on base during family day Sept. 15 held the base nose-dock and surrounding areas. Not only was there a fire truck on display, but there were also static displays of various aircraft including the C-130 "Hercules" and a KC-135R "Stratotanker" for families to climb in and explore.



Members of Will Rogers Air National Guard Family Day Sept. 15. This event is slated to happen every year with the base Olympics planned to happen in 2013. Airmen to share a little of what they do and their families. Airmen, family and friends enjoyed airplane rides, snow cones, face painting, craft making, a car show, guitar hero, a spouse

Family day 2012



Photo by Senior Airman Patricia Baker



ard Base enjoy Family Day held on base every two years at WRANGB alternating every two years as well. The event allows and where they work with their families. The static displays, free food, cotton candy, a live DJ, four different types of moon e's flight and more during Family Day.

2012 snapshots



Photo by Senior Airman Patricia Baker

Col. Glen Baker, commander for the 137th Air Refueling Wing, experiences a strategic dunking at the base Family Day held during September drill. Money raised at the dunk tank went to the base's Operation Holiday Spirit, which raises and gives money to Airmen in need during the holiday season. Throughout the day the dunk tank contained commanders and first sergeants from across base who agreed to get soaked for the sake of fun and family.



Photo by Senior Airman Patricia Baker

Facebook weekly photo caption winner

The Chief's Council at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base chose this month's winner for the base's Facebook photo caption contest.

The winner for the most creative caption is Bryan Utterbank with the caption, "Do I hear

\$5?"

A close second was Adam Cearnal with his submission to a training photo on Facebook.

There were many creative and clever runner-ups in the photo caption contest this month.

Airmen, friends and family are en-

couraged to check-out the 137th Air Refueling Wing on Facebook.

Keep entering your captions, and see if you can win it next month and have your entry printed in the Airlifter.

Visit the page and get base up-

dates, look at videos and photos of base events, read stories of troops on base, and keep in touch with your fellow wingmen during the month if you're a traditional Guardsman.

This month be looking for more photos of the

WRANGB family day, 146th Air Support Operations Squadron welcome home and ribbon-cutting ceremony, Airman spotlights, and, of course, more entertaining photo caption contest entries.

Airman hit the mark in Arkansas

By Tech. Sgt. Troy Chaddon, 137th Maintenance Squadron

The 137th Air Refueling Wing marksmanship team combined with the 138th Fighter Wing and two members of the Army Guard to represent the Oklahoma National Guard at the Marksmanship Advisory Council Region 5 Match held at Camp Robinson, Ark., in May.

Eight states in the region sent their best marksmen to compete and train. This year the weather made the range very challenging, but training and conditioning made the difference that allowed the two Oklahoma teams to perform well.

At a regional, or national-level match like this one, the Army Guard side of the house normally makes up about 50% of our teams from Oklahoma.

This year, however, the Army Guard did not have as many shooters available due to deployments.

Fortunately, The Air Guard has a lot of talent in marksmanship due

to both wings having good programs.

This year's match involved five individual and three team matches shot over three days. Competitors shot M-9 pistols at 15 to 35 yards and M-16 rifles at distances ranging from 25 to 500 yards. Temperatures reaching 100 degrees and afternoon winds made the 500-yard shots very challenging.

The Oklahoma teams being familiar with those conditions had less trouble keeping their shots on target.

The most demanding match for most of the teams was the 3-Gun Match. This match required teams to advance 150 yards to their first shooting position. At this position the teams used M-16 rifles to engage clay birds at 25 yards from a standing position.

Then they moved to the next position to engage steel targets at unknown distances ranging from 250 to 500 yards. After that, teams used

their M-9 pistols to shoot a plate rack at 25 yards. The last position required the teams to use pump-shot guns to engage knockdown targets. The final challenge was to move to the finish line, which was a helicopter 100 yards away uphill all the way. All of that had to be completed in five minutes, or the score was a zero.

The Oklahoma Guard shooters placed well both individually and as a team.

Senior Airman Chris Coats of the 137th Maintenance Squadron won top junior enlisted shooter and other members of the team earned points towards their distinguished marksman badges.

This type of training conducted in a competitive environment really pushes people to perform individually, and as a team.

Also, the requirement to bring new shooters to these events continues advancing the training of more soldiers and airman.

Oklahoma VA Medical Centers available



By First Sgt. Waco Blakely,
205th EIS

How would you like free healthcare? Have you ever taken the time to sit down and count every dollar that you have spent over the past 12 months for doctor appointments, medications, hospitalization, emergency room visits, surgeries, or physical therapy? How about over the past 24 months? Past five years?

Veterans who served in a theater of combat operations, or in support of OEF/OIF/OND have no co-payment during the five-year period after separating from active duty orders for hospital care, medical services (to include medications) and nursing home care for any illness that cannot be clinically ruled out as being related to your combat service.

The five-year date extends from your most recent date of discharge. Each time you deploy and have re-

ceived a new DD-214, your eligibility date resets itself for another five years. Additionally, you have 180 days from the date of discharge to register for free dental service at the VA medical center.

In the spring of 2007 the OEF/OIF/OND Program Office was created nationwide to ensure that each and every Post 9/11 Veteran had one central point in the VA Medical Centers to discuss any questions, concerns, or issues that you may have.

Helping you become proactive in your own physical and mental health care is the priority.

In Oklahoma there are VA Medical Centers located in Oklahoma City & Muskogee.

To provide primary care coverage in rural areas there are community based outpatient clinics located in Ada, Altus, Ardmore, Blackwell, Enid, Ft.Sill, Hartshorne, Jay, Stillwater, Tulsa and Vinita.

The OEF/OIF/OND Program Office at the Oklahoma City VA Medical Center is currently located at 921 NE 13th Street, Oklahoma City, Okla., 73104 on the 3rd Floor, office #3A-154. You can visit www.oefoif.va.gov to start your enrollment, or simply call them at 405-456-3214.

You have served your country proudly; now let the VA proudly serve you.

Reminder, required items needed for IDs

To obtain an ID call 405-686-5212 to set up the appointment. The available times are Tuesdays and Thursdays 8-10:30 a.m. and noon-1 p.m.

Military members must bring two forms of identification (unexpired photo IDs, social security card, student ID, employer ID, birth certificate).

Dependents must bring two forms of identification (unexpired photo IDs, social security card,

student ID, employer ID, birth certificate). The military member must be present with military ID, or pre-sign the DD form 1172.

New dependents must bring a marriage license, birth certificate or adoption paperwork.

Retirees must bring two forms of identification (unexpired photo IDs, social security card, student ID, employer ID, birth certificate).

New retirees should bring their retirement order.

ID office
is located in
Bldg. 1009
Room 161



Photo by Senior Airman Patricia Baker

Several guest speakers deliver their praises and words of encouragement to the Airmen of the 146th Air Support Operations Squadron during an official welcome home and ribbon cutting ceremony held at the new ASOS training facility held on base Sept. 15. The squadron was deployed to Afghanistan from July 2011 to April 2012 in support of Army and Air Force operations overseas.

Air Force Core Values

Integrity First
 Service Before Self
 Excellence In All We Do

WILL ROGERS MISSION STATEMENT

“To enhance global reach by serving our nation, state and community through the unique capabilities of the 137th Air Refueling Wing, the 205th Engineering Installation Squadron, and the 146th Air Support Operations Squadron.”

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To the family of: