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MAGAZINE OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

# Airman

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SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2011



## AIRMEN AT WAR

A LOOK AT THE AIR FORCE SINCE 9/11

# Airman



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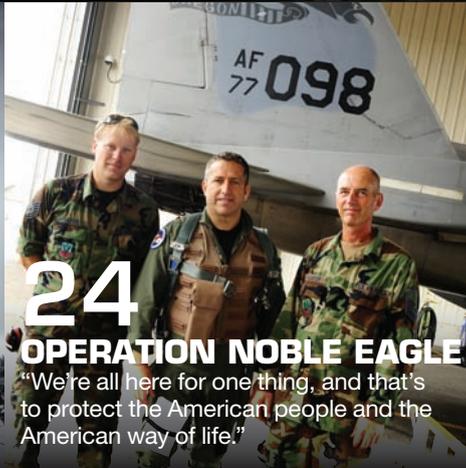
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Tech. Sgt. Rudy Skultety is a fuels specialist at Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho. Skultety deployed to Afghanistan in support of Provincial Reconstruction Team Zabul.

photo support by Staff Sgt. Brian Ferguson  
photo illustration by Patrick Harris

# COMMENTS

Got something to say about Airman? Write us at [airman@dma.mil](mailto:airman@dma.mil) or visit [www.AIRMANonline.af.mil](http://www.AIRMANonline.af.mil), to share views with fellow readers.



THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE  
CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON DC



September 1, 2011

To the Airmen of the United States Air Force:

September 11, 2011, marks the tenth anniversary of the terrorist attacks that claimed the lives of nearly 3,000 innocent people—at the World Trade Center; at Shanksville, Pennsylvania; and at the Pentagon—and affected the lives of countless others across our great country, and beyond. In all, ninety countries lost citizens, and people the world over would condemn these acts of terrorism.

This tragic event altered our view of the world and sparked a global effort to combat terrorism and the conditions that give rise to extremism. We are proud of the international efforts that have led to the capture or killing of many of the terrorist leaders, but our success has not come without significant cost. As we reflect on the horrific day that marked the beginning of our struggle to better secure the world from these threats, we honor the tremendous selfless service that today still distinguishes American Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen, comprising the most dedicated, professional, and powerful military force in the world. We also recognize that the need for sacrifice is not over.

We sincerely thank you and your families for what you have done for your country to date, and thank you in advance for bravely facing our future challenges. Please take a moment this day, to reflect on the tragic losses of September 11, 2001, as well as the losses and wounds that we have suffered in our campaign to maintain security for our Nation since that fateful day. Today we also remember the families and friends of the lost and wounded, who bear the heaviest burden, whose loneliness we seek to ease, and whose sacrifice we hold in the highest regard.

*Michael B. Donley*  
Michael B. Donley  
Secretary of the Air Force

*N. Schwartz*  
Norton A. Schwartz  
General, USAF  
Chief of Staff

*James A. Roy*  
James A. Roy  
Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force

## THUNDERBIRDS REPRESENT



Thanks so much for your outstanding story on the USAF Air Demonstration Squadron Thunderbirds by Staff Sgt. Chris Powell ["Bringing the Thunder," May-June 2011]. Sergeant Powell's story brought a huge smile to my face as I fondly remember my time on the team in the mid 1980s. I had seen many forms of teamwork in my U.S. Air Force career by then, but never to the degree that the officer and enlisted corps provided as wearers of the distinctive Thunderbird patch.

Whether it was "ragging the jets" so that you could see your mirrored reflection on them, or assisting a "Make A Wish" youngster have his or her dream come true, the team that is the "Ambassadors in Blue" came through each and every time to represent the best that the Air Force and this country has to offer.

Many times I've been asked how it was to be part of such a special organization and my response is always the same: We represent all members of the U.S. Air Force and all those who defend the freedom that we blessedly enjoy. I was very proud to have been a part of it, and have very fond memories.

Kudos to Sergeant Powell and his dynamic description of the team, who continue the unbroken tradition of never canceling a demonstration due to maintenance or other difficulties and embody the words "Once a Thunderbird, always a Thunderbird!"

**Maj. Ron Lovas**  
USAF Retired



# Airman

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## ABOUT AIRMAN

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## LOOK US UP

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## THANK YOU

I was in the Air Force quite a while ago, and just wanted to say thank you all for your service to this great country of ours. Independence Day seemed like a good day to say it. Be Safe.

**Steve Harris**

## RSS REQUEST

I have a suggestion. You have a couple of RSS feeds. I would love it if you would make the actual magazine an RSS feed, with each article being an RSS article. If one could use [RSS programs] on a tablet or smart phone, it would be wonderful.

It is what our young Airmen use, and some of the older retired Airmen like me.

P.S. I'm an active photographer since the early 1980s and currently teach photography at night school. I'm a big fan of David Hobby and Joe McNally. Using the strobist mentality has created a bunch of great photographers, but none better than the photographers of *Airman Magazine*. Each month I am just amazed at the photographic knowledge that these folks possess, from small light strategies, to using wide angle lenses in unique situations.

**James "Jim" B.A. Taylor**  
*Air National Guard Retired*

**Editor's note:** In September, *Airman* magazine will launch a new website, [www.airmanonline.af.mil](http://www.airmanonline.af.mil). Plans for the new site include expanded coverage from the field, more photography and new ways to interact and give feedback on stories that affect Airmen. RSS feeds are planned as a part of the new delivery strategy.

## SAFETY FIRST

In reference to the article "Shooting Star" in the May-June magazine, top notch article! Never have I read such a superbly written article about the shooting sports and those who have dedicated themselves to the perfection of their art. It was extremely informative and educational. I had no idea the Air Force had a facility to build their own competition handguns at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. I tip my hat to Mr. Roughton for his efforts.

Unfortunately, I have only one concern, and it deals with the lead picture on page 34. While I have no doubts that the photographer (Tech. Sgt. Davis) and the model (Tech. Sgt. McGloin) ensured the firearm used was unloaded and in a "safe" configuration, I must object to the framing of the photo. As a former safety NCO and instructor, that picture violates two of the most important rules of firearm safety. Never point your weapon at anything you do not intend to damage or destroy and always keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to fire. I, personally, object to any photography in that style but I did not let it cloud my enjoyment of the article.

**Tech. Sgt. Joe Brandon**  
*USAF Retired*  
*Hill Air Force Base, Utah*

**Photographer's reply:** *Your assumptions are correct. Tech. Sgt. McGloin and I took every precaution in making sure that his firearm was unloaded and inoperable. The image was shot in the gunsmith work area and illustrates how McGloin would "sight" the weapon during competition. I understand your concerns for fundamentals of handling a firearm, but this was a controlled environment photo shoot and a pretty common perspective when photographing a competition sport shooter.*

**Tech. Sgt. Bennie J. Davis III**  
*Airman magazine photojournalist*



photo by Staff Sgt. Brian Ferguson





**Air Force Staff Sgt. Kevin Flenoury** walks through Khwazi village, Afghanistan. Members of Provincial Reconstruction Team Zabul visited the village to survey a site for a future well project. PRT Zabul is composed of U.S. Air Force and Army, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development and U.S. Department of Agriculture personnel who work with Afghanistan's government to improve governance, stability and development throughout the province.

**1. A KC-135 Stratotanker** from the Kansas Air National Guard's 190th Air Refueling Wing prepares to refuel Navy F/A-18 Hornets over Wake Island during an escort mission from Japan to the United States.

photo by Staff Sgt. Ben Fulton



**2. Master Sgt. Molly Quentin** and Capt. John-Michael Fowler care for a critically ill patient during a medical evacuation mission from American Samoa to Tripler Army Medical Center, Hawaii. Quentin is an aeromedical evacuation technician. Fowler is a critical care air transport nurse.

photo by Senior Airman Lauren Main



**3. Staff Sgt. Jonathan Smith** gets a mouthful of dirt while crawling during a training exercise at Camp Blanding, Fla. Smith is the NCO in charge of training for the 820th Combat Operations Squadron at Moody Air Force Base, Ga.

photo by Airman 1st Class Joshua Green



photo by Samuel King Jr.





photo by Senior Master Sgt. David H. Hipp

**Master Sgt. Eric Johnson** (middle) hands sandbags to Tech. Sgt. Tracy Winterquist as they help create a flood levee barrier around a farm house in Cass County, N.D. The Airmen are members of the North Dakota Air National Guard's 119th Wing.



photo by Staff Sgt. Michael B. Keller





**A U.S. Air Force F-15E**

Strike Eagle aircraft from the 335th Fighter Squadron releases flares during a local training mission over North Carolina.



**1. A C-130 Hercules from the New York Air National Guard flies over Afghanistan to deliver supplies to a forward operating base in Oruzgan Province.**

**2. Staff Sgt. Geovani Pacheco leads his team out of a building during an assault demonstration by Airmen with the 96th Ground Combat Training Squadron at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.**

**3. A group of U.S. Air Force pararescuemen, U.S. Army site security team members and victims of a simulated aircraft crash wait for a U.S. Marine Corps MH-53 helicopter in the Grand Bara Desert, Djibouti. The scenario was part of a joint training exercise involving all branches of the U.S. military stationed at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti.**

photo by Senior Airman Krista Rose



photo by Samuel King Jr.

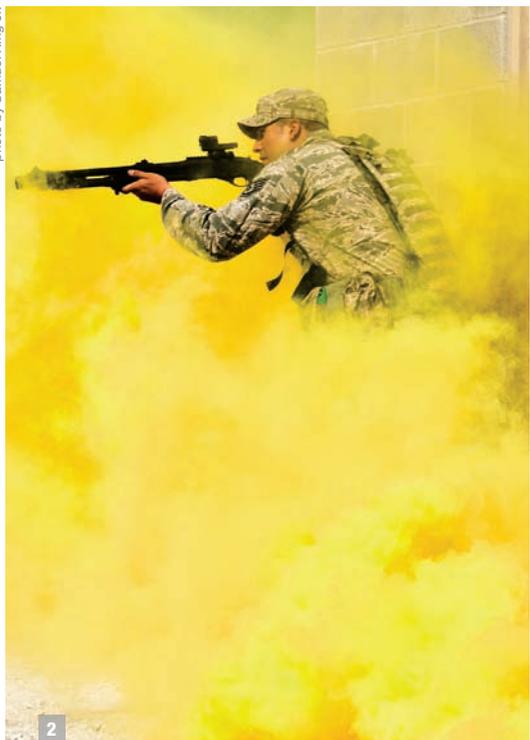


photo by Staff Sgt. Austin M. May





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**4. Staff Sgt. Billy Atherton** carries an Afghan child to a field hospital at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. Atherton is assigned to the 455th Expeditionary Medical Operations Squadron.

**5. An F-35A Lightning II** flies above the compass rose of Rogers Dry Lakebed at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif.



5

Senior Airman Amanda Stinson patrols the MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., shoreline. The 6th Security Forces Squadron boat patrol has been protecting the base's waters since 2001.

# AIRMEN ON BOATS

## SECURITY FORCES AIRMEN PROTECT THE MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE SHORELINE

STORY BY TECH. SGT. MATTHEW BATES ✪ PHOTOS BY TECH. SGT. BENNIE J. DAVIS III

**S**enior Airman Amanda Stinson's patrol vehicle doesn't have any tires.

In most other ways it's similar to the patrol cars on base. It has a powerful engine, flashing lights, a radio and even a steering wheel.

It just doesn't have those tires. Or any brakes.

Luckily, she doesn't need them.

Stinson's patrol vehicle is a boat and she spends her days patrolling the shoreline alongside MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., as part of the 6th Security Forces Squadron's Marine Patrol Flight.

"I never thought I'd be driving a boat as an Airman," she said. "But it's a great job and I love being out on the water."

Still, it's no joy ride. The job

was born of necessity and not as a leisure activity. In the aftermath of 9/11, the base conducted a threat assessment and identified the 7.2 miles of coastline as a vulnerability to terrorist attacks.

"We have a lot of coastline here," said Tech. Sgt. Christopher Velez, non-commissioned officer in charge of the boat section. "Base officials said, 'Hey, we've got to do something about this.'"



**Staff Sgt. Richard Orlandi and Stinson** are two of the 6th SFS's 15 members who serve on the boat patrols. Airmen apply for the marine patrol flight through the unit and qualify through performance reports, interviews and swimming tests.



At first, the Coast Guard assisted with patrols, but the manning and time needed to conduct the operation full time was too much for the local Coast Guard station to contribute long term. So, base officials asked the 6th SFS if it could take on the job.

"The squadron decided to step up and take on this mission," Velez said. "Of course, we had no idea what we were doing. I mean, Airmen on boats? There's no operations manual for that."

Base officials again turned to the Coast Guard for help.

"They're the pros, so we asked them if they could give us some training and point us in the right direction," Velez said. "Once they stopped laughing at the idea of the Air Force using boats, they were more than happy to help."

The services have built a strong rapport on the joint effort.

"Of all the services, I never expected to work with the Air Force," said Petty Officer 1st Class Brian Cross, with the Coast Guard 7th Division, District 7. "It's really turned out to be a great relationship and the Airmen are really eager to learn what we have to teach them."

Squadron leaders picked several Airmen to make up the new boat section and, after basic boating and water safety instruction from their Coast Guard counterparts, the Airmen headed out to sea.

They found out just how rough this new mission was going to be.

"Oh man, we were definitely wet behind the ears," joked Velez. "All we had was a glorified fishing boat with no cover, and the elements just beat us up. If it was hot, you were hot. If it was cold, you were freezing and if it was raining, you just got soaked."

However, the mission needed doing, and the new boat section was determined to get it done. The Airmen would note what things worked and what didn't, and what they needed and what they didn't.

"Obviously a better boat was up there on our list," Velez said. "But we also recommended other things, like equipment, how many people we'd need, things like that."

People listened. The boat patrol grew, seeing more and better equipment and its people better trained.

The squadron didn't just get one new boat, they got three.

"These new boats are amazing," Stinson said. "The cabins are closed off from the elements, they have state-of-the-art equipment and can really haul if you need them to."

Apart from having things like navigation systems, nighttime running lights and looking all shiny and new, these boats bring other intangibles to the section's mission. They look professional, they look serious and they look pretty darned intimidating.

Which, according to Velez, is exactly what they want.

"We are all about detection and deterrence," he said. "Our best tool is presence, making sure people know we're out there."

This means one of the boats is out on the water 24/7, responding to reports of boats and other watercraft entering the restricted zone near the base. Typically, these calls are lost boaters or fishermen trying to catch fish in the calmer, shallower water. However, the calls could be serious.

Someone has to drive the boat, meaning Airmen like Stinson are out on the water every day and every night. With more than seven miles of coastline, the Airmen can't see every square inch. Motion sensor cameras were installed around the base to act as extra sets of "eyes."

"The cameras are manned in the control center, so someone is monitoring them 24/7 as well," Stinson said. "If they see something, they radio us and we go check it out."

MacDill's boat patrol is the only one like it in the Air Force. A few other bases have boat patrols, but only MacDill's is manned 24/7.

The squadron doesn't let just anyone into these boats, either. Any Airmen sent to the boat patrol must first pass a screening process. This test uses the whole person concept to determine each Airman's eligibility.

"We look at their enlisted



**Senior Airman Patricia Zema** monitors the cameras and radars that track boats along MacDill's shoreline. The 6th SFS boat patrol enforces a ban on vessels entering the water within 1,000 meters of the base.

**Members of the 6th Security Forces** Marine Patrol Flight patrol the water's restricted zone 24/7.

performance reports, their duty history and do an interview," Velez said. "And, of course, we make sure they can swim."

Sitting in her patrol boat, Stinson has a lot of time to think. Usually, these thoughts are common. Things like "what's for lunch?" "Did I finish

my homework?" "What's up this weekend?"

Lately, though, she's been wondering if the Air Force should think about changing the lyrics to its song to include something about boats.

Because now, some Airmen won't be climbing high into the sun, but

across the glassy sea, toward the horizon.

The Air Force may be known as the world's finest air and space force, but thanks to a few Airmen at MacDill, it now has a pretty good navy, too.

No tires and all. 🦅



The boat patrol keeps watch over the MacDill coastline at night. MacDill is the only Air Force base with a full-time marine patrol.





**Lt. Col. Steve**  
Beauchamp prepares  
for a morning sortie.



# A NOBLE CAUSE

AIRMEN TAKE PART IN MISSION  
TO PROTECT THE NATION'S SKY

STORY BY TECH. SGT. MATTHEW BATES ✪ PHOTOS BY STAFF SGT. JOHN HUGHEL

**T**he radios were silent. This was one of the first things Lt. Col. Steve Beauchamp noticed as his F-15 Eagle lifted off the runway and started tearing through the sky. A pilot with the 142nd Fighter Wing, an Air National Guard unit based out of Portland, Ore., he'd flown in the area for quite some time. Normally, the colonel's headset would be filled with chatter from air traffic controllers and other aircraft in the local airspace.

This time, though, there was nothing. No chatter, no squawks, no beeps.

It wasn't just the silence that was

weird. It was also the feeling of isolation. Other than his wingman's F-15 flying next to the colonel, there wasn't a single other aircraft visible in the air — no commercial airliners, no police or traffic helicopters, no private prop jobs. Nothing.

"It was so surreal," Beauchamp said. "It's like we were the only people in the world up there."

Normally, this would be a fighter pilot's dream. He could go where he wanted, when he wanted. But this flight was no joy ride. This flight had a mission: find any unauthorized aircraft and shoot them down.

These words were still hanging over the colonel's head as he tried to make

sense of them. It had only been a few hours since he was staring at the television and watching the images of two of the World Trade Center towers burning. Words like "under attack," and "terrorism," kept being repeated and then he was in his flight suit, sitting in the cockpit and waiting for the word to go.

At first, the information trickling in was sketchy, but the known details were horrifying. Terrorists had taken over several planes and were using them as deadly, piloted missiles.

So, now, here he was, in the sky above Portland on a course to intercept a civilian airliner that was flying near Vancouver, Canada.



**(from left)**  
Operation Noble  
Eagle supporters  
Tech. Sgt. Andrew  
Shown, Beauchamp  
and Master Sgt.  
Mark Billmyer after a  
flight at the Portland  
Air National Guard  
Base, Portland, Ore.



**Beauchamp** prepares for a mission with a preflight inspection.

“When we were being briefed and getting ready for the mission, I kept talking to the other guys and the whole mood was pretty somber,” Beauchamp said. “It was like, ‘Man, we might have to shoot down an airplane full of innocent people.’”

This thought was now clinging to the colonel’s spine like an icicle as the airliner came into view on the horizon.

“Our orders were to get close and look for signs of duress among the passengers,” he said.

So, the two fighters came in on either side of the airliner and the pilots scanned the windows, trying to see inside the large plane.

Then, suddenly, bursts of bright light started coming from inside the airliner.

Laughing, the colonel radioed his wingman.

“It’s flashes!” he said into the radio. “They’re taking pictures.”

The plane, coming from Japan, was full of tourists headed to America and they were excited to take photos of the Air Force fighters.

Relieved and not seeing any other signs for alarm, the colonel and his wingman escorted the plane to the nearest runway.

The ordeal was over. But this mission’s ending was just the beginning of another.

**WE’RE ALL HERE FOR ONE THING, AND THAT’S TO PROTECT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE. WE’RE ALL COMMITTED TO THAT.**

— Lt. Col. Steve Beauchamp

Operation Noble Eagle was born.

Since that day 10 years ago, Air Force fighters have flown approximately 42,000 sorties as part of Operation Noble Eagle and have responded to more than 3,400 possible air threats. The operation uses

a wide range of Air Force assets, including the F-15 Eagle, the F-22 Raptor, the F-16 Fighting Falcon and support aircraft such as Airborne Warning and Control System and air-to-air refueling planes.

ONE is part of the overall plan to protect North America from airborne attack. Falling under the North American Aerospace Defense Command, the operation is directly controlled by 1st Air Force, headquartered at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla. The combined air operations center at Tyndall acts as a “brain” for the entire continental United States airspace and three subordinate air sectors handle various regions of the country. These are the Southeast Air Defense Sector at Tyndall, the Northeast Air Defense Sector at Rome, N.Y., and the Western Air Defense Sector at McChord AFB, Wash.

All of these sectors are responsible for monitoring and reacting to any threats in their airspace.

Over the past 10 years, Airmen



from the United States and Canada have stood on call 24 hours per day, 365 days per year, to ensure these areas over North America are safe.

In recent years, the nation's civilian and military leaders started to regard the expansive air defense operation above the nation's cities as a permanent defense requirement demanding significant attention from the U.S. Air Force. Despite substantial improvements in aviation security, the Air Force has been charged with keeping this program of combat air patrols going full-bore indefinitely.

At any given time, according to NORAD officials, Noble Eagle aircraft may be flying air patrol missions over more than 15 U.S. cities. Also, special security events like the Super Bowl and presidential visits usually warrant air protection.

This protection doesn't come cheap. Since 2001, the operation has cost an estimated \$27 billion, according to officials at 1st Air Force. Last year alone, ONE cost over \$50

million, according to the fiscal year 2012 President's Budget, released by the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

As the Air Force and sister services transform to meet the global challenges to the nation and the dynamic nature of future operations continues to evolve, 1st Air Force is developing and employing new capabilities to ensure the Airmen supporting the mission are ready to respond to any Homeland Defense operations. The threat and the environment, in a global context, have shifted dramatically over the past decade. Air Force leaders believe that the rate and kinds of changes will continue, if not accelerate, in the next decade.

For the men and women who perform ONE operations daily, the mission is about the intangibles: the lives saved, the buildings still standing and the tragedies averted.

Ultimately, though, it's about necessity.

"Homeland defense is a zero failure mission," Beauchamp said.

"There's no room for error and that means everyone has to be on top of their game."

This means evaluating threats and reacting to alerts as fast as possible. To respond to these alerts, the detachments always have two fighters "at the ready," meaning they can launch at a moment's notice. These planes range from F-15 Eagles to F-16 Fighting Falcons to even the Air Force's newest fighter, the F-22 Raptor. The planes are fueled, prepped and loaded with ammunition and missiles at all times and two pilots and a maintenance crew are on call 24 hours per day.

"Typically, we can be in the air in just a couple minutes," Beauchamp said.

At each alert station, pilots take turns pulling alert duty in teams of two. They and the on-call maintenance crews live in a small building near the flight line, complete with a kitchen, living area and sleeping quarters. Attached hangars house the alert aircraft.

**Shown marshals**  
an F-15 aircraft from  
a ready barn at the  
Portland ANGB.

**Beauchamp and**  
Master Sgt. Mark  
Billmyer greet each  
other before a  
morning flight on the  
142nd Fighter Wing  
flightline.





“It’s sort of like an ‘aerial’ fire station,” Beauchamp said. “Except instead of responding to fires, we’re responding to threats in the sky.”

The threats vary from mission to mission.

“It’s so interesting day to day because you don’t know what you’re going to face,” Beauchamp said. “One day you can respond to an aircraft that’s off course and the next you could be responding to someone flying too close to Air Force One.”

When one of these situations occurs, the alarm goes off and the fighters scramble.

One way the detachment gets an alert is through a system of lights that tell pilots and ground crews how to respond. If it’s a green light, then the fighters take off as soon as they can. If the light is green and yellow, then the fighters hold on the runway. If the light is yellow only, then crews prep the fighters, but they hold in the hangars. A red light kills a mission.

A horn also sounds when there’s an alert — a loud, piercing sound that is unmistakable.

Waiting for the alarm to sound is what the job is all about, which, at times, can make for an anxious work atmosphere. A mix of teamwork and camaraderie keeps the alert teams sharp and ensures when the alarm does go off they are ready.

“We work together and we get the job done,” Beauchamp said. “We’re all here for one thing, and that’s to protect the American people and the American way of life. We’re all committed to that.”

This is due in large part to a very capable team of maintenance experts that can fix just about anything in-house. From tire repair and engine maintenance to ordnance loading and electronics calibration, these maintenance teams can do it all.

The rapid advancement of new information and knowledge systems in the past 10 years has made it possible for 1st Air Force to conduct operations in new ways and more effectively.

“When we get a call, these jets need to be in the air,” said Master Sgt. Sam Dunn, an F-15 crew chief

with the 142nd FW. “This means when the pilots get in that jet, it has to work. Not just some of the time, but all of the time.”

The alert teams aren’t just a good mix of enlisted and officers. The teams are also a solid mix of total force components. Active, Guard and Reserve Airmen all contribute to ONE, with the Air National Guard currently providing the bulk of assigned personnel.

It’s not a competition, though, and the units understand this. For them, the only thing that matters is getting the mission done — together.

“We’re all in to make sure a tragedy like 9/11 doesn’t happen again,” Beauchamp said. “That’s why we’re out there day after day, patrolling the skies and keeping this country safe.”

While keeping America safe is motivation enough, the colonel is further motivated by the memory of the day the radios went silent and the sky was empty.

“That can’t happen again,” he said. “And on our watch, it won’t.” 🦅

**An F-15A Eagle** from the 142nd Fighter Wing takes off from the Portland ANGB.

# WHERE ARE THEY NOW

AIRMAN LOOKS BACK AT SOME  
OF THE PEOPLE PROFILED  
IN ITS 54-YEAR HISTORY

STORY BY RANDY ROUGHTON

**A**irman's predecessors had several different names and bore little resemblance to the full-color feature magazine it has been in recent years. The early versions of this publication began before the Air Force was even formed. The Air Service Weekly Newsletter was first published Sept. 21, 1918. It would become the Air Corps, Air Force and eventually Air Forces Weekly Newsletter before it was discontinued in 1946.

Airman's direct predecessor was called *The Airman*. That magazine's first issue in August 1957 featured a painting by the late NASA artist Robert McCall on its cover, a photograph of a 3-cent postage stamp in a section called "Airman's World" and lengthy articles written by leaders like then-Air

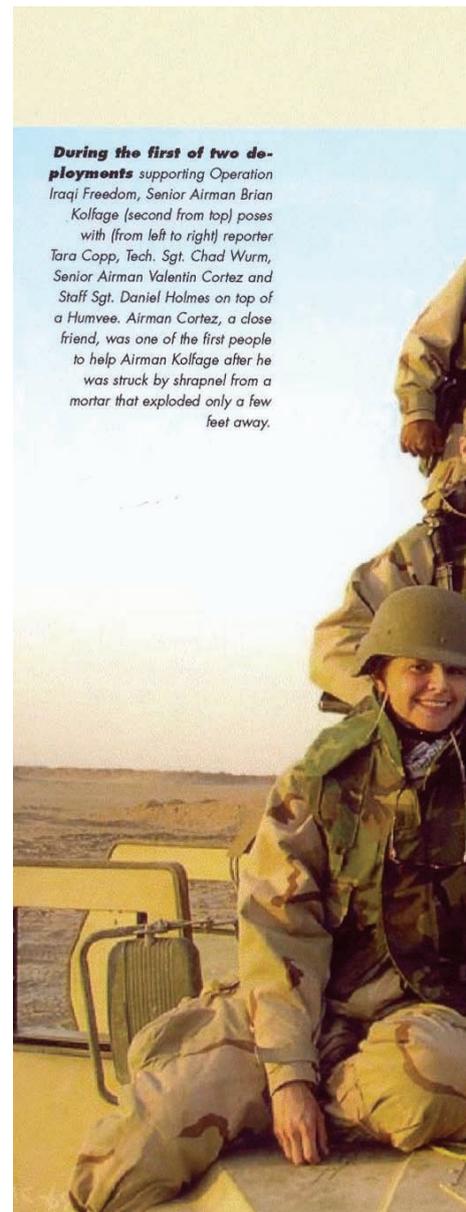
Force Chief of Staff Thomas D. White and retired Col. Francis S. Gabreski, a World War II and Korean War fighter ace. Not long after the magazine dropped "the" from its title, *Airman* developed the personality of the everyday Air Force member.

Through the years, *Airman* has covered important issues facing Airmen and introduced readers to some of the Air Force's most interesting people, from POWs and wounded veterans to Airmen doing their jobs. Recently, we caught up with a handful of featured individuals to learn where their careers took them after they appeared in *Airman*.

## RETIRED SENIOR AIRMAN BRIAN KOLFAGE

In July 2005, *Airman* was one of the first print publications to feature

**During the first of two deployments** supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom, Senior Airman Brian Kolfage (second from top) poses with (from left to right) reporter Tara Copp, Tech. Sgt. Chad Wurm, Senior Airman Valentin Cortez and Staff Sgt. Daniel Holmes on top of a Humvee. Airman Cortez, a close friend, was one of the first people to help Airman Kolfage after he was struck by shrapnel from a mortar that exploded only a few feet away.



retired Senior Airman Brian Kolfage as he began rehabilitation from severe injuries sustained in a mortar attack at Balad Air Base, Iraq on Sept. 11, 2004. The attack happened exactly three years after his first day on duty as a gate guard at Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas, on Sept. 11, 2001.

The 23-year-old Airman was walking through tent city to the morale tent when a 107-mm mortar shell landed about five feet away and knocked him nearly six feet in the air. He landed face-first on a wall of sandbags, where he was found by Senior Airman Valentin Cortez, his tent-mate and friend. Kolfage lost both legs and his right hand. He eventually endured 16 surgeries, mostly to remove debris and shrapnel from his body.

**In the July 2005** issue, Airman featured Retired Senior Airman Brian Kolfage, who had lost both of his legs and his right arm in a mortar attack at Balad Air Force Base, Iraq.

**Kolfage speaks to** Senior Master Sgt. Annette Whitenack about the Sept. 11, 2004 attack. Whitenack was a first responder at Balad when Kolfage was injured. (photo by Robert D. Martinez)

# Surviving AND Thriving

by Master Sgt. Chuck Roberts

by Master Sgt. Jim Yohagst



AT FIRST, IT WAS REALLY AWKWARD, EVERYBODY WAS TELLING ME YOU'RE SUCH A HERO. NOT REALLY. I JUST GOT BLOWN UP. I DON'T SEE MYSELF AS A CELEBRITY.

— Retired Senior Airman Brian Kolfage

“In the first two months, I was so heavily medicated that I was pretty zoned out,” he said. “As they started weaning me off, I began noticing people who still had their limbs, but were mentally disabled. I remember seeing a kid my age, and doctors were showing him his mom. He didn’t remember her. Seeing that made it easy to get over what happened to me. I still had my brain. That put it into perspective for me.”

The Airman story on Kolfage showed a photo of him receiving his Air Force Commendation, Global War on Terrorism Service and Expeditionary medals at his retirement ceremony and a photo taken after his first ski run in Aspen, Colo.



After the story was published and his media appearances became less frequent, Kolfage’s struggle was far from over. He was still dealing with stinging pain from his prosthetic limbs. Eventually, Irish prosthetist Kevin Carroll found the answer in a gel-like cushion he’d invented for a baby bottlenose dolphin with an amputated tail.

Kolfage now compares putting on his prosthetics with “putting on your shoes.” He worked as the base security manager at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., for nearly two years and is currently in architectural

**Tech. Sgt. John H.** “Jake” Schuffert, an aircraft radio operator, volunteered to draw cartoons for the Task Force Times, a newspaper published for Berlin Airlift personnel. After retiring from active-duty service, Schuffert worked as an Air Force civilian graphic artist until 1986.

school at the University of Arizona. He expects to graduate in 2014. More than six years after he appeared in *Airman*, Kolfage recalls a little embarrassment at the media coverage his story attracted. Suddenly, he’s finding himself back in the news. An upcoming 60 Minutes special will include a comparison of his rehabilitation to that of Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, who was shot outside a grocery store in Tucson, Ariz. He will also be a part of a Purple Heart documentary scheduled for February.

“At first, it was really awkward,” he said. “Everybody was telling me you’re such a hero. Not really. I just got blown up. I don’t see myself as a celebrity.”



# I THINK THE REASON THE CARTOONS ARE POPULAR IS BECAUSE I WAS IN THE AIR FORCE AND UNDERSTAND THE LIFE OF THE BLUE-SUITER.

— late retired Master Sgt. Jake Schuffert

## THE LATE RETIRED MASTER SGT. JOHN “JAKE” SCHUFFERT

Even today, the *Airman* staff receives occasional phone calls and emails from long-time readers who want

to see another “Here’s Jake” cartoon. Retired Master Sgt. John “Jake” Schuffert’s cartoons, which lampooned characters at the Pentagon and the fictional Boondock Air

Force Base, were a regular feature in many of *Airman*’s 50-plus years. Schuffert, a retired Department of Defense graphics supervisor who died of cancer on Nov. 2, 1998, served 23 years in the Air Force. He flew 50

missions during World War II, including the famous bombing raids on the Ploesti, Romania, oil fields.

“I think the reason the cartoons are popular is because I was in the Air Force and understand the life of the blue-suitier,” Schuffert once said in an interview with *Airman*.

**CAPT. KRISTINA BELCOURT**  
In 2004, 20-year-old

Kristina Belcourt was a U.S. Air Force Academy cadet while the school was trying to recover from a decade of sexual abuse allegations. Belcourt, now an intelligence training chief at Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, was featured in two *Airman* stories in 2004, including “A Time for Healing,” which was published just as she arrived for intelligence technical training at Goodfellow.

At that time, Belcourt found herself at the forefront of the topic, not only because she appeared in *Airman*, but also due to other coverage on Public Broadcasting Service and in *The Chicago Tribune*.

“I didn’t mind,” she said. “I know that I wasn’t embarrassed by it. In that particular instance at the academy, it was a big deal trying to revamp the sexual assault program. So if my explanation of what was going on could help, I was OK with sharing it.”

The academy responded to the highest number of reported sexual assaults in its history with sweeping changes in training and reporting procedures. Belcourt went on to complete weapons school at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., to earn her intelligence weapons officer Air Force specialty and deployed four times in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

## RETIRED COL. EILEEN COLLINS

Many Air Force members who made history were profiled in *Airman*, including one of its most groundbreaking astronauts. Retired Col.

**Capt. Kristina** Belcourt is the 366th Operations Support Squadron chief of intelligence training at Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho.

photo by Senior Airman Debbie Lockhart





**Retired Col. Eileen Collins** (second from right) and the crew of Discovery's STS-114, the first shuttle mission following the Columbia disaster. Collins was the commander on Discovery's July 2005 "Return to Flight" mission, her fourth and final space flight.

**Collins near her home** in San Antonio. Collins was featured in *Airman* magazine five times throughout her career.



Eileen Collins made the first of her five *Airman* appearances in "Two of a Kind" in 1994. The story also featured current 14<sup>th</sup> Air Force Commander Lt. Gen. Susan Helms, who became the first military woman in space on Space Shuttle Endeavor a year earlier.

In the summer of 2005, Collins was the first female shuttle pilot and commander. She retired after completing NASA's "Return to Flight," the first mission after the Columbia explosion. Since her retirement, Collins has served as chairperson of the NASA Advisory Council Space Operations Committee and has also remained busy on the consulting and speaking circuit.

"I miss flying airplanes," she said. "I miss being in the airplane, smelling the gasoline, putting on my gloves, talking on the radio, the instruments and flying in formation. I don't miss the acrobatics as much. I think my body got a little older for pulling G's."

"I do miss being in space, but you just can't go fly in space. I flew four times, and all four missions were very busy because you're constantly working and under stress. You have a mission; your boss is the people of the country and you don't want to disappoint the people. Usually toward the end of the mission, you can let your

**Retired Col. Gail Halvorsen**, the Berlin Candy Bomber, displays a handkerchief parachute like those he used to drop candy from his C-54 Skymaster to children in blockaded Berlin. "Operation Little Vittles," as the drops were collectively called, helped shape a positive perception of American forces in Germany.

photo by Tech. Sgt. Bennie J. Davis III



hair down a little bit because the primary mission's done and everything is put away. That was when you could put your face against the glass, stretch out your arms, and you don't even see the ship around you, just the Earth below, and you feel like you're flying over the planet."

## RETIRED COL. GAIL HALVORSEN

In Airman's June 1998 issue, the man known worldwide as "The Berlin Candy Bomber" demonstrated how he and his fellow pilots attached candy to parachutes before they dropped them to German children during the Berlin Airlift. Then-1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Gail Halvorsen was one of the American pilots flying round-the-clock missions from Rhein-Main Air Base to Templehof. He flew 126 missions between July 1948 and February 1949. One day, he combined his candy rations with those of his co-pilot and engineer and made the first parachutes with handkerchiefs and strings. He tied the parachutes to the chocolate and gum and made the first "Operation Little Vittles" drop from his C-54 Skymaster on July 18, 1948. By the end of the airlift, American pilots had dropped 250,000 parachutes and 23 tons of candy.

"The way I saw it was from one of the U.S. Air Force's core values: service before self," Halvorsen said. "That's so magic, with integrity and excellence, in saying we're not going to give up and how those core values were so inherent in the success of the airlift."

"It made us appear like we were telling them, 'You're a former enemy, but we love you and we're killing ourselves to keep you alive.' The reward you got was seeing the gratitude and synergy of service before self melding together as a woven blanket, and was the reason the whole attitude changed."

Even at the age of 90, Halvorsen maintains a hectic schedule with appearances at veterans' groups and active-duty Air Force units to events commemorating the Berlin Airlift.

## JASON SZUMINSKI

The Air Force's most celebrated athletes have also made appearances in Airman through the years. Then-1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Jason Szuminski, who may be the only Air Force Reservist who played Major League Baseball,

photo by Bo Joyner



**1st Lt. Jason Szuminski**, then-relief pitcher for the San Diego Padres, warms up in the bullpen during a 2004 game against the Atlanta Braves. Szuminski was the only Air Force reservist in Major League Baseball.

pitched briefly for the San Diego Padres in 2004. He attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on an Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps scholarship before he was drafted by the Chicago Cubs as the 27<sup>th</sup>-round draft pick in 2000. The 6-foot-4, 220-pound right-hander returned to the Cubs after a stint with the Padres before he suffered a career-ending shoulder injury while pitching for the team's Triple A affiliate in Iowa. Szuminski's career highlight was a scoreless inning against the San Francisco Giants when he recorded the final out against eventual home run king Barry Bonds.

"It was a big day for me, and [Bonds] wound up being the third hitter I faced," Szuminski said. "I was never going to be the best guy, but I got to go up against the best. Everyone walked him in those days, but I got him to fly out."

His Reserve job was as an individual mobilization augmentee with

the Air Force Research Laboratory's Propulsion Directorate at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif. Since his Air Force and baseball careers ended, Szuminski earned his master's degree from Stanford University and now lives in Palo Alto, Calif., where he starts new technology companies.

Because he was part of the World Class Athlete Program, Szuminski was on active duty on the opening day of the 2004 season. He hoped to make the 2004 Summer Olympics, but the U.S. team didn't qualify.

"I always felt guilty because we didn't have better success," Szuminski said. "Everyone else is out there working and so many are deployed, and I was out there playing sports. It added good pressure to try to succeed at it and deliver what I could for the Air Force, since I was getting this opportunity. I was frustrated I didn't get to go to the Olympics. I would've turned down the major leagues to play for the U.S. Olympic baseball team." 🦋

# LAND FOR LEASE

BASES TURN UNUSED PROPERTY INTO REVENUE, ENERGY

STORY BY TECH. SGT. MATTHEW BATES

**A graphic illustration depicts one of the office buildings planned for Falcon National Aerospace Research Park at Hill Air Base, Utah. The Enhanced Use Lease project will transform 150 acres of land at Hill AFB into a technology park, the largest private project of its kind in Air Force history.**

**A**cross the Air Force, bases have plots of land that aren't being used. They aren't much to look at, either: a strip of barren ground here, a patch of dirt there, a pile of rocks somewhere else.

But, what these plots of land lack in looks, they make up for in value.

"Land is one commodity that is always worth money," said Mark Kinkade, with the Air Force Real Property Agency.

The Air Force is now looking to cash in on this value, using a program called Enhanced Use Lease. How it works is simple: Air Force bases will offer unused plots of land for lease to private industry. These private organizations will pay for the land through either monetary payments or "in-kind" services.

Through this program, the Air Force has identified a potential \$5 billion worth of revenue-generating locations and projects.

"This is a lot of money we're talking about here," said Darrin Wray, EUL project manager at Hill Air Force Base, Utah. "But it's less about revenue and more about investment."

EUL investment could benefit the local community, base infrastructure and clean, renewable energy and resources.

## WHAT IT IS

Enhanced Use Lease isn't new. It's been around in some form or another since the mid-1980s, but it really didn't build up steam until 2008, after the Air Force, along with the rest of the Department of Defense, began facing unexpected demands on its resources. Budget shortfalls, rising fuel prices, the costs of fighting the war on terrorism and restrictions on retiring weapon systems all contributed to these challenges.

courtesy illustration



In response to these issues, the Air Force began transforming itself to make sure it could continue to accomplish its mission. Part of this transformation was to seriously look at EUL and see if the program could help out.

The Air Force liked what it saw.

"Basically, [unused Air Force land offers] the potential for a lot of revenue and resources," Wray said.

Air Force officials gave the Real Property Agency its orders: "Make it happen."

"And we are," Kinkade said. "Working with bases across the service, AFRPA has already identified numerous project sites and unused land that fit the bill."

Once identified, projects are developed and then shopped around, meaning the jobs are put out for bid to see if any private sector businesses are interested.

If there is interest and a contract is reached, then the project enters the construction phase. From there, it's just a matter of how and when the base gets paid.

"Sometimes it's just a straight lease, where the base receives a monthly payment," Wray said. "Sometimes the base may take a percentage of the revenue earned from the business built on the land."

Agreements also can include a combination of both types of payment. Either way, the base has options. And, either way, the base is generating revenue from what was formerly an unused asset.

"The beauty of it is the bases will not lose these assets," Wray said. "Because these contracts are leases, this means the base still owns the land, and, in many cases the buildings or structures built on them."

Money paid to the bases is put back into their infrastructures and used for things like new gymnasiums or other support facilities. In some cases, the base may receive "in kind" payments, such as the use of renewable energy being generated.

"Basically, it's a win-win for the base and community," Wray said. "The base makes money off of this unused



property, the local community gets jobs and private companies get some prime real estate.”

### WHERE IT IS

Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., is known for many things. It's home to the Thunderbirds, hosts Red Flag exercises every year and is close to one of the country's most famous cities, Las Vegas.

Now, though, it's also known for hosting what is currently the nation's largest solar array. Consisting of 72,000 solar panels, this array produces more than 30 million kilowatts of energy and supplies nearly 25 percent of the total power used by the base.

Four years ago, it didn't exist. Where this giant solar field now sits was just a large, barren piece of land. Nellis looked at its options and turned the unused land into a renewable energy venture that provides jobs to the local community and clean energy to the base.

The base didn't stop there. In cooperation with the city of North Las

Vegas, the base now hosts the largest water reclamation facility in the country. It's all natural, too, meaning the facility uses biological matter, rather than chemicals, to clean the wastewater.

The base is receiving more than monetary benefits from this venture.

“Nellis will be able to use the water recycled by this plant,” said Ernie Maldonado, a contractor with the company operating the facility. “When the water is treated, it's then sent back to Lake Meade and back into the water supply for the base and surrounding area.”

Nellis isn't the only base doing this. Using EUL, Air Force bases are turning unused land into income-generating, and often, energy-creating projects.

Hill is another base receiving EUL benefits. The base currently has several EUL projects in the works, the largest of which is its Falcon Hill business park. This 550-acre park is currently in construction and will feature nearly two million square

feet of commercial office space, all on land belonging to the base. Other projects include producing steam energy from a local waste plant, building a wind farm on the base's Little Mountain Annex and a 100-acre solar power field.

Edwards AFB, Calif., is in the process of building what will be the largest solar field in the country.

Other places, like the Air Force Academy and Kirtland, Eglin, Wright-Patterson and Luke Air Force bases, are also in the process of developing EUL projects.

“These projects aren't just about money,” Wray said. “They create local jobs and allow bases to invest in long-term energy initiatives.”

At its core, that's what the EUL program is all about: Creating revenue, investing in the local community and providing clean energy and resources along the way.

“It's just another example of the Air Force being good stewards of the environment and a good neighbor to its communities,” Wray said. 🦅

**Charles Transley**, base energy manager at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., surveys a solar power plant that covers 140 acres of leased Air Force land on the base. The plant provides nearly 25 percent of the power at Nellis.

photo by Staff Sgt. Joshua L. DeMotts



courtesy photo by Lockheed Martin



photo by Tech. Sgt. Michael R. Holzworth

photo by Airman 1st Class Brett Clashman

# TEN YEARS AT WAR

STORY BY RANDY ROUGHTON

**O**ctober marks a decade since the war began in Afghanistan. The assault on the Taliban regime started in October 2001, nearly a month after the 9/11 attacks.

The Air Force has been in the fight since the beginning, with bombing campaigns over Afghan terrorist training camps and Taliban air defenses around Kabul, Jalalabad and Kandahar, and later on command, control and communications targets to weaken Taliban communications.

The Air Force presence in the war effort remains prevalent 10 years later. For example, air refueling aircraft in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility have off-loaded more than 466 million pounds of fuel in 2011 to more than 35,000 receivers, according to statistics from the U.S. Air Forces Central's Combined Air Operations Center. Tankers also completed more than 7,100 sorties in support of operations so far this year.

Less than two years after Operation Enduring Freedom began, Airmen also began supporting the war on the Iraq front, from the invasion in March 2003 through the pull-out of troops at the transition of Operation Iraqi Freedom to Operation New Dawn in 2010.

Since the war began, many other changes have transformed the Air Force culture, such as the rise of cyber warfare to advances in warrior care, improvements in communication and developments in space. These images are representative of the many missions Airmen have supported over the past decade at war. 



photo by Staff Sgt. Michael B. Keller



courtesy photo



AIRMAN

AIRMAN

AIRMAN

photo by Staff Sgt. Michael B. Keller



photo by Staff Sgt. Clay Lancaster



photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Boltz



photo by Airman 1st Class Willard E. Grande II



photo by Staff Sgt. Douglas Olsen



photo by Tech. Sgt. Erik Gudmundson





photo by Airman 1st Class Jerilyn Quintanilla



photo by Tech Sgt. Jeffrey Allen



photo by Staff Sgt. Joshua L. DeWitts



photo by Senior Airman Nathanael Callon



photo by Tech. Sgt. James L. Harper Jr.



photo by Tech. Sgt. Rene Castillo



photo by Staff Sgt. Brian Ferguson





photo by Senior Airman Perry Aston



photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Boltz



STORY BY RANDY ROUGHTON ✦ PHOTOS BY TECH. SGT. BENNIE J. DAVIS III

# GATEWAY BARBER

## FIFTY YEARS: IT WENT BY AT A CLIP



**Lester West poses with a group of newly-shorn basic trainees outside the Basic Military Training Processing Center at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.**

**T**hree rows of zero-week trainees in the Basic Military Training Processing Center barbershop stare straight ahead at a mirror that reflects the back of a fellow trainee's head as his hair disappears in the barber's clipper vacuum. As Lester West finishes the haircut a few minutes later, he makes

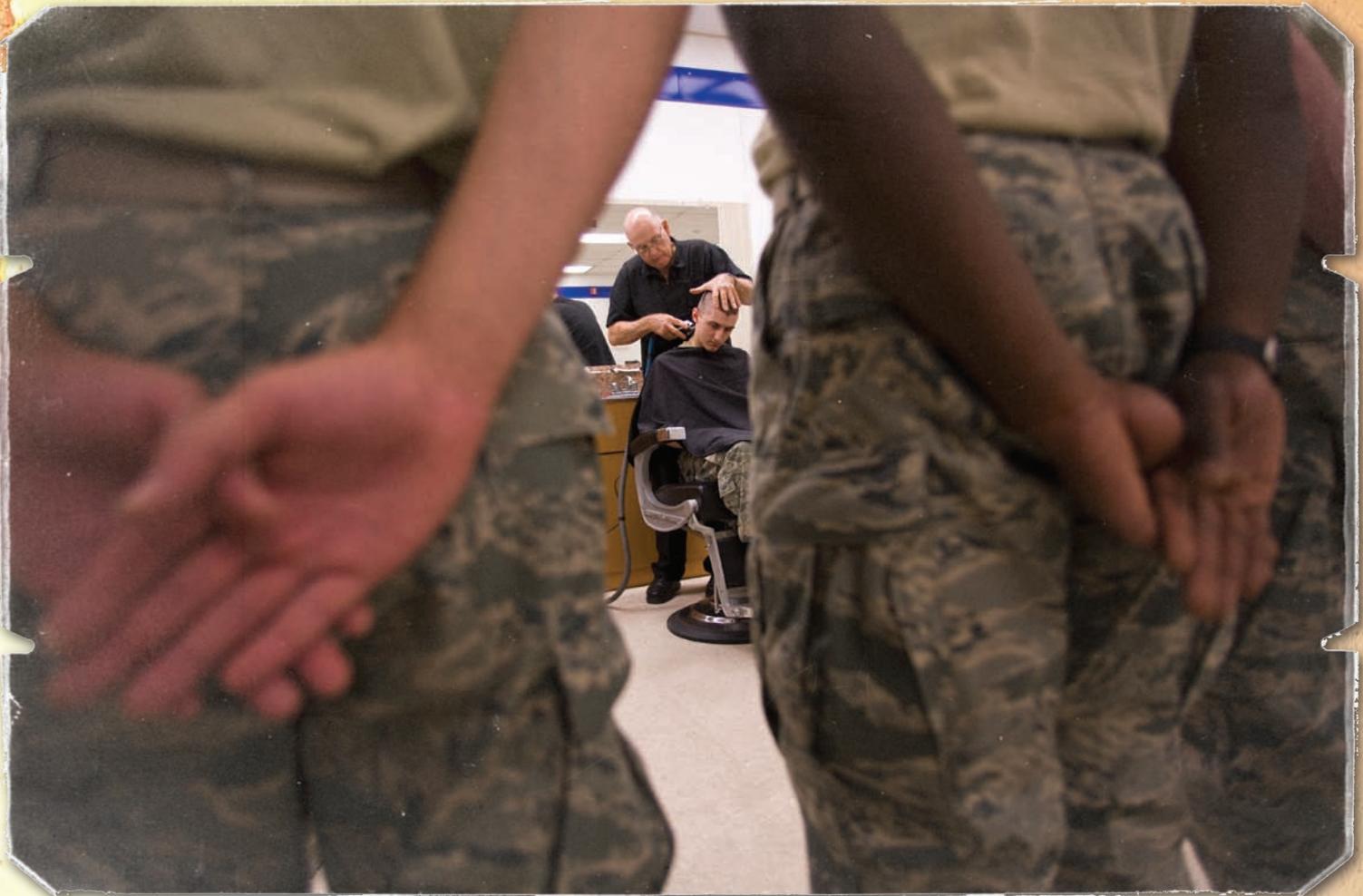
sure the line moves quickly and smoothly.

"Keep your toe on that black line," he firmly tells those waiting to replace the trainees standing on the red mark in front of the four barber's chairs. "Get shoulder-to-shoulder on that line. Fill in, white shirt. Man on the end, let's go. Come on around, young man."

For 50 years, West has given basic trainees at Lackland Air

Force Base, Texas, their first military haircut. Since he chose the barber's clippers over teaching and mortician's school at the age of 19, he estimates he's cut the hair of between 1.3 and 1.5 million trainees.

"That's a conservative figure," he said. "It's the same faces. Everybody's got that look on their faces, like they want to know what's next. These kids come



from all over the United States, and most of them are here because they want to be here. These kids are here to train. The hair part of it is just a little part of the process. They're here to get their training and move on.

"I try to talk slow, loud and clear, where they can understand because they're kind of nervous to begin with. You don't want to confuse them any more than they already are. It's not our job to holler at them. It's our job to get the money collected, get their hair cut and get them ready to go to clothing issue next door."

The basic trainee haircut cost 65 cents on May 5, 1961, when West joined about six older barbers in the shop. Today, haircuts cost \$5.05, which is still 60 percent below the permanent party cost of \$8.35 on base. Trainees

receive three haircuts in basic training: during their first, fourth and eighth weeks. They pay for all three during zero week with their EZ-pay stored value cards. West and his three fellow barbers, Gary Harris, Melissa Maloch and Clay Dalton, make sure the trainees keep the cards, which are pre-loaded with \$400 to cover supplies needed for basic training, while they're in the shop.

Before the flight enters the shop, the 69-year-old barber, dressed in matching black shirt, pants and shoes, briefs them outside. He instructs the trainees to carry their EZ-pay cards in their right hands and everything else, including the manila envelope with their pay documents, in their left arms.

"Put that card in that envelope, you hear?" he tells them.

"We make sure when they leave here, they have that card put away," West said. "When they get out of here, we don't know what happens to it, but we make sure they leave the barber shop with it."

When a trainee flight enters the barber shop, the first four proceed to the barber chairs and the next four line up behind the red line facing each of the barbers. The rest line up on three rows of black squares behind them. Although the schedule varies, the barbers worked three zero-week flights beginning at 7:30 a.m., followed by four fourth-week flights at 11. They normally get between nine to 12 zero-week male flights a week, far fewer than the number West saw when he began his career in the 1960s.

"In 1961, we'd have eight to 12 flights a day, just with zero-week

**West cuts a fourth week basic trainee's hair at Lackland's processing center barbershop. Trainees receive three haircuts: during their first, fourth and eighth weeks of training.**



flights, five days a week," he said. "At that time, those flights had about 65 people in them."

The flight sizes decreased in 1966 after a spinal meningitis outbreak at Lackland, which temporarily forced moving basic trainees to Amarillo Air Force Base, West said. The shop then was much smaller than the current one, with trainee hair from six barber's chairs freely falling on a floor that probably resembled the one in the opening scene in the movie "Full Metal Jacket." Today, little hair lands on the floor because of a vacuum system the shop acquired nearly 10 years ago. Three car wash vacuum motors are mounted in a 55-gal-lon drum, with a 1-inch hose that runs from the clippers to a 2-inch inlet line that leads directly to the vacuum system.

West grew up in a small community in Stockdale, Texas, about 55 miles southeast of Lackland. He moved to Poth with his wife in 1977 and remained

there after she died about three years ago. He continues to make the 45-mile commute to work each day.

As he cuts another trainee's hair, West continually asks the rest of the flight to check for moles or warts under their hair.

"If you've got moles or warts, locate 'em," he says. "Let us know."

"I brief them on moles, warts and hair bumps," West said. "They tell us where they've got them because you know under that long hair you don't know, and we don't want to hurt anybody."

"Check," he says to the next trainee in his chair. "Do you have your finger on it? Keep it there."

Every now and then, he'll have to tell a trainee a second time to keep the line moving.

"Somebody, send him down," he directs toward one who didn't respond when it was his turn to move to the red mark in front of West's chair. "Wake up and pay attention. You're liable

to get left in another place one of these days."

But trainees aren't the only ones who have benefitted from West's guidance through the past five decades. He also freely lends his experience to younger barbers, just as the older barbers did for him early in his career. He watches trainees leave each barber's chair to make sure each one receives the quality haircut he expects. One of the earliest lessons he makes sure younger barbers learn is the need to keep a hand on the trainee's head while he's in the chair.

"If someone comes in and asks them a question and they turn, you're liable to hit them in the ear with the clipper or something like that," West said. "You don't want that to happen. You have to watch, that's the main thing. It's the same way now, when we get new people here. People come in and watch us work and think there's nothing to it, but that hair doesn't

come off like it looks like it comes off. You've got to help them out until they get used to it. I make sure we get all their hair cut off of them, clean behind their ears good and treat them with courtesy, kind of like you'd treat your own son."

As trainees leave the chair, West and the other barbers make sure the line continues to move.

"When you go outside, grab your flashlight and fall in line, you hear," West says as two trainees leave after their haircuts.

After 50 years, West is asked if he sometimes sees some of those 1.5 million heads again.

"All the time," he said. "I've got guys now who have been retired 15 to 20 years, and they will come back for something on the base and stick their head in the door and say, 'You still here, West?'"

"As long as I'm healthy, I'll probably work a while longer because I like to be around people."



**(opposite page)**

First week basic trainees receive their haircuts at the processing center barbershop.

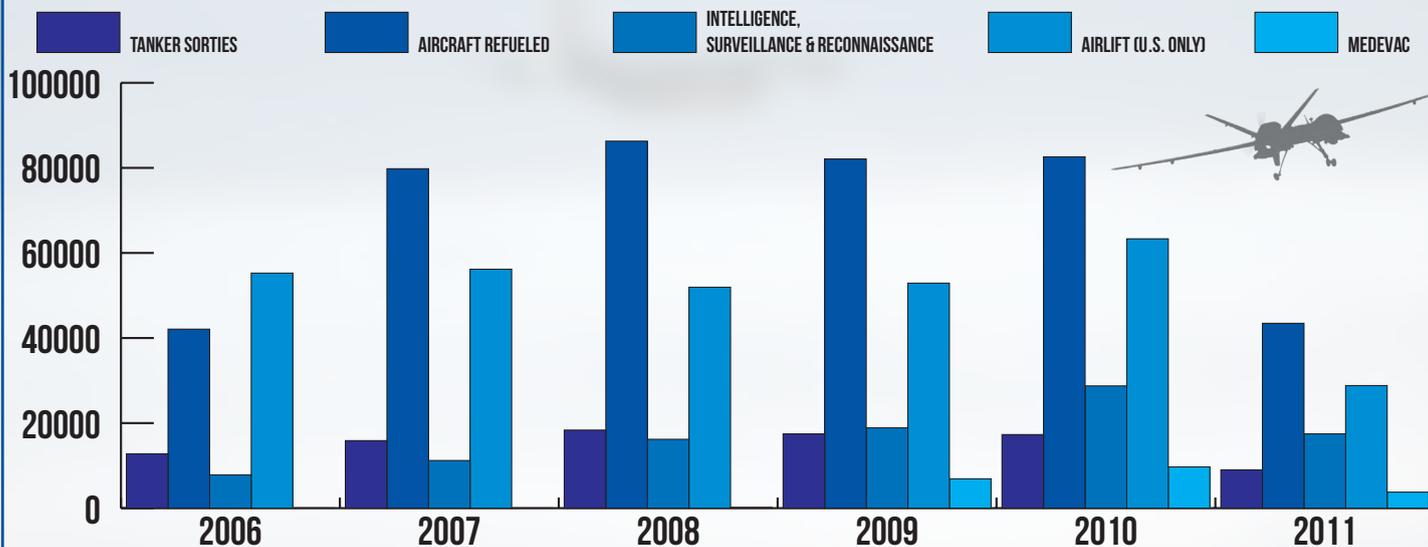
**(this page) West**

estimates that 1.5 million trainees have sat in his chair over the 50 years he has worked in the barbershop at Lackland.

# AIR POWER: BY THE NUMBERS

## 2006-2011 COMBINED FORCES AIR COMPONENT COMMANDER AIR POWER STATISTICS

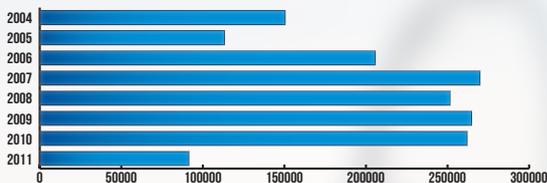
SORTIES FLOWN (AS OF JUNE 30, 2011)



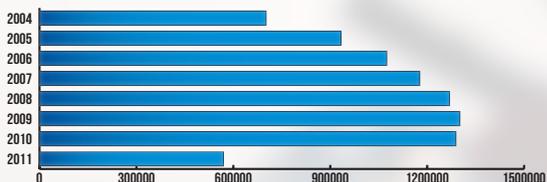
### AIRLIFT



CARGO  
(TONS)



PASSENGERS



### RECORD BOOK

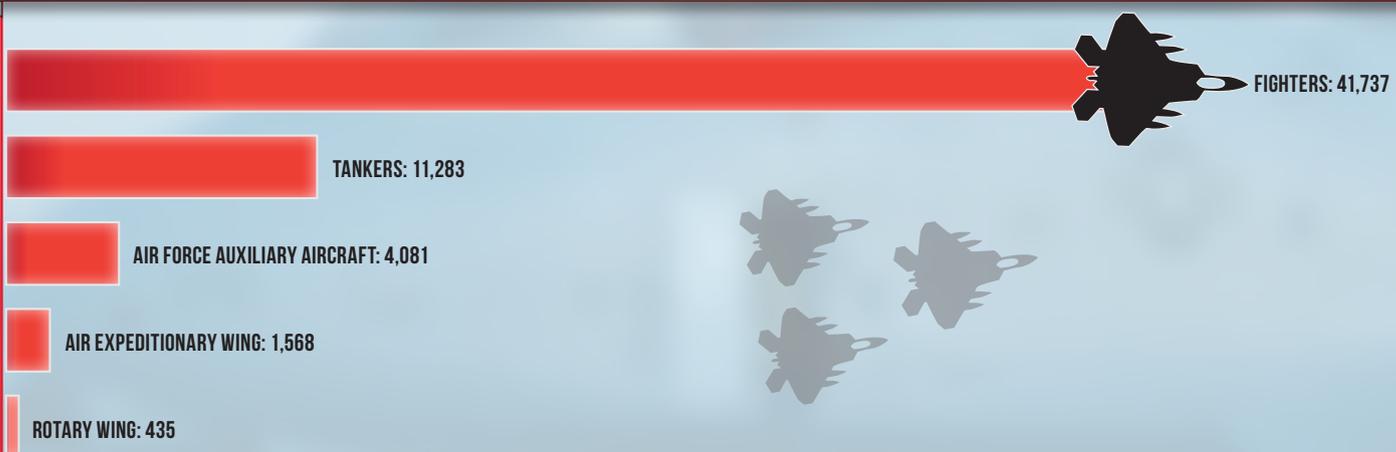
#### AIRLIFT RECORDS

FEB. 29, 2008: LARGEST AMOUNT OF CARGO MOVED IN A DAY	3.92 MILLION POUNDS
MARCH 2008: LARGEST AMOUNT OF CARGO MOVED IN A MONTH	82,718,000 POUNDS
SEPT. 18, 2007: LARGEST NUMBER OF PASSENGERS MOVED IN A DAY	5,700
MARCH 2008: LARGEST NUMBER OF PASSENGERS MOVED IN A MONTH	119,394

#### AIRDROP RECORDS

FEBRUARY 2008: MOST AIRDROPS IN A 30-DAY PERIOD	78
AUGUST 2008: MOST WEIGHT DROPPED IN A 30-DAY PERIOD	1,882,750 POUNDS

## OPERATION NOBLE EAGLE: SORTIES FLOWN



AS OF JUNE 2011, THERE HAVE BEEN A TOTAL OF **59,104** SORTIES FLOWN IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION NOBLE EAGLE. THIS TOTAL INCLUDES FIGHTERS, TANKERS, AIRBORNE WARNING AND CONTROL SYSTEMS, HELICOPTERS AND AIR FORCE AUXILIARY AIRCRAFT.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY  
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
*Celebrating 64 Years*



NEVER FORGET



SEPTEMBER 11, 2001