

AIRMAIL ✦ PROFILE ✦ HERITAGE ✦ FRONTLINE DUTY ✦ NOTEBOOK

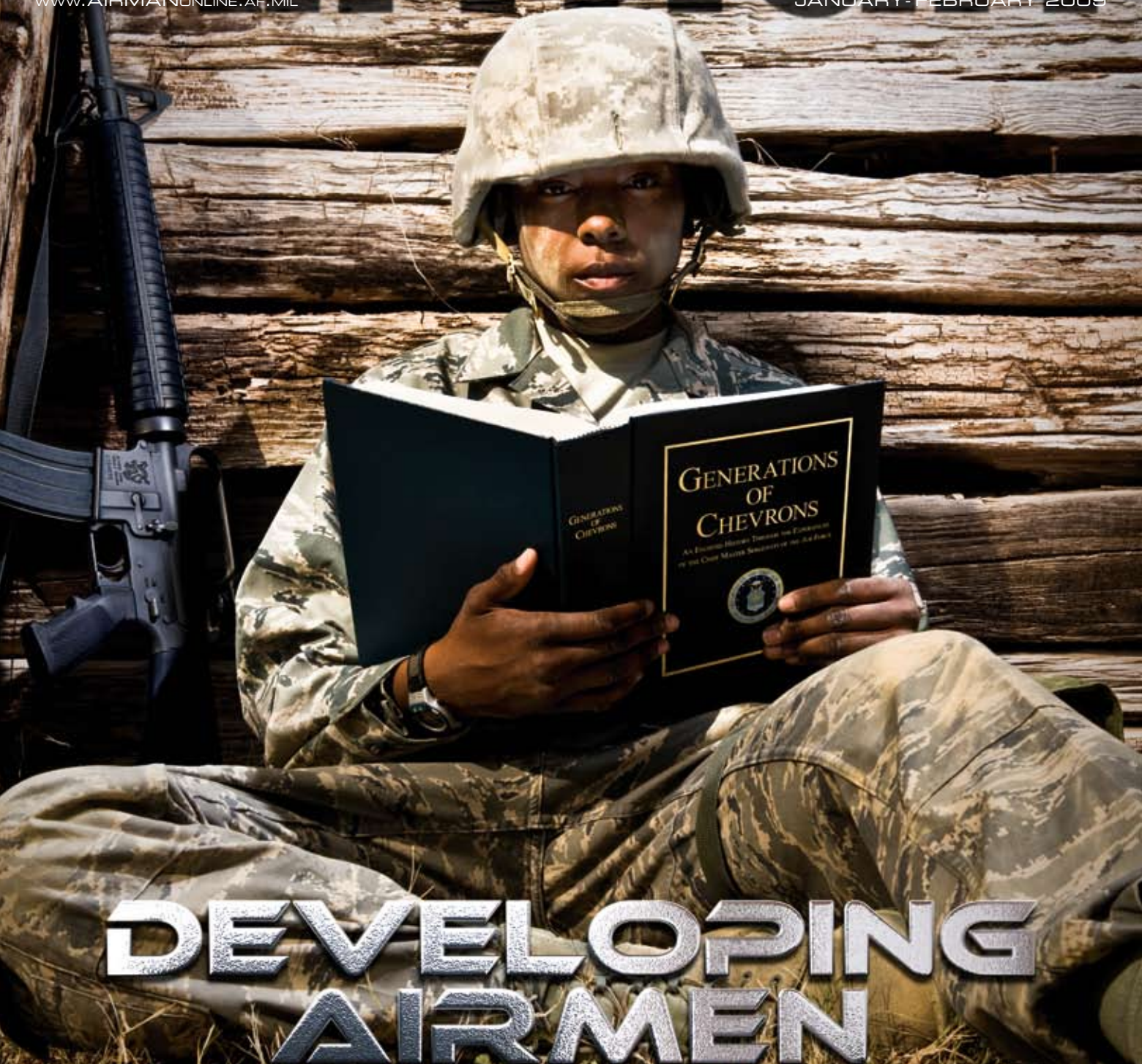


MAGAZINE OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

Airman

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JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2009



DEVELOPING AIRMEN

TRAINING AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES
ALLOW AIRMEN TO EXCEL

VIEW FROM THE TOP

AIR FORCE VISION

“The UNITED STATES AIR FORCE will be a trusted and reliable joint partner with our sister services known for integrity in all of our activities, including supporting the joint mission first and foremost. We will provide compelling air, space, and cyber capabilities for use by the Combatant Commanders. We will excel as stewards of all Air Force resources in service to the American people, while providing precise and reliable Global Vigilance, Reach and Power for the Nation.”

AIR FORCE MISSION

The mission of the UNITED STATES AIR FORCE is to fly, fight and win in air, space and cyberspace.

AIR FORCE PRIORITIES

- **Reinvigorate the Air Force nuclear enterprise**
- **Partner with the Joint and Coalition Team to win today’s fight**
- **Develop and care for Airmen and their families**
- **Modernize our air and space inventories, organizations and training**
- **Acquisition Excellence**





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On the Cover

Basic Trainee Ramia Husbands joined the Air Force to not only serve her country, but also to further develop her education. Her hometown is Washington D.C.

photo illustration by
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 Lance Cheung and
 G. Patrick Harris
 design by G. Patrick Harris

COMMENTS

Got something to say about Airman? Write us at airman@dma.mil, or visit www.AIRMANonline.af.mil, to share views with fellow readers.



FEAR THE HOG



In regard to what Capt. Terrell Eikner stated in the [July-August 2008] issue of Airman magazine, the captain wrote he believed the cover photo of the A-10 was an "... awful cover photo of a very dirty A-10 [and] is disrespectful to Spangdahlem maintainers and A-10 maintainers everywhere." I have to disagree. I have been a maintainer of the A-10 at a home base where we — maintainers and pilots — are being trained for war. I have also been deployed where the A-10 receives brutal and unending use in the war to fight terrorism. At a deployment site, a dirty A-10 is viewed as a "high flyer" in air/ground support for the Army in the wars we are carrying out. They are there to serve a purpose of war, not to be pretty. Only when A-10s are at museums, in air shows or at home station are they expected to be clean.

I believe the cover photo of the A-10 Thunderbolt II "Warthog" was a respectful and realistic tribute to all the hard work maintenance personnel expend to make the aircraft fully mission capable.

Staff Sgt. Rodney Transfiguracion
Sheppard AFB, Texas

I read Airman magazine and have loved it since day one. I recently retired as a chief master sergeant after more than 30 years and felt I must reply to the editorial by Capt. Terrell Eikner from Whiteman AFB, [Mo.] regarding his request for your magazine to apologize to the A-10 community for placing a "dirty" A-10 on the cover of [the July-August 2008] Airman magazine for the Fear the 'Hog' article.

I had the honor of being the chief of the 81st Aircraft Maintenance Unit — owners of that dirty Hog — prior to their deployment to Bagram AB, Afghanistan during that time. I have never met a finer group of maintainers or anyone more proud of the Hog than those

professionals. I have many years of "crewing the Hog" and was an A-10 dedicated crew chief for more than six years. I agree with the captain that the 81st AMU did a superior job of meeting the mission and "getting-R-done."

But, I am wondering how much time the captain has around a Hog and his knowledge of what the desert life and gun smoke from the seven barrels of "whoop butt" does to a "clean" aircraft. I know firsthand it's very difficult, if not impossible, to keep the "beast" clean. Yes, the 81st AMU could have done a static display for the photo and wasted several man hours making the Hog shine — wrong answer! I believe taking the photo of an aircraft that possibly was being prepared for another mission was spot-on. Please do not issue an apology. Keep the awesome articles flowing so I can continue enjoying being aware of what our Air Force is doing.

Chief Master Sgt. Mark Greatorex
Retired

I'm a recruiter in Georgetown, Texas, and I loved the article on the A-10 that was published in the [July-August 2008] Airman magazine. I thought it was spot-on as far as the team effort that goes into keeping our aircraft flying during the war. Anybody who has deployed understands that the aircraft take a beating in the harsh desert weather conditions and fully respects the 100-percent effort given day in and day out by the personnel who put these aircraft in the air! I was taken aback by the response written by Captain Eikner asking for an apology over the picture of the aircraft being "dirty."

I use these magazines every day in my job. Some applicants, who may not be looking for a career in this area, have really had their eyes opened and want to be a part of something like this. They say a picture is worth a thousand words and I truly think this picture on the cover shows a lot of blood, sweat and tears. I say, "great job" on the article and keep them coming!

Tech. Sgt. Damien Larche
Air Force recruiter, Georgetown, Texas

In respectful response to Capt. Terrell Eikner regarding his dissatisfaction with your Fear the 'Hog' cover, I'd like to make this observation: As a former A-10 maintainer with experience in taking the Hog into combat, that dirt is generally

viewed as a sign your jets are flying well and that maintainers are doing a good job of keeping them flying. It's no secret that the A-10 is, by nature, a dirty jet with the 30mm cannon hanging out the front. Much of that dirt is gun gas residue and proof that it's fighting.

If a jet is flying well and in the fight, then it's going to be dirty and stay dirty until it's scheduled for a wash. I, for one, would be, and have been, proud the jet is going out and being used to get the job done, regardless of its appearance. Besides, I'm sure those who count on the Hog for close air support sure don't care that it's dirty.

Tech. Sgt. R.J. Horacek
F-15 (former A-10) flightline avionics technician
104th Fighter Wing
Massachusetts Air National Guard

AIRCRAFT RECOGNITION



I enjoy your magazine and its high-quality format. The photos are excellent quality and the content is interesting, cover to cover.

I was dismayed, however, to find mistakes in the material that should have been caught. The photo on Page 24 [September-October 2008] is clearly not a C-130 and I think the reference on Page 30 should say the "Canadian CF-18 Hornets," not "CF-188." The latter could be a simple typo, but the C-130 should be recognizable to every Air Force member.

As the flagship magazine of our service, I am starting to doubt every other fact in "Airman" that I do not personally know is true. I get a lot of my information from your magazine about other career fields, theaters and missions; but, now I can't tell which of it I can count on being correct.

I'm sure I join plenty of other people who would gladly "fact check" your copy before its release.

Lt. Col. John Bradley
N.Y. Air National Guard

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ABOUT AIRMAN

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The opinions of contributors are not necessarily those of the Air Force.

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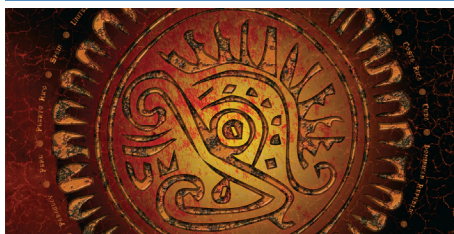


No doubt you've already been informed of this, but the aircraft flying overhead in the picture on Page 24 of *Airman* magazine [September-October 2008] is not a Lockheed C-130 Hercules. It, however, does bear a striking resemblance to a Transall C-160. Can anyone there confirm that ID?

Respectfully,
Lt. Col. Elliott Stoffregen III
Maxwell AFB, Ala.

Editors' note: American Airmen know their aircraft! We received more e-mails identifying the aircraft in the photo on Page 24 of the September-October 2008 issue than we could publish. The aircraft is, in fact, a Transall C-160. The two-engine military transport aircraft is used primarily by Canada, France, Germany, South Africa and Turkey. At 32.4 meters, the C-160 is 3.1 meters longer than the C-130 Hercules and 2.29 meters shorter than the "stretched" version. More notably in the photo, the aircraft has a flatter tail fin. Additionally, there was a question about the identification of the CF-188 on Page 30 in the same issue. The CF-188 is the official designation for the Canadian fighter aircraft. However, the converted American F-18 Hornet is more commonly referred to as a CF-18 Hornet. *Airman* staff always strive for accuracy and remain committed to identifying personnel and equipment accurately.

HISPANIC HERITAGE



I think it's very important for everyone to recognize the diversity of our Air Force. I am proud to be an American and I will never forget that. I am also proud to be Colombian. I was the first of three brothers to be born in the United States. When I looked at the last page of the September-October 2008 *Airman* magazine I was proud to see the ad about Hispanic Heritage Month in our magazine.

I was a little sad to see that they misspelled Colombia in the ad, but I was even more impressed to see you had included the United States. Many people don't realize that we are a diverse nation of many cultures and backgrounds. Thanks for all the great articles and continuing to recognize the great Airmen of the U.S. Air Force.

Airman 1st Class Jeffrey Echeverry
Tinker AFB, Okla.

Editors' note: The *Airman* staff strives for accuracy in all areas of the magazine and regrets this error.

IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

The act of giving blood is a most generous and selfless gift. During National Blood Donor Month, we salute you, our dedicated blood and platelet donors, and send our gratitude for your donations.

militaryblood.dod.mil



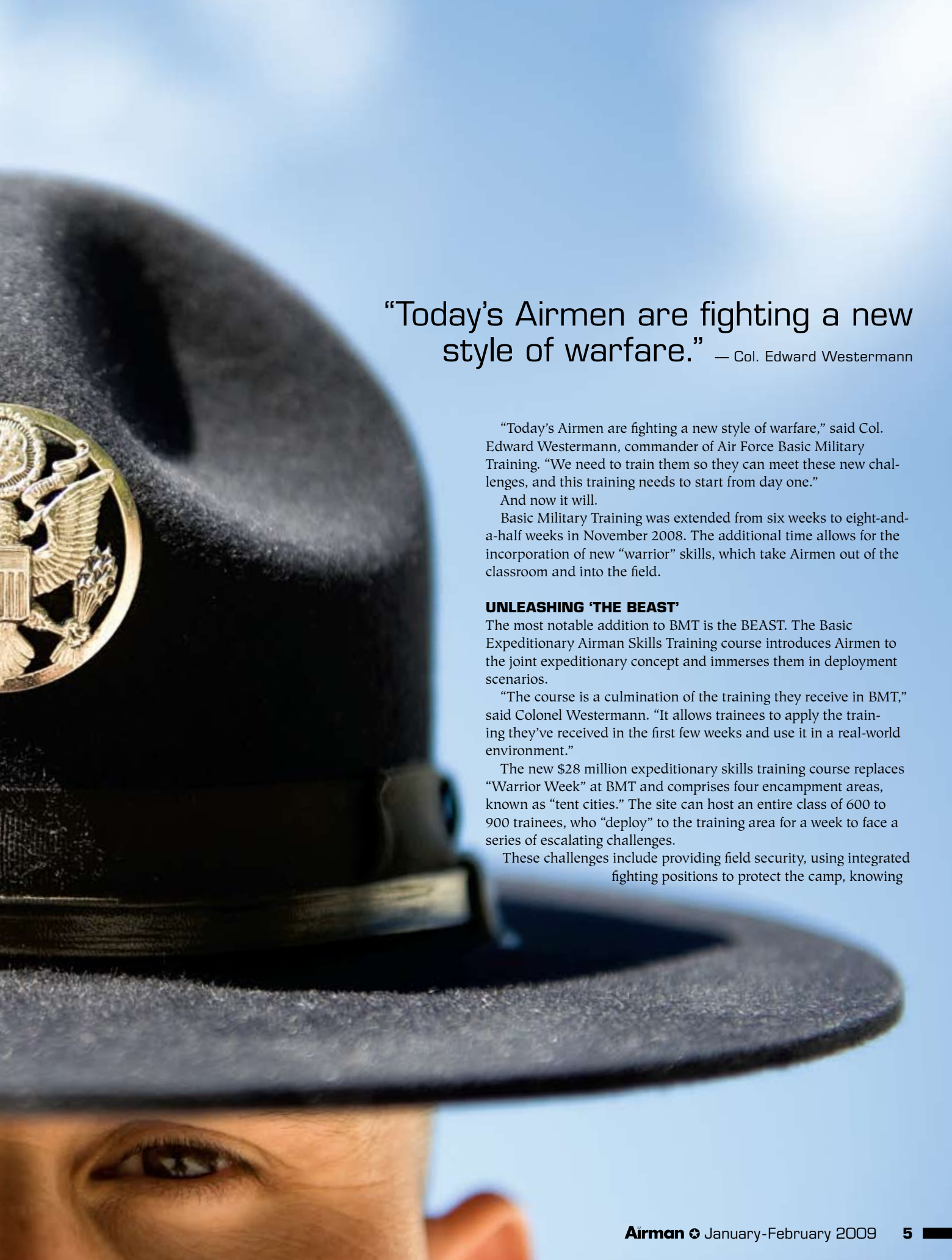
NEW AIRMEN FOR A NEW WORLD

AIR FORCE BASIC MILITARY TRAINING
ADDS TWO-AND-A-HALF WEEKS OF
TRAINING DESIGNED TO HELP AIRMEN
MEET THE CHALLENGES OF AN EVOLVING
JOINT COMBAT ENVIRONMENT

STORY BY STAFF SGT. MATTHEW BATES
PHOTOS BY STAFF SGT. DESIREE N. PALACIOS
DESIGN BY G. PATRICK HARRIS

The Cold War is over, but a new war has emerged to take its place. In this war, temperature is not a factor, terrorism is. Missiles have been replaced by improvised explosive devices, and the enemy, once easily identifiable, is now hard to find. Combat has evolved, and today's Airmen need to evolve with it.

Recognizing this, Air Force leaders are changing the way Airmen are developed, starting at Basic Military Training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.



“Today’s Airmen are fighting a new style of warfare.” — Col. Edward Westermann

“Today’s Airmen are fighting a new style of warfare,” said Col. Edward Westermann, commander of Air Force Basic Military Training. “We need to train them so they can meet these new challenges, and this training needs to start from day one.”

And now it will.

Basic Military Training was extended from six weeks to eight-and-a-half weeks in November 2008. The additional time allows for the incorporation of new “warrior” skills, which take Airmen out of the classroom and into the field.

UNLEASHING ‘THE BEAST’

The most notable addition to BMT is the BEAST. The Basic Expeditionary Airman Skills Training course introduces Airmen to the joint expeditionary concept and immerses them in deployment scenarios.

“The course is a culmination of the training they receive in BMT,” said Colonel Westermann. “It allows trainees to apply the training they’ve received in the first few weeks and use it in a real-world environment.”

The new \$28 million expeditionary skills training course replaces “Warrior Week” at BMT and comprises four encampment areas, known as “tent cities.” The site can host an entire class of 600 to 900 trainees, who “deploy” to the training area for a week to face a series of escalating challenges.

These challenges include providing field security, using integrated fighting positions to protect the camp, knowing

entry control procedures and performing tasks while undergoing simulated attacks.

“I think this is as realistic as we can get here at BMT,” said Colonel Westermann.

This realism means trainees are placed in field situations where the knowledge they receive in the classroom is put to the test. These warriors-in-training will face convoy duties and are introduced to what deployed Airmen endure in a deployed environment on a routine basis — mortar rounds, base attacks, IEDs and unexploded ordnance.

“They’re taught how to identify potential threats and how to react to them,” said Master Sgt. Magdalena Cortez, a training instructor with the 737th Training Support Squadron.

The BEAST introduces trainees to basic combat skills as well as how to take care of themselves and each other. The course also offers more hands-on instruction in self aid and buddy care — 16 hours now compared to the couple of hours previously taught.

The BEAST culminates in a final day challenge. Here, trainees experience the sounds, sights and smells of combat. The event prepares them for the intricacies of modern warfare. In today’s expeditionary Air Force, non-traditional combat and an unconventional enemy warrants warfare training different from the tactics of the past.

This is important, because many trainees will find themselves deployed shortly after graduating from their technical training schools and arriving at their first duty stations. Air Force officials estimate 85 percent of all Airmen will deploy at least once during their careers, and these deployments are mainly to hostile areas.

“Our Airmen are warriors,” said Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Rodney McKinley. “There are many Airmen in joint missions who are helping to win today’s fight ‘outside the wire’ and from stand-off locations within the U.S. and around the globe.”

At the same time, Airmen are taking on more and more varied



Basic trainees march through an “improvised explosive device lane” during field training. This training is done during Basic Military Training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

operations than ever before. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates noted that more than 6,000 Airmen are performing nontraditional missions on the ground, from detainee operations to explosive ordnance disposal as well as convoy security and provincial reconstruction teams participation.

“Put simply, without the Air Force’s contributions in the skies and in many cases, on the ground, America’s war effort would simply grind to a halt,” said Secretary Gates.

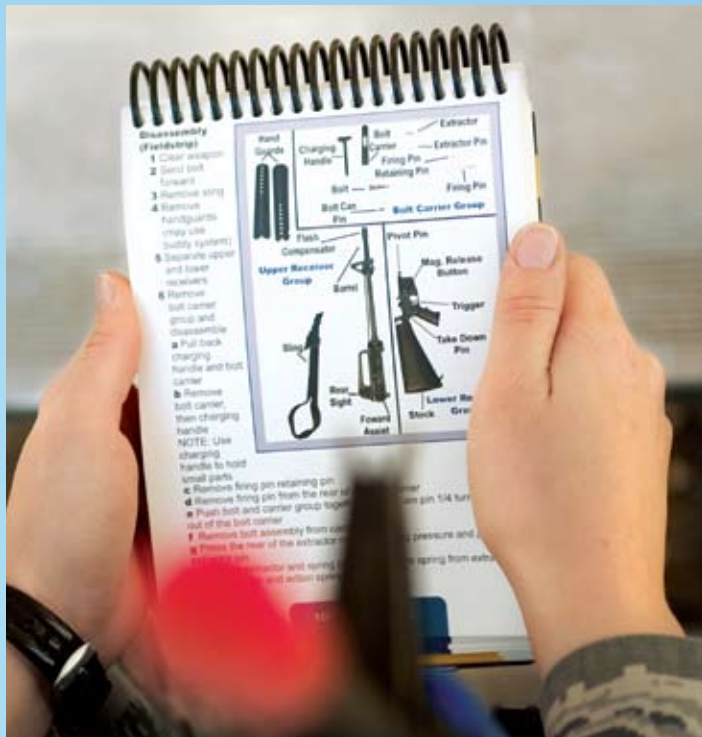
The secretary also reminded Airmen that basic training is just the first step on a path where they will be big players in defending the United States and its interests, both at home and overseas.

“It is no easy task, but it is a vital one if the United States is to remain safe, prosperous and strong,” he said.

Basic Military Training officials point out that, this is another



The Basic Expeditionary Airman Skills Training course, or the BEAST, is a new facility added for the two additional weeks of basic military training and replaces “Warrior Week.” The \$28 million course consists of four zones, called tent cities. Each zone, designed to immerse Airmen in realistic training, consists of 10 tents, one latrine, one hard shelter and one tower.



A basic trainee reads through her "Airman's Manual" during a portion of field training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.



A class of basic trainees inspect their weapons during a portion of a field training exercise at Lackland Air Force, Texas.

reason the new version of Air Force BMT is so important.

"This means Airmen need to have basic combat skills," said Chief Master Sgt. Kevin Ludwig, BMT superintendent. "The new training in BMT will do this . . . give trainees skills now they can use throughout their careers."

WARRIORS IN THE MAKING

The BEAST isn't the only part of BMT dedicated to "warrior" training. The extra two-and-a-half weeks of BMT are packed full of expeditionary skills training. Previous courses have been expanded to meet the demands of a changing combat landscape.

I think going from six weeks to eight-and-a-half is a lot better because of the applications and the thoroughness of the classes we will be able to provide for the trainees, said Sergeant Cortez.

Trainees now learn to use, clean and fire the M-16 rifle and the M-9 pistol. There is a new joint warfare module and increased emphasis on Air Force heritage. Basic self defense training also has expanded and trainees even learn how cultural sensitivity and human relations are applicable to the military.

"Learning how to fold t-shirts and socks are still important parts of BMT, but this new training is on another level," said Chief Ludwig. "This is training that will teach Airmen how to be warriors and survive in a joint service environment."

TRAINING THEIR OWN

These changes don't only affect trainees. The BMT staff is also feeling the impact of this new, improved BMT. More training means more instructors are needed, and before the instructors can teach the new training schedule, they have to be familiar with it themselves.

"What people often overlook is the fact that everything a training instructor teaches trainees, he or she has to go through first," said Chief Ludwig. "So, we've been putting our instructors through the paces here, getting them up to speed with the new changes and making sure they're ready to teach the trainees."

This also means BMT officials are constantly on the lookout for individuals who would like to become training instructors.

"Because the training schedule is now a few weeks longer, this means we actually need more instructors," said Colonel Westermann. "If anyone's been thinking of becoming a TI, now's a great time to look into it."

A TIME FOR CHANGE

These new changes to BMT weren't made simply for the sake of change. They were necessary and a long time in coming, according to leaders at the 737th Training Group.



Basic trainees work their way through an obstacle on the Basic Military Training obstacle course at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.



A basic trainee yells out to his wingman while providing defensive cover during the tactical assault course at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. The tactical assault course tests the defensive tactics and communications skills of trainees.

“I call this the most historic change in the history of BMT,” said Colonel Westermann. “It’s an important time for the Air Force, and it’s a worthwhile, needed change.”

Air Force officials first started looking at how to best change BMT several years ago, when then-Chief of Staff Gen. John Jumper realized Airmen needed to develop warrior skills early on in their careers. Then, after a tri-annual review of Air Force basic military training, the current changes were designed. The review, which brought together chief master sergeants from around the Air Force, used an analysis of lessons learned from such places as Iraq, Afghanistan, the Philippines and the Horn of Africa to develop and propose the changes.

“The goal was to determine how we could best prepare young men and women to meet the challenges of today’s Air Force,” said Colonel Westermann. “The answer was to start right at the beginning of their training — right here at BMT.”

So, as today’s combat continues to evolve, tomorrow’s Airmen already are being trained to be capable, ready and willing to meet the challenges of this new joint combat environment. 🦅



A basic trainee pours water into a Meals, Ready to Eat during a field training exercise.



Staff Sgt. Edward Lozano (center) briefs basic trainees about the tactical assault course at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. Sergeant Lozano is a basic military instructor for the 737th Training Support Squadron. The tactical assault course tests the defensive tactics and communications skills of trainees.



A basic trainee removes his mask in the mask confidence training facility. Mask removal lets trainees experience the importance of proper mask training.



Basic trainees take cover in sand bunkers during their defensive fighting position training during field training.

MILITARY TRAINING INSTRUCTOR

Staff Sgt. Nicole Pino

photo by Staff Sgt. Desiree Palacios



“ Since I was a trainee going through Basic Military Training myself, I knew I wanted to be an MTL. When I actually got accepted to become one, I had no idea how much I would love the job. You hear a lot about the long hours and demanding expectations but, for me, it’s all worthwhile. Being an MTL is definitely one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. I can’t describe how it feels to march your flight down the bomb run on graduation day. It’s such a sense of pride and accomplishment. I truly believe I have one of the best jobs in the Air Force. ”

HOME UNIT/BASE:
737th Training Support Squadron
Lackland Air Force Base, Texas

HOMETOWN:
Pueblo, Colo.

ENTERED AIR FORCE:
Oct. 20, 1999

PRIMARY AFSC:
4Y0XX - Dental technician

IT'S TIME TO STEP UP, STEP OUT, AND TAKE ON NEW CHALLENGES!

IN 2009, THE AIR FORCE END-STRENGTH IS INCREASING MORE THAN 4,000+

THE AIR FORCE NEEDS OUTSTANDING ARMEN LIKE YOU TO ENSURE
THE AIR FORCE CAN MEET THE CHALLENGES OF TODAY AND TOMORROW.

NEEDED: 500 RECRUITERS, 205 TECHNICAL SCHOOL INSTRUCTORS, 200 MTIS

VOLUNTEER TODAY!



To volunteer for special duty assignments, check out EQUAL Plus and apply online.
For more information e-mail the Recruiting Screening Team at rst@rs.af.mil or the BMT Training Team at MTIR@lackland.af.mil



Gen. Stephen Lorenz stands in front of his T-1A Jayhawk on the flightline at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas. General Lorenz is the Commander of Air Education and Training Command. He is responsible for the recruiting, training and education of Air Force personnel. His command includes the Air Force Recruiting Service, two numbered air forces and Air University. The T-1A Jayhawk is a medium-range, twin-engine jet trainer used in the advanced phase of specialized undergraduate pilot training for students selected to fly airlift or tanker aircraft.



MOLDING THE FUTURE

GENERAL CREATES VECTOR TO DEVELOP
AIRMEN OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

STORY BY STAFF SGT. MATTHEW ROSINE ✦ DESIGN BY LUKE BORLAND

For many people, tomorrow is another day. But, for Gen. Stephen Lorenz, developing the Airmen of tomorrow must be done professionally and decisively, today.

As the leader of Air Education and Training Command, he has an obligation to meet the Air Force's joint combat mission. He must also help create the Air Force of the future — a legacy to be carried forward for the more than 300,000 Airmen currently serving around the world.

This challenge is something the 1973 Air Force Academy graduate is ready to face, with the support of the men and women of AETC.

"I am extremely proud to be associated with the men and women of the First Command. They are the ones who do the mission, and they deserve the credit," said General Lorenz. "I've had the opportunity to meet with many of them as I've traveled around the command, and I have been deeply impressed with their intelligence, tenacity and patriotism."

WINNING TODAY'S FIGHT

Training more than 340,000 students every year, AETC stretches across 13 different bases and uses the efforts of more than 88,000 active-duty, Guard, Reserve, civilian and contractor personnel.

It is these professional leaders who are the foundation of the command's programs, the general said.

"Our men and women are recruiting, training and educating our force so that we have the knowledge, skills and expertise to 'win today's fight.' That's our core competency in AETC, and I am continually amazed as I travel around and watch our people pour their hearts into recruiting the best and brightest, training them in their primary skills, and educating them to apply critical thinking," the general said.

The enlisted Basic Military Training and officer training programs provide Airmen with the military and warrior skills foundation they need to succeed in today's Air Force. Then the technical and flying training programs build on this foundation and provide each Airman with the technical proficiency to succeed in air, space and cyberspace — on the battlefield of today's fight.

The AETC umbrella also includes Air Force Recruiting Service, two numbered air forces and Air University.

"From our enlisted Basic Military Training at Lackland AFB to our senior officer courses at Air University, we deliver the right mix of training and education for the Air Force," he said. "While our people are doing a great job of training and educating a force that can 'win today's fight,' they are also directly contributing to the fight."

On average, during the last three years, approximately 4,400 men and women assigned to AETC have deployed in support of the war on terrorism and other operations around the globe, providing combatant commanders with the knowledge, skill and expertise to win today's joint fight.

"Many of them are doing things that relate to our core competencies, such as training our partners how to fly and fix airplanes or educating them to lead their new organizations," said General Lorenz.

This is experience these warfighters bring home to help future Airmen overcome any challenge on tomorrow's battlefield, he said.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

For General Lorenz and AETC, the race to victory must overcome three main hurdles — limited resources, modernizing the Air Force's aging air and space inventories and maintaining flexibility to meet

photo by Robbin Cresswell



Despite a downpour, Airmen from the 326th Training Squadron flights 261 and 262 recite the oath of office as graduating Airmen from Basic Military Training at the Lackland Air Force Base parade field in San Antonio.

"While our people are doing a great job of training and educating a force that can 'win today's fight,' they are also directly contributing to the fight." — Gen. Stephen Lorenz

future training requirements.

"Just like everyone else, we have big challenges because we are balancing shortfalls across our command while striving to meet increased goals in recruiting and student production," the general said. "Our leaders have to make wise decisions about where to put their focus, because they only have so much money, manpower and time."

When dealing with the challenge of modernization, General Lorenz has already put the command on the correct vector.

"We are constantly working to deal with an aging aircraft fleet. Many of our airplanes are just plain old, and we are taking some extraordinary steps to maintain a fleet that is safe and reliable," he said. "My goal is that an aircrew member never has to worry about his or her airplane being fundamentally safe. I know they are always ready to react if something goes wrong, but I want them to also have the confidence that we've done our due diligence in making sure that airframe is ready to fly. We've examined the airplanes and made



Senior Airman Andrew Caro and Staff Sgt. Dustin Maglinti take aim at a target building during a training exercise at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. They are close-precision-engagement-team members who are trained to blend into their surroundings.

some changes to our inspection routines to ensure that is the case. I'm also confident that we will get some newer airplanes in the future, although not as soon as we want them."

Today's Airmen-in-training are also being prepared for their role.

"A third challenge for our command is remaining flexible enough to provide relevant training as the world changes. Our force is constantly learning and growing in the field, and we must take these lessons and transfer them to the next generation of Airmen," said General Lorenz. "This means we must adopt processes to quickly incorporate what we've learned into our curriculum. We also have to adjust to changing demands due to the current fight, including a dramatic increase in the demand for battlefield Airmen, (Unmanned Aircraft Systems) operators and special operations pilots."

ENABLING JOINT AND COMBINED OPERATIONS

As the war on terrorism evolves, and the Air Force's role in global operations expands, the Airmen emerging from AETC must be prepared to utilize their skills and training in an ever-changing environment.

"We have rapidly fielded training programs to prepare our forces to survive and fight in Iraq and Afghanistan," said General Lorenz.

Some of these programs include the Basic Combat Convoy Course. This course provides integrated convoy teams the ability to operate globally in conditions spanning potential threats in a myriad of environments.

Air Education and Training Command also created an Air Advisor training program for Airmen to help rebuild both the Iraqi Air Force and the Afghanistan National Army Air Corps. This program provides basic combat skills training, cultural awareness and language

training, and Air Advisor tactics, techniques and procedures for more than 750 Airmen annually. The command provides Air Advisor training for all of the services. Many of these Air Advisors provide flight or maintenance instruction on several different partner-nation aircraft such as the Russian Mi-17 helicopter.

"One of our biggest success stories in AETC is that the command has become the lead command responsible for training Airmen assigned to fill Joint Sourcing Solutions slots for joint force commanders," said General Lorenz.

"This means we have provided training for more than 7,000 Airmen annually in jobs that we don't normally do as Airmen," he said. "The feedback I get about these Airmen is very positive. The joint force commanders are very happy with their performance in the field, and all of us at the senior levels are very proud of them."

The command has also created the Evasion and Conduct After Capture course that provides advanced survival training for Airmen.

"We hope that our Airmen never have to use this training, but making it available to those Airmen who could find themselves in enemy hands is the right thing to do," the general said. "We want to give them the tools they will need to 'return with honor.'"

Additionally, AETC stood up the Basic Expeditionary Airman Skills Training program, known as the BEAST, at Basic Military Training. This program introduces expeditionary skills training for all enlisted Airmen. The command also completed an overhaul of the Officer Training School and the Air and Space Basic Course. It now integrates basic expeditionary skills training throughout the officer training curriculum.

All of these efforts are focused on enabling tomorrow's Airmen to succeed this era of joint and combined operational environments.



Capt. Sam Allen, 563rd Flying Training Squadron instructor and Unmanned Aircraft Systems Fundamentals Course director at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, operates the controls of a battlespace simulator in the course's laboratory.



Staff Sgt. Nicole Saulsberry and her flight pass in review during a Basic Military Training graduation ceremony at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. Sergeant Saulsberry is a military training instructor with the 323rd Training Squadron.

FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

Developing the Airmen of tomorrow is a daunting task. To help keep the command heading in the right direction, leadership uses a variety of avenues to help determine the training and educational needs of Airmen.

One such method was the Future Learning Survey AETC conducted in 2008. This survey revealed that today's Airmen are increasingly familiar to new innovative technologies, and AETC plans accommodate their growing affinity for technology.

"We are using the Future Learning Survey to focus our research efforts as we look to transform our learning systems. Young people are very comfortable with new technologies, and future Airmen will come into the Air Force expecting to use these technologies to help them learn and grow," said General Lorenz. "Our job is to find the right mix of technologies and learning techniques to allow each Airman to reach his or her potential for service. This means that we use the most effective means to deliver education and training.

"Sometimes the best way to learn is hands-on, sometimes it is listening to an instructor in a classroom setting, and sometimes it is

reading a manual or computer screen," he said. "In the future, we may deliver training and education in new ways, perhaps through experiences in 'Second Life' or self-paced courses that allow a student to learn at his or her own speed. We all learn differently. For example, some of us learn best from reading while others like to talk about the course material. I'm excited about the possibilities of teaching and training Airmen according to their own learning styles."

These improved programs will have an impact on many facets of Air Force operations, such as space superiority and the use of unmanned aircraft systems.

Since the September 2008 announcement by Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton A. Schwartz, these emerging requirements now include unmanned aircraft systems.

In his announcement, General Schwartz said the Air Force will assign 100 pilots a year from undergraduate pilot training directly to UAS operations to help meet the projected requirement for an additional 800 UAS operators over the next five years.

"The first thing we must do is fill the immediate requirements for UAS operators, and the Chief of Staff has directed us to send up to 100 new pilots each year to fly these critical assets," said General Lorenz.

To date, only experienced aviators received UAS assignments. To ensure these recent UPT graduates are ready for entry to the UAS formal training unit, AETC started a 'lead-in,' UAS Fundamentals Course at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, in late November. The course is a combination of academics and simulators, with no actual flying operations. But, the program will provide a knowledge foundation to prepare individuals for entry into training for medium to large UASs.

"We are also implementing a test program to see if other Airmen can fill UAS operator roles," said General Lorenz.

After being selected, the first set of 10 officers entered a test UAS pipeline in January. This pipeline consists of light aircraft training, a T-6 simulator-only instrument qualification syllabus conducted at Randolph, followed by entry into the fundamental course before proceeding to the UAS formal training unit. A second beta group of 10 officers enter training in June.

"Our goal is to gather lessons over these



Airmen in training from the 363rd Training Squadron make their way through an obstacle course during a deployment exercise designed to increase their combat skills knowledge.

two courses and make a determination about how we should proceed," the general said.

IMPROVING THE LEARNING CURVE

Leading a trend to innovate new and better ways to train and educate America's Airmen, General Lorenz has overseen the development of new learning centers and spear-headed improvements on long-standing educational opportunities.

Recently, AETC established the Cultural and Language Center of Excellence at the Air University at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., to capture lessons learned from current war on terrorism operations. This center will determine the best way to integrate those lessons with Air Force leadership and Defense Department guidance. The center will also provide recommendations to senior Air Force leadership on future education and training programs that will best position the Air Force to support the joint fight that spans the continuum of warfare.

"There's no doubt that our cultural awareness can improve, and language skills are a major key to unlocking other cultures," said General Lorenz. "Our goal is to make recommendations to the senior Air Force leadership to help us improve in these areas."

Partnered with the Army, AETC developed the Air Advisor ground training curriculum through a partnership with the Army's Joint Advisor Training School at Fort Riley, Kan. All Air Advisors who require training to support the Iraqi Air Force attend flight training with the Navy at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas.

In 2008, AETC stood-up the Electronic Warfare Coordinators Course and the Operation Enduring Freedom Deployers Course. These courses provide joint training for all electronic warfare aircrew as a pre-deployment training requirement to support the Counter Improvised Explosive Device Defeat mission.

The command's commitment has also witnessed AETC using existing programs to help improve training and educating Airmen, such as distance learning programs.

"In recent years, we have invested in distance learning to increase educational opportunities for our Airmen," General Lorenz said. "For example, we've created the Associate to Baccalaureate Cooperative to help our enlisted Airmen earn their bachelor's degrees. We like to call this '12 clicks to being a junior,' because all Airmen have to do is go to the Web site (via the Air Force Portal), and they will find universities that will give college credit for the training they've already accomplished."

Airmen will also be able to apply for tuition assistance and enroll in follow-on courses.

"This is a great example of how distance learning can help our Airmen reach their education goals," said General Lorenz. "For our officers, we have stood up the master's degree program through Air Command and Staff College. This provides officers with a way to get their master's degree online. Nearly a thousand have enrolled, and we recently graduated our first students. An interesting development is that many officers in other services have enrolled because they can get a master's degree and earn their joint PME credits through the program."

This initiative has the potential to provide cost-effective, quality training to more Airmen while saving the Air Force more than \$37 million, starting in fiscal year 2010. This effort will only target those courses that are appropriate for this format to ensure that training via distance learning will be at least as

effective as the in-residence courses being replaced, the general said.

Not all courses will maintain the same format that most people are familiar with. This upgraded process will utilize various distance learning forms; to include self-paced courses, where appropriate, but also more interactive forms and tools such as blackboards, chat rooms and web-based seminars.

"We are also actively looking to convert some of our training courses to distance learning. It may be possible to replace some in-residence courses with distance learning, perhaps through 'virtual instructors,'" the general said. "This could save a lot of time and money if we do it correctly. It will be important; however, that we provide our Airmen with the time to do this training — we can't make it an additional duty."

While this effort will yield substantial cost savings and leverage new and emerging technology, it also will greatly benefit Airmen in the form of reduced TDYs and increased training availability.

All these benefits are meant to improve Airmen today. And for General Lorenz and the men and women of AETC, creating the Airmen of tomorrow — the future leaders in air, space, and cyberspace — is essential. There is no time to wait.


"It's never been more important to recruit high-quality Airmen, train them to fight in today's joint environment, and ensure that they have the education they need to adapt to an uncertain future," said General Lorenz. "Our mission is to develop America's Airmen today for tomorrow. Our focus is our people — our Airmen — and we will continue to recruit, train and educate the best Airmen in the world." 

photo by Robbin Cresswell



Staff Sgt. Bryan Garcia and Master Sgt. Ronald Thompson cover each other during training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. They are members of the 37th Training Wing's emergency services team who recently competed in the Southeast Texas SWAT competition, taking first place.



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EDUCATION BENEFITS *Then & Now*

STORY BY RYAN MATTOX ✦ PHOTOS BY LANCE CHEUNG ✦ DESIGN BY LUKE BORLAND

Education benefits and opportunities available to Airmen today have come a long way since their beginning at the end of World War II. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, more commonly known as the GI Bill of Rights, was said to be one of the most important pieces of legislation for servicemembers at that time.

However, the act almost didn't pass. According to historians at the Department of Veterans Affairs, one of the arguments Congress had against the GI Bill of Rights was the idea of paying unemployed veterans \$20 a week. Some in Congress believed the bill would diminish a servicemember's incentive to look for work. Others questioned the idea of sending battle-hardened veterans to colleges and universities, when at the time, it was a privilege reserved for the affluent.

Despite those arguments, Congress eventually agreed something had to be done to help veterans transition into civilian life. On June 22, 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the bill into law and made the Veterans Administration responsible for carrying out the law's key provisions: education and training.

Before the war, a college education or finding employment were difficult to obtain for most veterans. After the war and thanks to the GI Bill, millions who would have flooded the job market without an advanced degree or trade-school training, instead elected to get their education. According to VA statistics, in 1947, veterans accounted for 49 percent of college admissions. By the time the original GI Bill ended, July 25, 1956, 7.8 million of the 16 million World War II veterans had used the benefits.

From July 1956 to 1984, several forms of educational benefits were in effect. The Vietnam-era GI Bill (benefits preceded that war) ran Feb. 1, 1955, to Dec. 31, 1976; the post-Vietnam era Veterans Education Assistance Program ran Jan. 1, 1977, to June 30, 1985; the Montgomery GI Bill began July 1, 1985, and continues until the new Post 9/11 GI Bill kicks off Aug. 1, 2009.

Until that time, today's bill was revamped from the original by Mississippi Congressman Gillespie V. Montgomery in 1984, known as the Montgomery GI Bill or MGIB.



Staff Sgt. Michael Turner, 344th Training Squadron, fills out an answer sheet before taking a College Level Examination Program test at the education center at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

In 2008, the GI Bill was once again updated. The new law gives veterans with active-duty service on, or after, Sept. 11, 2001, enhanced educational benefits that cover more educational expenses, and provide a living allowance, money for books and the ability to transfer unused educational benefits to a spouse or to their children.

These educational benefits for servicemembers have long been a huge incentive for individuals to join the Air Force and have opened doors for them after completing their military service commitments.

"We have talked to many recruiters, and the number-one reason people come into the Air Force is for the educational benefits," said

Master Sgt. Eric Culver, the 37th Mission Support Squadron superintendent of education services at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. "The kids today are joining up to take advantage of what we have to offer them. It is a huge recruiting tool for recruiters out in the field."

Not only have GI Bill benefits given young people a reason to join the Air Force and opened doors for them after they have served, but programs like the Air Force Military Tuition Assistance program have given those who already are serving a reason to continue to serve their country and help themselves create opportunities to accomplish their educational goals.

The tuition assistance program is a quality-of-life program that provides tuition and certain fees for college courses taken by Airmen working on their education. Tuition assistance is capped at \$250 per semester hour or \$166 per quarter hour and is restricted to a maximum of \$4,500 per fiscal year.

The Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard also have tuition assistance programs.

However, for the Air National Guard, TA benefits vary from state to state and each state has specific requirements and qualifications for those benefits.

Airmen in the Air Force Reserve can receive \$250 per semester hour not to exceed \$4,500 annually in tuition assistance. To receive the benefit, Reservists must be pursuing an associate's or bachelor's degree. Reservists who are pursuing a master's degree can receive up to \$187.50 per semester hour not to exceed \$3,500 annually.

With more than 287,000 enrollments and 90,900 Airmen using tuition assistance, the Air Force provided \$164 million for the program in fiscal 2007. The use of tuition assistance has helped those Airmen earn more than 22,000 associate's degrees, more than 5,000 baccalaureate degrees and 5,000 master's degrees in fiscal 2007.

Tuition assistance is authorized for college goals below the doctorate level. An education plan must be on file with a base education office.

"The [TA] program is one of the most frequent reasons given for enlisting and re-enlisting in the Air Force," said Billy Thompson, chief of the 37th MSS Education Services Flight at Lackland AFB.

Tuition assistance started out as a program that paid 75 percent of an individual's tuition. In Jan. 6, 1997, it changed to a rate of 100 percent, with implementation no later than fiscal 1999.

"We offer right now — under the current program — \$4,500 a year in tuition assistance that is available to every individual who is on active duty," said Sergeant Culver.



Counselors at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, helped former Sailor, Jessica Parker, use her educational benefits to pursue her dream of becoming a chef. Education counselors at any military installation can assist current and prior servicemembers.

The program also provided another opportunity for Airmen to get their degrees while on active duty. Airmen like retired Senior Master Sgt. Robert Bates, now a civilian employee with the 37th MSS education technician at Lackland AFB, went to school while on active duty using tuition assistance.

During a brief time in the late 1970s, when he entered active duty, VEAP was the only benefit offered to those joining the Air Force. However, he declined those benefits.

In spite of that decision, Mr. Bates still had an opportunity to complete any educational dreams he may have had by using tuition assistance.

"Initially, it was to get my (Community College of the Air Force degree). But once I got the school fever, I knew, to be marketable, I needed at least a bachelor's degree," he said.

Mr. Bates earned his CCAF degree in 1991. He earned a bachelor's degree in management in 2006.

"The plan was to get everything done before I retired because I knew I didn't have any other benefits," he said. "A college education helps you with speaking, communication and

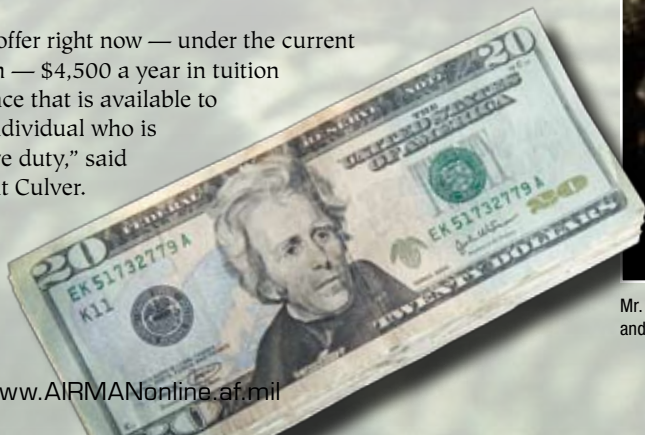
writing. It helped me to convey to the younger troops, if I can do it, you can do it.

"In my career, having TA helped me to go to school, because at the time, I didn't have any money," he said. "I thought TA was a wonderful program because in my case it opened a lot of doors. By trade, I worked munitions on aircraft. At some of the units I was assigned to, I was the only one who had a CCAF degree, so it showed supervisors I had potential. They said, 'So let's let him try' solely based on the fact I had that CCAF degree."

Airmen who joined the Air Force and signed up for the Montgomery GI Bill had another resource to tap into while on active



Mr. Robert Bates (right) explains to Staff Sgt. Jamie Dunkin how to do a \$600 buy-in for GI Bill benefits and how to fund a certification program at a local university in San Antonio.



duty: tuition called "Top-Up."

The program began Oct. 30, 2000.

"This was the first time funds from two different government sources could be used for the same course," Mr. Thompson said. "We pay our 100 percent TA up to \$750 per three-semester hour course; if the cost is more than \$750 then the individual can use his MGIB to supplement under the Top-Up program. For those without the MGIB, there are other types of federal financial aid in the forms of grants and loans which can be applied for to cover the extra costs, including books."

For Airmen who put their educational goals on hold until they complete their service to the country, they have the MGIB or will have the Post 9/11 GI Bill.

No matter which program they use, Mr. Thompson recommends Airmen use their benefits to their advantage, which would be to use tuition assistance first while on active duty and to apply for scholarships and financial aid available to servicemembers.

He also recommends that once guidelines for the new GI Bill are issued, people will have to watch for the announcement and follow the written guidelines on how to sign themselves up. It's not going to be automatic. At the appropriate time, Airmen will have to switch.

Many Guardsmen and Reservists qualify for the MGIB based on their prior active-duty service. Most who don't qualify still can fund their education requirements using the Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve. The MGIB-SR program provides a maximum of \$329 per month, not to exceed 36 months for education expenses.

Donna Swanson used tuition assistance while on active duty to pursue a degree in kinesiology. However, after 20 years of serving

her country, Mrs. Swanson had her GI Bill benefits and finished her degree. She also decided to pursue a career in the culinary arts at a local college in San Antonio still using her GI Bill.

"It's a benefit I feel I have earned," Mrs. Swanson said. "I believe it's a great way to give back to the people who serve their country, and it's a great benefit for them to continue to offer to those who want to serve their country. I think a lot of military people put their lives on hold in order to serve their country. This is an additional benefit so that we can get our civilian lives on track and do what we want to do once we leave the military.

"If it weren't for the GI Bill, I wouldn't be able to afford to go to college," she said. "I make too much to apply for financial aid but I don't make enough to be able to pay for it outright. So without the GI Bill, I just wouldn't have a chance."

For Jessica Parker, getting a college education wasn't in her plans until she heard about the MGIB.

Mrs. Parker said she was an "F" student in high school, but it was her military service and the MGIB that turned her life around. Now, she is an "A" student in a top culinary school in San Antonio.

"If it weren't for the GI Bill, I wouldn't be in college," said Mrs. Parker.

"We hope this new bill will dramatically increase the education level across the United States," said Mr. Thompson. "The GI Bill has turned out to be a tremendous opportunity for our Airmen and to be a real benefit to them."

For some, the benefits Airmen and veterans use to accomplish their educational goals, did more than just help them in their careers. It also helped them adjust to civilian life. ♡

"The GI Bill has turned out to be a tremendous opportunity for our Airmen..." — Billy Thompson



Studying in a secluded spot in the base library, Senior Airman Mark Gabenski, catches up on some reading. The Airman earned his CCAF degree and is currently using tuition assistance to earn his bachelor's degree.

STORY BY JAMES B. PRITCHETT • DESIGN BY MIKE CARABAJAL

OLD SCHOOL

FORMER CMSAF RECALLS DAYS AS MTI

Airmen who arrive at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, for their Basic Military Training now have an additional two weeks to learn skills critical in a joint field environment. With a look at how BMT has changed through the years, retired Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Robert Gaylor recalls his experience as a military training instructor.

In the summer of 1957, becoming an MTI wasn't even on the radar for then-Master Sgt. Gaylor. He was finishing up a tour with the air police at Kunsan Air Base, South Korea, when he strolled into the orderly room to forecast for his next assignment.

Sergeant Gaylor listed four bases in the San Antonio area on his "dream sheet," including Lackland. The Airman helping him said he could guarantee an assignment to Lackland.

Puzzled, the sergeant asked how that was possible.

All the Airman said was, "Leave it in my hands and trust me."

In August, confirmation came. Sergeant Gaylor was indeed on his way to Lackland. He couldn't believe his luck, overcome with excitement he sat down to write his wife and tell her their dream had come true.

After stopping to pick up his family in Laredo, Texas, he was on his way to Lackland.

Sergeant Gaylor arrived at the air police squadron in late September to sign in.

"They confused me by telling me, 'there is no guy named Gaylor pending assignment to our unit,'" said Chief Gaylor. "But, my

photo courtesy U.S. Air Force Military Training Instructor Association



Master Sgt. Robert Gaylor in 1958, during his service as an MTI.

photo courtesy U.S. Air Force Military Training Instructor Association



Preparing his Women in the Air Force flight for Honor Flight inspection, Master Sgt. Robert Gaylor stands front and center on the parade field.

U.S. Air Forces Photo



Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Robert Gaylor in 1977.

confusion turned to enthusiasm when the clerk suggested I was probably going to be an instructor at the air police school on the other side of the base.

"Following his directions, I drove to the school, only to be advised, 'We don't have anyone named Gaylor projected in to the school.' I felt like a lost soul," he said.

Examining Sergeant Gaylor's orders more closely, the clerk exclaimed, "Man, you're going to be a TI!"

"How did that happen?"

Sergeant Gaylor asked.

"You volunteered," the clerk replied, pointing out a (T) after his name on the order.

Airman Johnson, Sergeant Gaylor's Kunsan clerk, had volunteered him to be an MTI.

"I assure you that no one has ever been more surprised about a career change than I was that fall day in 1957," he said.

He went on to serve four years and four months as an instructor at Lackland, starting out as all MTIs do, with on-the-job training. Soon after, Sergeant Gaylor began training his first group of 60 Airmen in Flight 200.

"The six weeks zoomed by, and I was quite overwhelmed by the whole experience. But, I was learning, and I probably did a better job with my second flight," he said. "I was 'getting my feet wet quickly and trying to keep from drowning.' For sure, I put in a lot of hours."

photo by Senior Airman Amber Bressler



Speaking to thousands of Airmen every year, retired Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Robert Gaylor travels to bases where they serve, including this trip to Europe in 2008.

OLD SCHOOL TRAINING

Trainee treatment at that time was much different than it is today. Authoritarian leadership, based on the power and the authority of the leader, helped the U.S. win World War II and continued to be widely used during the Korean conflict. Fear and intimidation were tactics used by some leaders to affect trainee attitude and performance, according to Chief Gaylor. His own introduction to the Air Force in 1948 had been at the hands of leaders with this style of training.

"My supervisor once said to me, 'When I say jump, both feet should leave the ground and stay up there until I tell you to come back down.' If you had more rank than the other person, you had authority over them," said Chief Gaylor.

In 1957, when he began his MTI duty, the authoritarian leadership style still predominantly influenced the behavior of MTIs. It was common practice to threaten, intimidate and provide "in-your-face" commands to a basic trainee.

"I had initial difficulty making that adjustment as I had found that a more participative

selling style had served me better in my role as a leader," said the chief. "As a result, a couple of my peers called me 'grandma' and suggested that I was babying the trainees."

Another common practice was physical abuse of the trainees in an attempt to change trainee attitudes. There were MTIs who served at the same time as Chief Gaylor who were eventually punished for this practice.

After spending two-plus years in a male basic training squadron, Sergeant Gaylor was transferred to the Women in the Air Force basic training squadron as the senior training NCO.

"I recall the use of authoritarian leadership by the instructor was generally less, but there were WAF MTIs who were quite noted for their boisterous style in dealing with the trainees," he said. "It's accurate to say that the actions of the MTIs were mere reflections of the leadership being practiced throughout the Air Force back then."

He left Lackland in 1962 and did not return to the scene until the mid-1970s. During that absence, the techniques employed by MTIs went through a revision, whereby physical and verbal abuse was discontinued.

MODERN BASIC TRAINING

The program is periodically reviewed to improve the quality of training. Recent changes culminated in extending the length of initial training and changing the focus to preparation for duty in deployed locations.

"I think now if you fast forward to 2008, the MTI approach has been greatly

improved. I am not suggesting an absence of discipline, even forcibly verbally administered (nose-to-nose), but the boundaries are much more closely defined," said Chief Gaylor. "The bottom line is, I like the way they do it now much better than the way we did it, and I believe the end product, the graduated trainee, is much better prepared to enter into the Air Force structure."

As for the additional training recruits now face, the chief said he believes it was necessary. As the Air Force continues engagement in the war on terrorism, officials are changing the way they develop and train Airmen, so they are better-prepared to fight the war, and so the service delivers a better prepared force to combatant commanders.

"Airmen are now performing duties on the front lines of action that require war-fighting skills and other tactics previously not required," he said. "We owe it to our Airmen to prepare them for events that they will face in the war zone. It could mean their survival."

MTI DUTY: SERVING THE AIRMAN

Chief Gaylor said he is proud of his service as an MTI, and the time he spent in that role had a positive impact on his Air Force career.

"My advice to MTIs today would be to fully realize the important role they fulfill and the responsibility placed upon them to transition that young Airman from civilian status to a highly disciplined, trainable product," he said. "I would also advise that they enjoy it and have fun while they're doing it, because it is an experience that they will favorably recall in the years to come."

Each year, Chief Gaylor travels around the country and to locations overseas where Airmen serve to speak to them and with them about their service. He speaks at Airman Leadership School and NCO Academy graduations. He meets Airmen serving on the frontlines and those who are supporting the war on terrorism at home and abroad.


"In my travels, I talk to thousands of Airmen, and I advise them of the need for MTIs at Lackland. I tell them to not rule it out until they have a full understanding of the duties and opportunities," he said. "I also tell them that during my four-plus years as an MTI, I learned more about the Air Force than at any other period of my 31-year career and that I am aware that the knowledge I gained as an MTI helped in my future promotions and job opportunities. Although four-plus years was long enough in my book, I have great memories and pride in having served as an MTI." 

photo courtesy U.S. Air Force Military Training Instructor Association

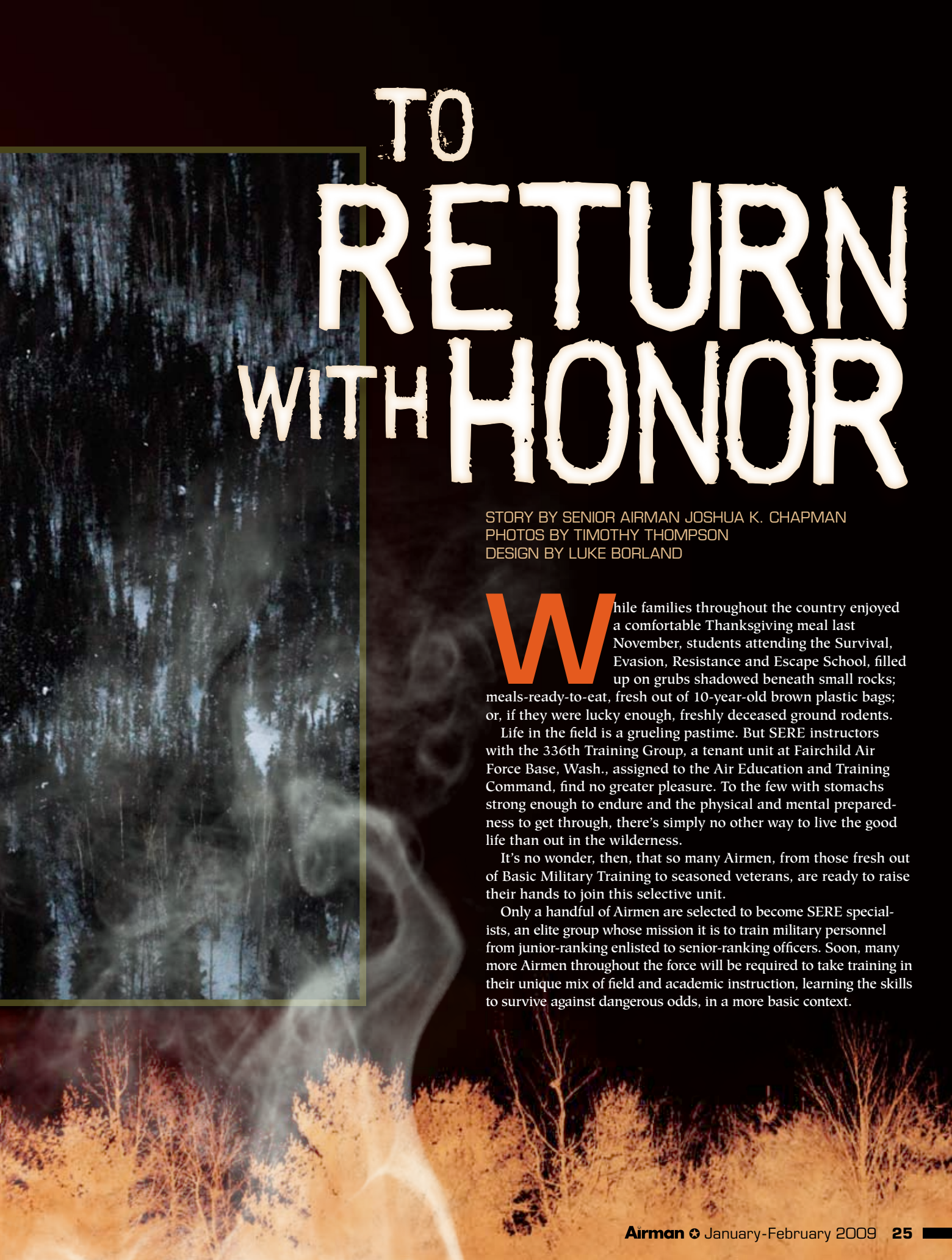


With Women in the Air Force flights marching, Master Sgt. Robert Gaylor leads a pass in review during his tour of duty as a military training instructor at Lackland AFB, Texas, in the late 1950s and early 1960s. While an MTI, he trained both male and female recruits.



Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape students lay out a rescue ground marker and burn rescue flares during an arctic SERE class in Alaska.





TO RETURN WITH HONOR

STORY BY SENIOR AIRMAN JOSHUA K. CHAPMAN
PHOTOS BY TIMOTHY THOMPSON
DESIGN BY LUKE BORLAND

While families throughout the country enjoyed a comfortable Thanksgiving meal last November, students attending the Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape School, filled up on grubs shadowed beneath small rocks; meals-ready-to-eat, fresh out of 10-year-old brown plastic bags; or, if they were lucky enough, freshly deceased ground rodents.

Life in the field is a grueling pastime. But SERE instructors with the 336th Training Group, a tenant unit at Fairchild Air Force Base, Wash., assigned to the Air Education and Training Command, find no greater pleasure. To the few with stomachs strong enough to endure and the physical and mental preparedness to get through, there's simply no other way to live the good life than out in the wilderness.

It's no wonder, then, that so many Airmen, from those fresh out of Basic Military Training to seasoned veterans, are ready to raise their hands to join this selective unit.

Only a handful of Airmen are selected to become SERE specialists, an elite group whose mission it is to train military personnel from junior-ranking enlisted to senior-ranking officers. Soon, many more Airmen throughout the force will be required to take training in their unique mix of field and academic instruction, learning the skills to survive against dangerous odds, in a more basic context.



A Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape instructor teaches a water survival course to SERE students off the Florida coastline.

“It was rough, but that kind of training really develops strength in character and confidence.” — Col. Michael Poole



A SERE instructor signals a student during a portion of water survival training. Water survival training is one of the critical training areas for many SERE students.

“Currently, we have three major phases of SERE training: A, B and C,” said Senior Master Sgt. Thomas Bonsant, superintendent of the 336th Training Support Squadron. “Everyone who joins the military receives at least level A training. And since now-retired Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley ordered it, all Air Force personnel are required to train through level B.”

Level B training was commonly used for moderate-risk-of-capture personnel, but is now a computer-based training that has been directed for all Airmen throughout the Air Force.

In a post-Sept. 11 world, senior Air Force leaders decided to increase training in skills to combat “asymmetrical warfare,” a term used to describe the prevailing type of combat in places like Afghanistan and Iraq. In these zones, suicide bombers, hostage situations and roadside bombs using improvised explosive devices have become more prevalent.

“To combat the new type of enemy that we encounter today, we’ve reshaped and adapted our training regimen,” explained Lt. Col. Michael Poole, deputy commander of the 336th TRG and, as a pilot, a former graduate of the program he now oversees.

“Currently, we train anywhere between 10,000 to 11,000 military personnel every year. In addition to the new programs that we’ve either recently or soon plan to stand up, we expect that number to grow by about 6,500,” he said.

BEATING THE ODDS IN SV-80-A

Littered across television networks and motion-picture media, Americans are confronted with more and more outdoor, survival-gear entertainment. With this provocative look into the life of a person sustaining on little, the topic of military survival training is growing in popularity.

Probably the most well known of the courses offered by the group is SV-80-A, SERE training. Aircrews and other high-risk personnel are required to make it through this training before completing their technical training. The course is a finely-tuned, 19-day lesson designed to hone the critical skills necessary to survive when lost behind enemy lines or, in the worst case scenario, captured.

Trainees learn to survive in harsh terrains, whether they are in frigid, arctic-freezing temperatures; baked, desert-like heat waves; or sweaty, dank rainforests. They train to evade capture in the midst of enemy combatants, to resist the enemy’s demands for sensitive information when captured and to escape successfully when the opportunity presents itself, said Sergeant Bonsant.

All Airmen are taught Article 1 of the Code of Conduct from the very beginning of their training: “I am an American, fighting in the forces which guard my country and our way of life. I am prepared to give my life in their defense.” SERE training reminds students of that commitment and gives them a taste of the meaning behind the promise.

“During SV-80-A, we always fall back on the Code of Conduct,” said Senior Airman Mathew Cothron, a SERE specialist and instructor in the SV-80-A course. “Every night, we end our training by discussing the Code of Conduct and its importance in training and in the chance that a capture does take place.”

THE NEW FOUR-DAY COURSE

More Airmen can expect lessons in survival with the advent of a new SERE course taught by 336th TRG Airmen. The course is a condensed version of the SV-80-A program, lasting four days, shaving off 15 from the main training program. It was taught for the first time in June 2008.

It’s called ECAC, or Evasion and Conduct After Capture, and is geared toward Airmen in deployed environments who are at a higher risk of capture due to their increasing time spent “outside the wire.” Currently, the course targets a select group of Airmen, including Office of Special Investigations agents, transition training teams, security forces, explosive ordnance disposal technicians and some in the civil engineer career field. There are plans to extend the training to an even larger student base in the future.

“The major benefit and goal of expanding this course is reaching a larger audience,” said Colonel Poole. “This short course will allow our experts to teach valuable information to Airmen before they head downrange. It is essential training that will give men and women the skills necessary to return with honor.”

The course’s three main objectives include apprehension avoidance, escape enhancement and evasion techniques. It features

Staff Sgt. Benjamin Westveer demonstrates how to properly form a door plug out of a white parachute panel filled with snow. Sergeant Westveer is a SERE instructor with the 66th Training Squadron at Detachment 1, Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska. The 66th is assigned to the 336th Training Group.



lessons in dealing with captivity, ranging from “peacetime to war-time and hostage detention strategy,” said Colonel Poole.

Cadets at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo., will supplement the cadet-conducted Combat Survival Training with the contractor-based ECAC course this summer, where many of the contractors are retired or separated SERE specialists. Beginning in October, all incoming second lieutenants across the Air Force will take the course during their stay at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., during the aerospace basics phase of their training. In summer 2011, the 336th TRG officials have plans to stand up the ECAC course at the Security Forces Academy located at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio.

Already in the works is a new urban evasion facility to be added to the unit at Fairchild, which will act as the main hub for Airmen training with the cadres. Nearly 30 SERE specialists already have been added to facilitate the growing training demands, with 23 contractors, most of whom were prior SERE specialist themselves, to aid in the process.

AVOIDING THE FREEZE

In their training repertoire, aircrew and other high-risk-of-capture personnel endure arctic training, one of the most physically and mentally strenuous courses. Airman Cothron described his experience in one word as, “miserable.”

“You’ve got to think about what you’re doing at all times,” he said. “You’re thinking about how to keep your body at an even 98.6 degrees. And that’s pretty difficult to do at 25 to 40 below zero.”

The three-day training environment is a test of psychological might, said Airman Cothron. “The first night I wasn’t allowed a fire, and I was given a raft to sleep in. I drank water that was near the temperature of the air around it, and I tried my best not to sweat, because each drop of perspiration would freeze and cling to my body, further adding to the chill factor. All the while, you’re thinking about what you’ve eaten and if you’ve eaten enough. It’s tough.”

Beyond maintaining homeostasis in biological functions, a



A SERE instructor talks to students about various methods of gathering and melting snow for drinking water during arctic survival training in Alaska.

primary challenge in the training involves building a sustainable shelter out of the most plentiful resource around: snow.

“But it gets better as you continue to add some of the ‘niceties,’” said Airman Cothron. “The fire on the second day is welcomed, even though building it in an arctic-like environment is a pretty major, counterintuitive feat in its own right.”

“When I went through the training, the temperature dropped into the 40-below-zero range,” said Colonel Poole. “It was rough, but that kind of training really develops strength in character and confidence. It was well worth it.”

“It gives you the stress inoculation in case something goes bad. That’s what we’re shooting for here,” he said. “I’ve had a lot of guys come back and tell me that when they were faced with a situation, they remembered the training they had taken years earlier. The material makes its impression and when the time comes, people recall what they need to know. That’s the goal.”

SUPPORTING THE ONGOING MISSION

Spread throughout bases globally, SERE specialists are being used

for continuing SERE education, as well as assisting with reintegration of former isolated personnel.

One of the main jobs for the specialists is to help in transitioning military and civilian personnel returning from captivity.

“There are a lot of guys stationed at Joint Personnel Recovery Centers at various world-wide bases who are in charge of managing the joint personnel recovery effort at whatever unit they’re assigned to,” said Colonel Poole. “Whether it be in a forward-deployed space or a base here in the contiguous United States, we have specialists willing and able to assist in missions, both wartime and peacetime.”

Reintegration comes in three phases: diagnosing psychological and physical integrity, recovering usable intelligence to aid in future operations, and helping captives return with the resources they need for successful assimilation.

“It’s important to help returning captives while they reacclimate to society by giving them the decompression and counseling time they need,” said Airman Cothron. “One of the first things we do, besides an intelligence debriefing, is to begin the process of preparing the released to live within society again.”

“The amount of time that they’re in the program is directly proportional to the amount of time that they are held captive,” he said. “Obviously, someone who’s been held as a prisoner of war for many years will require more assistance than someone who’s been gone for a few weeks.”

During the process, vital intelligence is gathered and worked into the SERE course curriculum to supplement existing material with relevant updates.

“As operations take place, the courses continue to evolve to incorporate lessons learned,” said Paul Cepeda, a curriculum developer with the 336th TRG, a SERE historian and a retired U.S. Army intelligence officer. “We continually adapt the courses to expand on the information that we receive from former isolated personnel. There’s plenty to grow from.”

And while SV-80-A, ECAC, arctic training and reintegration counseling are all aspects of the SERE mission, they’re by no means all inclusive. The specialists work in a variety of settings.

Over the past two years, six new courses have been added to the SERE training regimen, and in the near future, the group plans to increase the number of available courses by three, totaling 17 in all. Whether it be on land, in water or in the air, SERE specialists are there training the next batch of military personnel with the tools they need to survive, evade, resist and escape. 🦅



Staff Sgt. Bryan Smith, a Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape instructor with the 66th Training Squadron at Fairchild Air Force Base, Wash., takes notes on student progress during the early morning hours of training in the field.



SERE SPECIALIST

SrA Matthew T. Cothron

photo by Timothy Thompson



“Being a SERE specialist is the greatest job in the Air Force. The job is always changing and evolving, which makes it exciting and also a challenge. It is an honor to know that I am giving aircrew members and battlefield Airmen the tools and confidence they need to survive and ‘Return with Honor.’”

HOME UNIT/BASE:

22nd Training Squadron
Fairchild Air Force Base, Wash.

HOMETOWN:

Indianapolis

DEPLOYMENTS:

CENTCOM

ENTERED AIR FORCE:

Oct. 5, 2004



Frontline *Duty*

DEVELOPING AIRMEN TAKES MANY FORMS

Across the Air Force, the dedicated men and women who are actively serving their country also make time to improve themselves through education and training opportunities.

A myriad of training keeps America's Airmen sharp for the future. Whether preparing at home station, surviving arctic temperatures or serving in the desert, more than 500,000 of America's finest men and women proudly serve as Airmen in our United States Air Force — a total force made up of active duty, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve personnel standing strong to project air, space and cyberspace power around the globe.

Because Airmen play a vital role in the overall success of the force, officers and enlisted alike must have the means and support to develop their full potential in accordance with the "Developing Airmen" core competency. To reach this goal, leadership has set out a plan to execute deliberate, well-thought-out steps of education and training opportunities throughout an Airman's career — never leaving personal and professional development to chance.

—Airman staff

ENTRENCHED.

photo by SENIOR AIRMAN AMBER BRESSLER

Surrounded by sand bags, Staff Sgt. David Dier, 1st Combat Communications Squadron, mans a defensive fighting position in Kriegsfeld, Germany.

The 1st CBGS conducts quarterly combat readiness courses to keep Airmen prepared to perform their missions on the frontline.





⊕ SURVIVING. Careful tending leads to flames as 1st Lt. Matthew Feeman, 80th Fighter Squadron, Kunsan Air Base, Korea, builds a fire to help combat the cold, preventing frost bite and hypothermia during Red Flag-Alaska, at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska. Lieutenant Feeman is playing the role of a “downed pilot” behind enemy lines. He must now survive, evade, resist and escape to successfully complete the training mission.

⊕ SUPERIORITY. An F-35 Lightning II, marked AA-1, lands on a runway at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif. The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Integrated Test Force concluded a series of testing at Edwards. In November 2008, engine air restart tests were completed, marking a significant program milestone and demonstrating the reliability of the F135 engine in flight. The F-35 was put through a series of 12 engine stops and restarts while in flight.





DEEP FREEZE. An LC-130 Hercules sits on an improvised ice runway at Davis Station, Antarctica. A U.S. and Australian medical team moved an injured Australian civilian aboard the aircraft from the camp to a hospital in Hobart, Australia. The mission was flown as part of Operation Deep Freeze. It is commanded by U.S. Pacific Command's Joint Task Force Support Forces Antarctica at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii and provides a unique cold-weather environment training opportunity for Airmen.

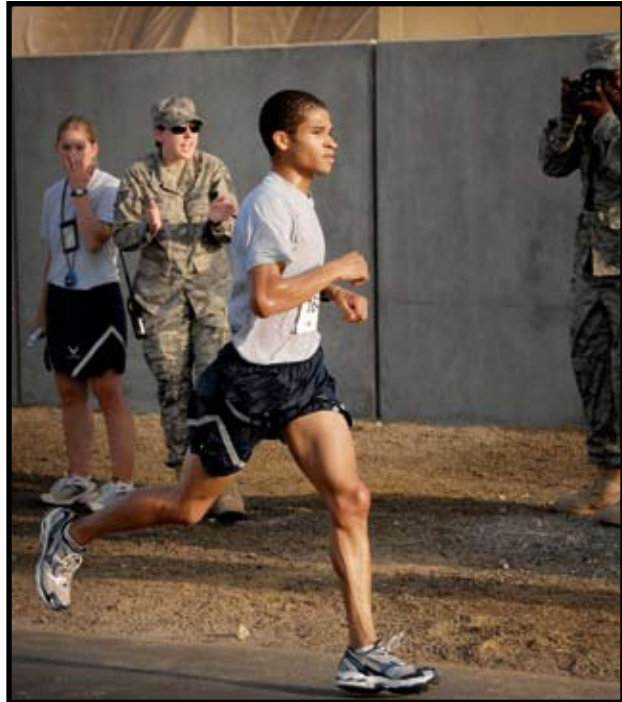


HOT STUFF. Welding is the most common way of permanently joining metal parts. Heat is applied to metal pieces, melting and fusing them to form a permanent bond as Senior Airman Timothy Jeffers, 386th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron combat metals section, welds pieces of a fuel probe mounting bracket together for a C-130 Hercules at an air base in Southwest Asia. Airman Jeffers is deployed from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz.



CROSSING ARMS. Precision and practice are essential for Airmen serving on the Ellsworth Air Force Base Honor Guard Drill Team. Staff Sgt. Ruben TrejoSanchez (left) and 1st Lt. Erik Ruiz rehearse an over-the-head rifle toss at Ellsworth AFB, S.D. The drill team strives to personify the integrity, discipline, teamwork and professionalism of every Airman.

» **'HOG' HEAVEN.** An A-10 Thunderbolt II flies over Afghanistan. The "warthog" provides close-air support for joint services. Pilots endure several months of specialized training before they qualify to fly an A-10.



Ⓜ **MARATHON MAN.** Cheers from the sidelines greet Mike Bowman as he finishes first place in the 13.1-mile "half-marathon" with a time of 1:26:10. It was held at the 380th Air Expeditionary Wing in Southwest Asia. The winner is a Boston Marathon qualifier and hopes to qualify for other named marathons as well. This event was an official extension of the U.S. Air Force Marathon that was held at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, in September. Extensions of the marathon give deployed Airmen the chance to compete as long as they are registered and the event follows official rules.



Ⓜ **CONFLAGRATION.** Flames erupt from a simulated aircraft while Mr. Stephen Elliott and Staff Sgt. John Healey, both of the 366th Civil Engineer Squadron, man hoses to control the fire. Fire department personnel assigned to the squadron train approximately 200 hours each year at this training site on Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho.



Ⓜ **TRAINING ALLIES.** Training occurs wherever Airmen are stationed. It sometimes includes coalition partners. Carrying a blue training rifle, an Iraqi air force warrant officer shows his enthusiasm after low crawling under barbed wire during a Basic Military Training-style tactical course.



KEEPING CURRENT. While news of the U.S. presidential elections roll in, Senior Airman Gustavo Gonzalez, 8th Fighter Wing, reads the results while wearing protective gear during a peninsula-wide operational readiness exercise at Kunsan Air Base, South Korea. Airmen participating in the exercise were tested on their wartime capabilities.



AIRMEN HONOR. As part of the opening ceremony of the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site at Moton Field, Ala., National Park Service officials unveil a sign that designates part of Interstate 85, which passes near the city of Tuskegee, as the Tuskegee Airmen Memorial Highway.

SF SHUFFLE. Loaded down with parachutes and gear, Airmen from the 786th Security Forces Squadron execute an airborne jump exercise over Southwestern Germany.

SMART START

2009 EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES PAVED FOR TRAVEL FOR AIRMEN

STORY BY TECH. SGT. MATTHEW MCGOVERN ✦ DESIGN BY VIRGINIA REYES

Similar to a freeway, the education path in the Air Force branches off to many highways and biways of discovery — often the road less traveled can make the journey smoother.

For 2009, officers can embark on several educational travels with the help of scholarship programs.

THE OLMSTED SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Olmsted Scholarship Program offers two-year, foreign-language educational grants at universities in foreign countries across the globe. Selected Olmsted scholars enroll as full-time students and interact with locals from countries like China and Romania.

“I started my graduate degree in International Relations and European Studies at a Romanian university this week,” said Maj. James Price, Olmsted scholar and

combat aviator. “All of my classes are in Romanian, and I am surviving. I actually know what they are saying, and my colleagues and professors have all commented on the quality of my Romanian.

“There is still much to do before I and others will consider myself fluent, but I am progressing rapidly,” said Major Price.

Using the Olmsted program, Major Price is expected to live on the economy of Romania while exploring the country. While there, he will be connected to U.S. embassies and consulates for administrative and force protection issues. This, with advancement in the language, helps students get to know Romanian culture beyond the tourist attractions.

“My language skills have allowed me to gain the confidence and friendship of my neighbors, friends and associates here in Romania,” he said. “We are now just part of the





Maj. James Price (right) talks with a Romanian national. Major Price was selected for an Olmsted Scholarship. He is currently studying in Romania to strengthen his knowledge of international relations.

neighborhood and that has opened doors into cultural understanding and acceptance.

“We have learned to view the world differently. We have listened to the viewpoints of others and learned about distinct foreign cultures and histories that are new for us,” said Major Price. “Most of all, we have learned that everyone is a lot like us once you look a little deeper and get to know them. They have the same desires, dreams, obstacles and fears.”

The major, who is married, gets to know the locals with his family, who accompanied him on this journey. Married scholar’s spouses also receive grants for language training and to counter balance the costs involved in support of the Olmsted Scholarship Program.

“Another benefit to this program is that we are accomplishing all of this as a family. We spend most of our time outside of school together,” said Major Price. “We travel together, we learn the language together, and we overcome all the challenges of living in a foreign country together. We have become a tighter and stronger family because of the good times and the challenges. The operations tempo back in the regular Air Force was hard on the family and did not provide for a lot of quality time. Our family is enjoying this experience together.”

With the support of his family and the immersion into this foreign culture, Major Price said he feels confident this will help him grow as a leader in the Air Force. Officers who participate in the Olmsted program gain useful experience and may be assigned upon completion to command positions or other high-level assignments, including NATO, joint commands, or with the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

“I am developing many intangible skills related to foreign languages, historical understanding, cultural sensitivities and diplomacy,” he said. “All of this coupled with my experience as a combat aviator, weapons school graduate, and proven leader will only help make me a better Air Force leader in the future.”

“The Air Force spent the last 11 years teaching me how to be the best combat leader and aviator I can be,” he said. “This program now allows me to broaden my narrow focus of the past few years

and form the skills I will need at higher levels.”

For more information about the Olmsted Scholarship Program, visit www.olmstedfoundation.org.

INFORMATION ASSURANCE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Information Assurance Scholarship program offers complete scholarship support to selected officers and enlisted Airmen looking to receive graduate certificates and degrees in information assurance areas.

The IAS program includes tuition, allowance, a paid part-time internship and full-time employment opportunities upon graduation.

The IAS offers undergraduate degrees in computer science and applied information technology, and five Master’s of Science degrees in information security and assurance, information systems, software engineering, computer science, and computer engineering. The program also offers a Ph.D. in information technology or computer science focusing on information security.

“I have found the program to be very beneficial to improving my technical proficiency and professional knowledge,” said 1st Lt. Thomas Moore, IAS student. “As we move into this cyberspace domain, I’ll be asked to perform skills that I wouldn’t have known how to do without this program. This program has given me the technical background I’ll need in order to be successful.”

During breaks in their academic studies, information assurance scholars receive progressive, hands-on experience in information security internships at Department of Defense agencies. In return, scholars must agree to some restrictions and obligations regarding curriculum, GPA and post-program employment. If all conditions are met, information assurance scholars receive full-time permanent positions with the Department of Defense upon program completion.

Lieutenant Moore wasn’t sure if he would be accepted into the program, but now he advises Airmen to apply and take advantage.

“The experience of being here has opened my eyes to all the education opportunities open to Airmen. I was hesitant to apply, thinking I wouldn’t be accepted, but I’m proof that sometimes you can reach your goals if you just try. It has provided me the opportunity to complete my second master’s degree. My first was earned through tuition assistance,” he said.

Lieutenant Moore encourages Airmen to explore the path of the IAS program as well as other educational routes he discovered while in the Air Force.

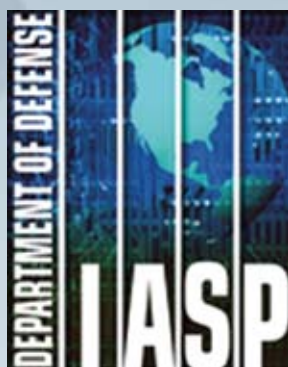
“If you count my (Community College of the Air Force degree), bachelor’s degree, and both master’s degrees, it’ll mark four degrees I’ve earned with little to no education expense to me because I’ve made the most of the education

opportunities afforded to Airmen by the government. And to think I’ve only been in for eight years makes it seem almost impossible,” he said. “It’s not impossible, as long as an Airman knows what the opportunities are and takes the time to take advantage of them,” he said. “I’ll take the knowledge learned here and apply it in my Air Force career immediately upon graduation.”

The program also provided the lieutenant with some AF culture he had not been exposed to previously. The IAS program is not just for communications officers. Enlisted Airmen, pilots, navigators, personnel officers and individuals from other specialties also attend on the scholarship.

“This diverse group of Air Force people has given us the opportunity to gain different perspectives of the overall transition into the cyberspace domain that we wouldn’t have been given if we were in our typical Air Force assignments,” said Lieutenant Moore.

For more information on the Information Assurance Scholarship program, visit www.defenselink.mil/cio-nii/iasp/index.htm/.



WHITE HOUSE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The White House Fellowship program chooses 11-19 highly motivated Americans each year to gain first-hand experience working at the highest levels of the federal government.

Members normally spend one year operating as special assistants to senior White House staff, cabinet secretaries, the vice president or other top-ranking government officials on a full-time basis with pay.

“Given the challenges and opportunities facing the country, it’s critically important that we develop the best leaders possible with this program,” said Janet Eissenstat, the director of the President’s Commission on White House Fellows.

“People who have been through the program say it’s a life changing experience, and it exceeded their expectations,” said Ms. Eissenstat. “They learn a great deal from the experience as well as from other classmates. For example, the current (group of program participants) has an oncologist, microbiologist, F-16 pilot and others; it’s a very diverse mix of people.”

The program also includes an educational section allowing the Fellows to meet with leaders such as foreign heads of state, Supreme Court judges, members of Congress and the President.

According to Ms. Eissenstat, members meet twice a year in the Oval Office where they can ask the President questions.

Fellows also travel to cities and regions outside of Washington D.C., and to other countries to see U.S. policy in action, to learn about other cultures, and to see the U.S. and the federal government from differing points of view.

“Every class picks a two-week international trip,” said Ms. Eissenstat. Last year, it was Russia and Turkey.”

What is learned from the trips and the rest of the program adds to the expertise of the members.

The program staff is available to provide assistance and answer questions. The staff can be reached Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. eastern time at 202-395-4522.

For more information about the White House Fellowship program, visit www.whitehouse.gov/fellows/

MANSFIELD FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The Mansfield Fellowship Program gives selected U.S. federal employees the chance to develop an in-depth understanding of Japan and the Japanese government by attending two years of study in Washington D.C., and Japan.

During the first year, in Washington D.C., members receive full-time training in the Japanese language including presentation instruction, history, culture, economics and in the government of Japan.

Members spend the second year in Japan, where they work full time in agencies of the Japanese government and participate in continued language, education and administrative training. The efforts in Japan help members learn how the Japanese address issues similar to those of their U.S. counterparts.

“Alumni Fellows often tell us their Mansfield Fellowship was one of the best experiences of their lives,” said Margo Grimm Eule, director of communications for the Mansfield Foundation. “They value the experience of living in Japan and gaining practical experience in the Japanese government. They appreciate the relevance of the experience to their government service. Many alumni Fellows returning from Japan have been promoted or assigned to federal government positions with direct responsibility for issues involving Japan.

“It’s rewarding to hear not only how they have applied the expertise gained during their fellowships, but also how they have benefited from the perspective gained and friendships made during their year in Japan,” she said. “I think these Fellows would agree that there is no substitute for being in Japan and working with their counterparts in these ministries. The insights, expertise and contacts they gained during their year in Japan have benefited their Japan-related work on behalf of the Air Force and helped further the partnership between the U.S. and Japan.”

Following their year in Japan, members return to work for the U.S. government service for a minimum of two years, using their new expertise and network of contacts to benefit the agency in Japan-related work.

“Alumni Fellows who return to federal government positions with direct responsibility for issues involving Japan are able to draw on their understanding of Japan and the contacts they made here to find ways our countries can coordinate and cooperate on critical issues like the security alliance, trade, and health care policy,” said Ms. Eule.

“This is what the fellowship program is all about — building bridges and strengthening cooperation and understanding between the U.S. and Japan,” she said.

For more information, on the Mansfield Fellowship program, visit www.mansfieldfdn.org.



Michael Zürn speaks to students at an evening lecture open to the public. Mr. Zürn was a guest professor from Berlin.



Students listen to a guest speaker during an evening lecture. Major Phil Stodick (center) attends the lecture as part of a special education opportunity.

ENLISTED COMMISSIONING PROGRAMS

Airman Scholarship and Commissioning Program

The Airman Scholarship and commissioning Program is for selected Airmen who separate from active duty and enlist into the Air Force Reserve. The ASCP program offers enlisted personnel the opportunity to earn a commission while completing their bachelor's degree as an Air Force ROTC cadet, according to <http://www.au.af.mil/au/holmcenter/AFROTC/EnlistedComm/EnlistedCommissioning.asp>. Those selected may participate for up to four years, depending on their degree program and previous academics. They receive a tuition and fees scholarship for up to \$15,000 per year, textbook allowance of \$900 per year and a cost of living stipend of up to \$500 per month.

Airman Education and Commissioning Program

Airmen can remain on active duty with the Airman Education and commissioning Program and continue to receive all pay and allowances, while going to school full time to complete their bachelor's degree in pursuit of a commission. Airmen selected for AECP receive a tuition and fees scholarship for up to \$15,000 per year, as well as a textbook allowance of \$600 per year. Those selected may participate for up to three years, depending on their degree programs and previous academics. The AECP is only open to specific majors, including nursing, meteorology, physics, math, most engineering majors and certain foreign language and foreign-area studies specialties.

Academy Preparatory School

The Academy Preparatory School is designed to physically, academically and mentally prepare qualified young men and women to enter the U.S. Air Force Academy. Located on the Academy grounds, this ten-month school provides intensive academic preparation to

make selected applicants more competitive for entrance into the Academy. The school's program emphasizes the same four areas as the Academy: academic, military, athletic and character development. The curriculum includes math, English and general sciences. Students at the Prep School are addressed as "cadet candidates."

Scholarships for Outstanding Airmen to ROTC

Up to 54 active duty Airmen can be nominated for the Scholarships for Outstanding Airmen to ROTC. The scholarship provides up to \$15,000 per year for tuition/fees, a \$900 textbook allowance and a cost of living stipend of up to \$500 per month. Military members separate from the Air Force while earning a degree. The SOARs are awarded for two to four years, depending on how many years Airmen have remaining in their bachelor's degree program. Airmen with some or no college credit may apply for the program. Scholarships are awarded in a variety of fields, including technical (engineering, meteorology, architecture, etc.), non-technical, nursing, pre-health and foreign language areas.

Leaders Encouraging Airman Development Program

The Leaders Encouraging Airman Development Program allows commanders to seek out outstanding and deserving qualified Airmen for appointments to the Air Force Academy and AFROTC Scholarship programs.

Professional Officer Course — Early Release Program

The Professional Officer Course — Early Release Program offers active-duty Airmen (who can complete all bachelor's degree and commissioning requirements within two years) an opportunity for an early release from the active-duty Air Force to enter the

Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps. This program is open to students in all majors. If selected, Airmen would separate from the active-duty Air Force, join an Air Force ROTC detachment and become a full-time college student. It is not a scholarship program, although those selected are allowed to use their GI Bill benefits to off-set tuition costs. Airmen receive a \$900 annual textbook allowance and a cost of living allowance stipend of up to \$500 per month. Airmen must pursue a bachelor's degree and will be commissioned as a second lieutenant upon graduation and completion of the two-year program. They will then be returned to active duty (typically within 60 days of commissioning) for at least four years.

For more information on these programs, visit <http://www.airforce.com/education/enlisted/>



CCAF. Education Now

COLLEGE DEGREES OPEN DOORS FOR TODAY'S AIRMEN

STORY BY MASTER SGT. BEN GONZALES ✦ PHOTOS BY LANCE CHEUNG ✦ DESIGN BY MIKE CARABAJAL

This college has no traditional classrooms, teachers, dorms or libraries, but more than 300,000 students are registered. Sixty-seven degree programs are available, and each student can have an individual degree plan developed by any one of more than 5,700 counselors available for assistance. More and more classes are taken by students from homes or even while they are deployed supporting the war on terrorism.

This is today's Community College of the Air Force. It helps enlisted members earn job-related associate's degrees in applied science and other academic credentials that enhance mission readiness. The face of CCAF has changed as 21st century Airmen shape educational needs of the Air Force.

Overseeing the largest multi-campus community college in the

world is Lt. Col. Raymond Staats, the commandant of CCAF at Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base, Ala. The CCAF has more than 5,700 credentialed Air Force faculty members to guide and counsel students who are spread out in 37 states and nine foreign countries.

CCAF students complete 1.61 million hours of college credit each academic year. In 2008, CCAF officials handed out 17,899 associate's degrees, the largest number ever in one year.

It all begins when Airmen report for Basic Military Training.

"Airmen become Community College of the Air Force students as soon as they report for basic training," Colonel Staats said. "They begin earning credits right away with four semester hours of physical education from BMT that goes toward their CCAF degree."

Education is the number one perceived benefit that gets people to join the Air Force. "We keep the promise of education every day for

Airmen, and the availability of education is there throughout their career," he said.

"I joined the Air Force to get an education while I got paid for doing a job full time," said Staff Sgt. Mark Gabenski, an education technician at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. "I've used \$17,000 in tuition assistance that I don't have to pay back, compared to having to get a student loan as a civilian to pay for school. There is no way I could afford that if I wasn't in the Air Force."

Being in the Air Force for five-and-a-half years, the Toledo, Ohio, native already has earned two CCAF degrees, one in information systems technology and the other in education and training management. He is now three classes short of a bachelor's degree in computer information systems management.

"Knowledge is power, and as an education technician, I do my best to help other Airmen develop knowledge through courses and help them earn their CCAF," he said.

"The foundation of liberty is knowledge" has served as the motto for the Community College of the Air Force since it was established in 1972.



The Community College of the Air Force has now moved to its new location at Gunter Annex, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.



Senior Airman Tiffany Harris-Rivera reviews a pamphlet on pre-nursing education at the Lackland AFB, Texas education office. A formal training technician with the 37th Mission Support Squadron, she used the Air Force tuition assistance program to get her bachelor's degree and is now pursuing an education in nursing.



Larry Johnson prepares ceremonial diplomas prior to Community College of the Air Force graduation at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. He is an education specialist with the 37th Mission Support Squadron.

CCAF officials seek to expand that knowledge by providing new ways for Airmen to receive education.

“Airmen are getting education coupled with real-world experience,” said Mr. Billy Thompson, the chief of the education services flight for the 37th Mission Support Squadron at Lackland AFB. “But above all else, Airmen know how to work with people to manage, lead and to teach; and that is where you get all the payback from education.”

“Our students are better-educated warriors,” Colonel Staats said. “Online learning is a new way of presenting education to our students. Instead of taking 12 semester hours in classrooms, Airmen are taking classes on their home computers, or they take classes with them wherever they go, on personal media devices, laptops, on videos or Web cams, so they can do schoolwork at anytime and anywhere. CCAF officials need to be ahead of our time because we have forces around the world, and the younger generation expects educational access no matter where they are. Today’s Airmen are hungry for education.”

To feed the zest for higher education, CCAF officials began to offer the Air University Associate-to-Baccalaureate Cooperative program in 2007. The AU ABC initiative partners CCAF with accredited higher-education institutions to offer bachelor’s degree opportunities through distance learning. AU ABC applies CCAF associate-degree credit toward baccalaureate degrees and requires participants to complete no more than 60 semester hours.

The initiative is for active-duty, Reserve and Guard Airmen, and degree requirements may be completed after a student retires or separates from the Air Force. AU ABC maximizes military education and training, and provides a multitude of online academic and support services for Airmen.

“With AU ABC, students are able to participate in courses anytime, anywhere to earn career-relevant bachelor’s degrees,” Colonel Staats said.

“Educational opportunities have changed so much since

CCAF began in 1972,” said Mr. Thompson. “Initially, Airmen could only earn certificates. Now, Airmen in every Air Force specialty can earn an associate’s degree directly related to their jobs, and they are signing up for classes and taking classes online.”

One thing that has not changed is the help provided by guidance counselors, academic advisers, education technician specialists and test examiners at each education office. These education specialists help Airmen plan and pursue educational goals with tailor-made degree plans.

“With a degree plan, we only pay for courses that we can see absolutely fit into an Airman’s plan,” Mr. Thompson said. “A degree plan gives Airmen the choice of what kind of degree they want and which school they want to take classes through. They have the flexibility to make their degree plans and their wishes for their future.”

With a focus on the future, CCAF’s vision is to be the Airman’s college and to educate Airmen for life.

“Education is a lifetime endeavor, from the moment they sign on the dotted line at BMT, until they hang up their uniform; and afterward,” Colonel Staats said. “CCAF helps to bring young men and women into the Air Force; it helps them stay in the Air Force to continue using educational benefits. It gives Airmen a leg up on the competition when they leave the service.”

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley has challenged CCAF officials to lower the timeframe of Airmen receiving their degrees. Today, the average Airman takes 10.5 years to earn his or her CCAF degree, but that isn’t good enough for the chief. He wants the Airman to have his or her degree completed at 5.5 years.

“In today’s Air Force, if you stay in four to six years, there is no reason why you shouldn’t have your CCAF degree,” said Chief Master Sgt. Juan Lewis, command chief for the 37th Training Wing at Lackland.

Along with Basic Military Training, technical school, career development courses and Airman Leadership School all help Airmen earn college credits. Airmen only need to take about five classes to earn the CCAF degree in their first term of service.

“I had about a year of school under my belt before I joined,” said Senior Airman Tiffany Harris-Rivera, a 37th MSS formal training technician at Lackland. In three years, Airman Harris-Rivera earned her human resources and management associate’s degree from the CCAF and graduated from Park University with a bachelor’s degree in human resources and management. She is now pursuing further education in nursing.

“With the classes I’ve taken since I joined the Air Force, I’ve been able to do my job better and answer questions on my own because of an interpersonal communications class that helped me communicate better with others,” said the 25-year-old native of Bryan-College



Senior Airman Mark Gabenski (standing) assists Senior Airman Amando Arrabis in accessing some of his education information. Airman Gabenski is an education specialist at Lackland AFB, and Airman Arrabis is on a temporary duty assignment from F.E. Warren AFB, Wyo.

Station, Texas. “Everything worked out for me because I was able to go to work full time and still take classes to get a degree. I wouldn’t have been able to do that or been able to pay for classes if I hadn’t joined the Air Force.”


Earning an associate’s degree early in an Airman’s career also is vital later in his or her career because an Air Force policy in 2007 states that a senior NCO is not entitled to a senior-rater endorsement for promotion to E-8 or E-9 if the individual does not hold at least a CCAF degree. Today, 72 percent of senior master sergeants and chief master sergeants hold a CCAF degree in their career field, and that percentage will only increase.

“It wasn’t that long ago that a CCAF degree wasn’t required to get a senior rater endorsement (for promotion),” Chief Lewis said. The 24-year Air Force veteran holds a CCAF degree in hotel, fitness and restaurant management for the services career field.

“Once you get that degree, it certifies you as being a professional inside your career field,” he said. “If your records meet the senior NCO promotion board without a CCAF degree, that, to me, is a negative mark. With a senior-rater endorsement for promotion, you are getting a recommendation from the highest level.

“The time to get your education is now and as fast as you can,” said Chief Lewis. “The chief master sergeant of the Air Force has even said Airmen can start on their CCAF degree even before they finish their CDCs, and supervisors need to support that.”

“When you go up for rank or for selection boards, they look at the level of education you have or if you are taking classes,” said Airman Harris-Rivera. “Education only helps you in every facet of life.”

“Get your education so you can be a better professional,” said Chief Lewis. “Do it so you develop more skills and so you can go on to be a better person and can lead Airmen. The Air Force of the future is going to be a better-educated force. We all need to take advantage of all the opportunities through CCAF to go out there and get educated. Education makes you and the Air Force stronger.” 

THINGS YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF THE AIR FORCE:

1. Classes taken must be toward an Airman’s CCAF degree.
2. Up to 30 hours of the CCAF degree can be obtained by CLEP and DANTES exams — CCAF offices have study guides for these exams.
3. Airmen can apply for classes, get information on tuition assistance and ask counselors questions online.
4. Airmen can enroll and take classes while deployed.
5. The Air Force pays for 100 percent of tuition assistance, up to \$250 per semester hour (\$166.60 per quarter hour) and up to \$4,500 for tuition per fiscal year.
6. CCAF will pay tuition assistance for up to master’s degrees for enlisted and officer members.
7. Through the Air University Associate-to-Baccalaureate Cooperative Program, Airmen can receive their bachelor’s degree with no more than 20 classes.
8. CCAF counselors can help develop a specific degree plan tailored for any student.
9. Airmen can get additional CCAF degrees on special-duty jobs or if they cross-train into a new Air Force specialty code.
10. The Air Force Virtual Education Center link on the Air Force Portal serves as the gateway for degree programs, student services, online enrollment, tuition assistance processing and other educational services.



Command Chief Master Sgt. Juan Lewis (right) has a strong message to all enlisted personnel concerning education — get your Community College of the Air Force degree. Chief Lewis and Senior Airman Zachary Fouk are with the 37th Training Wing at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

CENTER COLLEGE

CULTY IDEAS



Col. Patrick Owens talks about what students learn at the Air War College. "They teach you not what to think, but how to think." He is a KC-135 navigator, mobility officer and the class leader for his fiscal 2009 class.



Art of War

AIR WAR COLLEGE TEACHES SENIOR LEADERS HOW TO THINK ABOUT TOMORROW'S WARFARE

STORY BY STAFF SGT. MATTHEW ROSINE ✪ PHOTOS BY LANCE CHEUNG
DESIGN BY MIKE CARABAJAL

Like many college students around the world, the alarm clock rings early, announcing a long day of laborious classes, study and research.

But, unlike other college students, Col. Patrick Owens, an Army mobility officer from U.S. Transportation Command, is studying the art of war at the Air War College at Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base, Ala.

For Colonel Owens and his classmates, there is no room for negative attitudes, no half-strength effort on schoolwork and no cutting class. Students at the Air War College can't afford any less than their best. These senior leaders are preparing for tomorrow — an unknown future — and they must be ready.

“The conflicts that are foremost in everyone's mind today won't

necessarily be the conflicts of tomorrow,” said Colonel Owens, the academic year 2009 class leader. “More often than not, through history, militaries have been surprised by the changes that have taken place just like we were surprised by 9/11.”

THE WARRIOR'S CLASSROOM

The AWC is the Air Force's senior professional development school. The school is a joint strategic educational environment that helps educate Air Force colonels and lieutenant colonels as well as equivalent-ranked officers in the Army, Navy and Marine Corps. The school's doors also are open to service higher-grade civilians and foreign international officers from around the world.

“We are preparing our senior leaders at the strategic level

of education,” said Col. John R. Carter Jr., Air War College vice commandant. “We are educating and preparing them for the unknown. Training is training them to do a task, but education is improving their thinking. Education is preparing them for (unexpected situations). We don’t know what tomorrow will bring, and this education will prepare them for when they have to answer their nation’s call.”

To help prepare senior leaders attending the college to operate in today’s and tomorrow’s joint missions, the AWC has achieved a Joint Phase 2, accreditation provided by the office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

“We don’t know what tomorrow will bring, and this education will prepare them for when they have to answer their nation’s call.”

— Col. John R. Carter Jr.

In order to be considered a joint program, the AWC must be at or under 60 percent total force Airmen. Currently, the Air War College is composed of 55 percent total force Airmen and 10 percent civilians. Additionally, 17 percent are officers from sister services and 18 percent are international officers.

“This joint environment is crucial for us,” said Col. Polly Padden, an AWC professor of strategy and an Army War College graduate. “In fact, your foreign officers can really make your seminar. I recently had Iraqi and Colombian officers [attend]. And, when I was at the Army school, I had a Colombian and an Israeli officer [attend]. It is really fascinating learning things from their perspectives.”

But despite where any student calls home, the Air War College is prepared to educate him or her to overcome tomorrow’s challenges.

“This is senior developmental education,” said Dr. James Mowbray, a professor of strategy who has more than 24 years experience teaching at the AWC. “It is an education program, not a training program. We don’t tell them what to think. We try to help them to learn to think analytically and synthetically in an evaluative way. We work on how they think; we don’t try to tell them what to think. It is not training. It is very much education.”

Col. Polly Padden and Dr. James A. Mowbray, are instructors at the Air War College on Maxwell-Gunter AFB. The patch on Colonel Padden’s flight suit belonged to her father, who was in the class of 1974, and taught at the Air University. Dr. Mowbray first came to Maxwell as a boy when his father was stationed there in 1944. “I grew up here playing on B-29 bombers.” He started teaching in 1984, and has been with the AWC schoolhouse for 24 years.



Army Col. Al Kelly reads a book on cultural differences at the Muir S. Fairchild Research Information Center at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala. This research is for his Professional Studies Paper on the cultural differences between the Army and Air Force.

This emphasis on education is the foundation of the instructors’ core curriculum from the very beginning.

“When we go through the newcomer orientation for the teachers, they really emphasize that your goal as a professor is to get the students to learn from each other as much as they learn from you because you are really providing a base for their knowledge,” said Colonel Padden. “And from there, they should build off each other’s experience and thoughts, to carry it to the next level.”

These educational skills are even more important and sought after in today’s expeditionary environment, a fact recognized by the joint teaching teams at the college.

“Unlike the past when I’ve been here, we now have a whole bunch of guys with hands-on warfighting experience,” said Dr. Mowbray, who is simply known at the AWC as “Doc.”

“They’ve been out there in the AORs. They have often been in a very senior position. And, they have seen the strategic issues up close and personal,” he said. “Our job is to give them the theory and the idea framework of how to think about strategy.

“But next time, instead of going to Afghanistan, they may be doing homeland security,” said Doc. “The idea is to have a mix of ideas. We don’t force schoolhouse solutions down their throats. We are giving them a clash of ideas to learn from. When you have Arabs and Israelis in the same schoolhouse, it can get real exciting.”

ABOVE AND BEYOND

The Air Force is not the only service to operate a war college. The schools sometimes even cross-share their curriculums. The AWC has Army, Navy and Marine Corps instructors. And Air Force instructors teach at the other services’ schools as well.

And while all of these institutions have similar goals and guidance to achieve the successful education of its graduates, the Air War College is still unique.

“The difference is that when I’m at the Army school, they come at things from the Army’s perspective. So you get a lot more of the Army flare on things than you would here,” said Colonel Padden.

“We talk a lot more about airpower and what airpower can do and what is the role of airpower. And that’s okay. Because you still have and need that expertise of airpower. You still have that expertise of landpower and expertise of seapower.”

The unique Air Force perspective the Air War College provides is something that its students expect.

“This is my first time at the Air War College,” said Army Col. Al Kelly, G-3, U.S. Army Alaska. “I had the chance to go to the Army War College, but I opted to come here instead. In today’s joint operational environment, I thought I would get a better joint flavor coming from an Air Force perspective.”

The AWC also offers a special regional studies program.

“That is really the biggest difference (between the war colleges); we do regional studies,” said Colonel Padden. “For two weeks out of the year, every student goes on a trip to a regional area basically of their choice after taking a whole course of regional study. This also links up with their foreign language.”

At the beginning of the academic year, students sign up to study three areas. Then students get assigned to a group. If these students get west Africa, they will complete a regional and cultural study on west Africa. They plan their own trip to an approved region of west Africa. They take a language pertinent to the region such as French. Then, with an instructor, these senior leader students complete 20 lessons about the region, prior to going.

Once this ground work is done, they conduct a two-week field study in that region. The foreign officers attending the AWC do their regional and cultural study about the United States.

“They are on the road for two weeks at the same time the Americans are,” said Mr. Mowbray. “When we bring those international officers here, there is a requirement that we acculturate them to the United States. So we teach them a whole cultural regional study on the U.S. and take them to a variety of places in the United States.”

THE BEST KEPT ‘SECRET’

With all the education the Air War College faculty provides, they seem to have a secret that they don’t mind sharing.

Despite the name, the college staff focuses on peace, not war.

“You don’t go to the war college to learn to make war,” said Colonel Padden. “I think it was (Secretary of War) Elihu Root, who founded the Army War College, who said, ‘Not to promote war, but to preserve peace by intelligent and adequate preparation to repel aggression.’”

This philosophy still echoes through the halls of the AWC today, even though the name itself may cause some confusion, especially in the civilian community.

“I think the biggest problem in the civilian world is that the civilians don’t understand that the people who least want to go to war are the military,” said Mr. Mowbray. “If there was a message to be gotten out to the public, it is: ‘Listen, these guys are the least war-like, in terms of wanting to go to war, of any people on this planet. If the politicians say, ‘Go to war,’ it is their solemn duty to do that.’”

To help educate the American public, National Security Forum officials invite civilians to the war colleges and integrate them into seminars.

“It was amazing to watch the transformation of these civilians,” said Mr. Mowbray. “I had a female judge from Arizona who came to one of my seminars a few years ago. And she said that during the Vietnam War, she was out picketing when she was a college student. She was an activist, and she went away very sobered about what the military is like, who the people are in it, how they feel, how they act, how they think. They say, ‘Wow. This is not what we thought it was. This is not what we expected.’”

Whether informing the American public or educating senior leaders, DoD civilians and foreign international officers about strategic communication and policy, the Air War College faculty is dedicated to overcoming the unforeseen challenges that tomorrow may bring.

“Not all senior-level Air Force officers are able to attend in residence. I didn’t know I would have the opportunity to attend in residence,” said Colonel Owens. “For me, this was a very valuable opportunity that I wanted to take advantage of because it is my last chance before assuming an O-6 billet to sharpen the sword to prepare myself for the responsibilities that come with those duties.”



Lt. Col. Thomas Johnson (center) asks Cynthia Kierscht, a U.S. State Department foreign service officer, a question during a seminar at Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base, Ala., while fellow student, Lt. Col. Walid Borgi listens. Mrs. Kierscht answered questions from seminar participants during the National Security Forum portion of the Air War College, about her service experiences overseas, the role and tools of an embassy or consulate, and how officers supported presidential administrations in past geopolitical states. Col. Johnson is a navigator and mobility officer. Col. Borgi is from Tunisia.

STORY BY CHIEF MASTER SGT. MATT PROIETTI ✦ PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. DESIREE PALACIOS

AN OFFER YOU SHOULDN'T REFUSE



While corresponding during Air Force Week-Los Angeles in November, then-Senior Master Sgt. Matt Proietti, works on a story about the Secretary of the Air Force. When he's not working on Air Force-level stories, he's working on finishing his master's degree.

I earned my associate's degree and completed most of my bachelor's degree without sitting in a civilian classroom, thanks to the Community College of the Air Force.

My secret weapon was the College-Level Examination Program, which provides credit to students who demonstrate knowledge in five general areas and 34 individual subjects.

Exams are free to military members, while civilians pay \$120 per exam. Base education offices have sample CLEP tests so students can see if they have the knowledge required to pass the actual exams. They also are available online at www.petersons.com/dod/.

In 1985, I signed up for the Air Force's community college, through which Airmen may earn an associate's degree in a field related to their career. We get college credit for basic training, technical training and professional military education.

Though I never attended college during my active-duty tour, I earned credit toward a diploma in public affairs by completing on-the-job training and passing two CLEP tests after a persistent education clerk got me to try them.

About two-thirds of U.S. colleges and universities accept CLEP scores for credit, according to the College Board, which administers the program. I later took advantage of the similar Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Educational Support, or DANTES, Subject Standardized Test exams. More information on DANTES is available online at www.dantes.doded.mil.

CCAF degrees require 64 credits in five areas: technical education; leadership, management and military studies; physical education; general education; and a program elective. CLEP tests saved me in general education and the elective, in which I needed six credits in written communication and three each in mathematics, natural science, social science, humanities and oral communication.

Finding the time to study was problematic after I left active-duty service in 1988,

and joined the Air Force Reserve. I landed a civilian newspaper job, thanks to my military journalism experience. The position normally required a college degree, but I was fortunate that my boss was a former naval officer who believed in hiring other veterans.

Over the next nine years, I got steady pay raises, improved my skills and supervised seven college graduates, including one with a master's degree.

As a Reservist, I edited the work of seven other college graduates, including one who now has a doctorate.

Not having a degree hampered my civilian career, though. I normally had triple the experience required for most journalism jobs, but the lack of a sheepskin prohibited me from being invited for an interview. It stopped me even from applying most of the time.

The 1990s went by in a blur. I got married and became stepfather to three children. On my list of priorities, finishing the degree was now a distant third behind family and work.

Frankly, if it weren't for the Air Force, I would have blown through an entire decade without taking a single step toward a diploma. Because of the military, however, I passed three more CLEP tests and earned 16 college credits by completing the NCO and Senior NCO academies.

In 1999, I looked at my records and was shocked to find that I was only nine credits away from getting my associate's degree. By this point, though, I had started a real estate sales career and had even less time for school. Back to the CLEP program it was.

Apprehension keeps people from taking CLEP or DANTES tests, but military students who fail a test can simply retake it in six months — again for free. It's a fear I understand, though, because I avoided the mathematics exam for a decade because of my disdain for the subject. I finally relented and I passed. I failed a speech test in 1994, and didn't take it again for six

years because

I was scared to blow it again. I conceded and picked up the final credits I needed to complete the CCAF degree program.

I passed seven CLEP or DANTES exams for a total of 39 credits, 21 of which counted toward the associate's degree. Nearly all of the others were accepted by the college, where I finished my bachelor's degree in 2007. I also earned nine credits at that school by taking two CLEP-like tests it offers. All told, I earned 48 credits for free.

The writing is on the wall for enlisted Airmen: a CCAF degree is no longer an option for anyone who plans to make the military a career. Advanced degrees seem all but required for anyone hoping to reach the highest enlisted ranks because of the high caliber of people wearing Air Force uniforms today.

The CCAF, CLEP and DANTES programs to me were like the Mafia was to the aging Michael Corleone in the movie, "The Godfather, Part III." I just wanted to be left alone, but they kept pulling me back in: they made me an offer I couldn't refuse.

Chief Proietti is a Reservist assigned to the Air Force Public Affairs Agency in Arlington, Va.

Matt Proietti



“FREEDOM MUST BE REPURCHASED
BY EVERY GENERATION.”

— GEN. DANIEL “CHAPPIE” JAMES JR.



FEBRUARY 2009

AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

TUSKEGEE AIRMEN. (CIRCA 1940's) ✪ MAJ. SHAWNA R. KIMBRELL (FORMERLY NG-A-QUI) BECAME THE FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN FEMALE FIGHTER PILOT, FLYING HER FIRST COMBAT SORTIE IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION NORTHERN WATCH IN 2001.

THE FINAL FRAME

LISTEN UP | photo by STAFF SGT. DESIREE N. PALACIOS
Basic trainees pay attention to Tech. Sgt. Patrick Hill as he briefs them on how to setup tents during field training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. Sergeant Hill is a military training instructor for the 737th Training Support Squadron.

Airman
3A



PFRM

3

C-400