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Airman heritage CMSAF: Airmen continue 'to answer call'

By Chief Master Sgt. Rodney J. McKinley Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force

We should all be very proud of our Air Force heritage. It is outstanding to see photographs, art and other memorabilia depicting a unit's heritage proudly on display when walking through a dormitory, squadron or other facility.

Through visual depictions of heritage, Airmen are better able to identify with their unit mission and goals and are reminded their sacrifices are not forgotten. Think of the pride an Airman would feel pointing to a photograph hanging on the wall and saying, "Look! I was there - I took part in that operation!"

Our Airmen - officers, enlisted and civilians - have been engaged in continuous combat for more than 17 years. From Operations Desert Storm and Northern Watch beginning in 1991, to today's fight on the ground and in the skies of Afghanistan and Iraq with Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, Airmen are answering our nation's call.

Even before our current fight to win the Global War on Terror, more than 52,000 brave Airmen gave their lives during World War II alone on the ground and flying in B-17s, B-24s and other aircraft - we must never forget their sacrifices. Our Airmen continued the fight with courage and distinction from the Sobaek Mountains of Korea to the dense jungles surrounding Cam My, Vietnam. While discussing our history, I encourage everyone who has the opportunity, to visit our Air Force Memorial in Washington D.C. This monument embodies Airman Heritage and is a magnificent place to reflect on our Air Force past, present and future.

Our Herculean combat efforts were accomplished through the toil, sweat and blood of our Airmen. Even today, Airmen are facing the enemy in battle with many paying the ultimate sacrifice and giving their lives for this great nation. Many Airmen also experience the loss of limbs, eyesight, suffer traumatic brain injuries, and other debilitating injuries, and these Airmen represent us all across America today - they too are part of our heritage.

In addition to engaging on the battlefield, our Airmen have displayed honor and courage through their involvement in life-saving humanitarian operations and world-changing training exercises around the globe. Exhibiting these acts of service within our facilities helps develop our Airmen for their role in

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Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley

the Air Force mission and builds pride and esprit de corps in all. Our Airmen are professionals and we are so very proud of all they do day in and day out to preserve the banner of freedom. We show pride in our mission and our Airmen by displaying our amazing heritage!

Our Airman's Creed captures what our warrior ethos means, and everywhere I go I see Airman reciting the creed from heart. It is inspirational to see their commitment as they say the words and understand what they mean. I have seen numerous eye-catching depictions of the creed, and it makes me proud. Just as these Airmen have done, the creed should be prominently displayed in every Air Force organization along with other notable accomplishments.

We should make every effort to honor our Airmen's contributions and sacrifices toward fulfilling the Air Force mission. We do that by highlighting and displaying our Airman heritage!



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Staff Sgt. Allen Haas, II 442nd Fighter Wing Chaplains office

An integral part of the 442nd Fighter Wing Chaplain's office since 2000, Staff Sgt. Allen Haas' knowledge of the career field, passion for his service and outgoing personality make him an invaluable asset to the wing.

Sergeant Haas helps take the Chaplain's ministry to the wing members and can be seen visiting with them in a variety of settings. He welcomes them into the office and routinely visits them in their workplaces.

One of Sergeant Haas' responsibilities has been to conduct the suicide prevention briefing for the Newcomer's Flight and Ancillary University, increasing the wing completion rate for this critical segment of readiness. To qualify to present this briefing, Sergeant Haas volunteered to attend the Department of Defense national suicide prevention training conference. He also represented the wing during the biannual Air Force Reserve Command Chaplain Service conference.

Sergeant Haas has been recognized as a lead member in the planning and preparation of the annual 442nd Memorial Day ceremony, as well as the wing's highly-successful marriage enrichment workshops.

Involved with continuous self improvement, Sergeant Haas recently began working on his Master's degree in business.

March 2008 Charge-of-quarters



Master Sgt. Robert Smith 442nd Security Forces Squadron

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COVER PHOTO: The 442nd Fighter Wing received its second Air Force Outstanding Unit award in a row and its sixth overall Jan. 7, 2008. As of that date, the unit had deployed more than 600 of its members since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. (Cover graphic by Master Sgt. William Huntington)

MOHAWK

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By Master Sgt. Bill Huntington

Air Force reservists assigned to the 442nd Fighter Wing have earned the wing the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for 2007.

In a Jan. 7, memorandum, Air Force Reserve Command officials at Robins AFB, Ga., announced the award for the A-10 Thunderbolt II unit for leading the way, "in combat effectiveness, applying its trained combat-ready forces and their war craft, at will, in direct support of the Global War on Terrorism."

Nearly 600 members, about half of the Wing, have mobilized and deployed worldwide, including to combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, during the two-year rating period of March 2005 through February 2007. In doing so, they have supplied more than 70,000 active days of service to the military's 'Total Force' objective.'

With the Wing now having won the award six times in its nearly 65-year history the Wing's commander, Col. Steve Arthur, credits the unit's success directly to its members.

"These men and women exemplify the very best that the United States has to offer," he said. "As Citizen Airmen, they put their civilian lives on hold and step forward to answer the call with dedication, professionalism and patriotism. There are none better."

Almost echoing the Colonel's words, the award's citation read, "The exemplary effort, experience and fighting spirit of Airmen of the 442d Fighter Wing have forever contributed to the

cause of Liberty at home and abroad."

Wing members will wear the award on their uniforms in the form of a ribbon with a narrow red stripe, flanked by a thin white stripe, a wide blue stripe, a thin white stripe, edged with a narrow red stripe. Members who have been with the unit when it earned one of the previous awards should add an oak-leaf cluster device to the ribbon.

The AFOUA history goes back to Jan. 6, 1954, when it was authorized by Department of the Air Force General Order One. It is awarded by the Secretary of the Air Force to numbered units that have distinguished themselves by exceptionally meritorious service or outstanding achievement that clearly sets the unit above and apart from similar units. The services include; performance of exceptionally meritorious service, accomplishment of a specific outstanding achievement of national or international significance, combat operations against an armed enemy of the United States, or military operations involving conflict with or exposure to hostile actions by an opposing foreign force.

The wing was first organized in September 1943, during World War II, as the 442nd Troop Carrier Group. Nine months later, on D-Day, the Group dropped 82nd Airborne paratroopers over St. Mere Eglise, France, and then participated in every major European campaign until the fall of Nazi Germany.

Organized as a reserve unit in 1949, the unit flew transport aircraft and supported humanitarian efforts overseas and in the United States, as well as airlift support in Vietnam. In 1982, the Wing transitioned to the A-10 and has since deployed a number of times in support of operations world-wide.

Wing member featured on Whiteman video



Tech. Sgt. Craig Burton, a 442nd Fighter Wing Command Post controller, was one of several Whiteman Air Force Base Airmen featured in a local version of the Air Force's Airman's Creed video. Sergeant Burton's role in the video reflects the dual nature of being a Citizen Airman by showing him first in civilian attire then transitioning to

show him in his uniform. With an A-10 Thunderbolt II as a backdrop, Sergeant Burton's segment of the video shows him making the statement, "I have answered my nation's call." The entire Whiteman AFB Airman's Creed video is available for viewing on the base's public Web page at www.whiteman.af.mil.

Officals delay basing decision for Air Force Cyber Command

BARKSDALE AIR FORCE BASE, La. (AFPN) — The decision for the final location of the Air Force Cyber Command was expected to be finalized before the official Oct. 1 stand up of the command, but Air Force leaders now say it will not be made until closer to the end of the year.

"This is to give us additional time to carefully review all the locations under consideration," said Maj. Gen. William T. Lord, AFCYBER (provisional) commander. "We are currently reviewing how well the locations that have been identified to us match up to the needs of the Air Force," General Lord said.

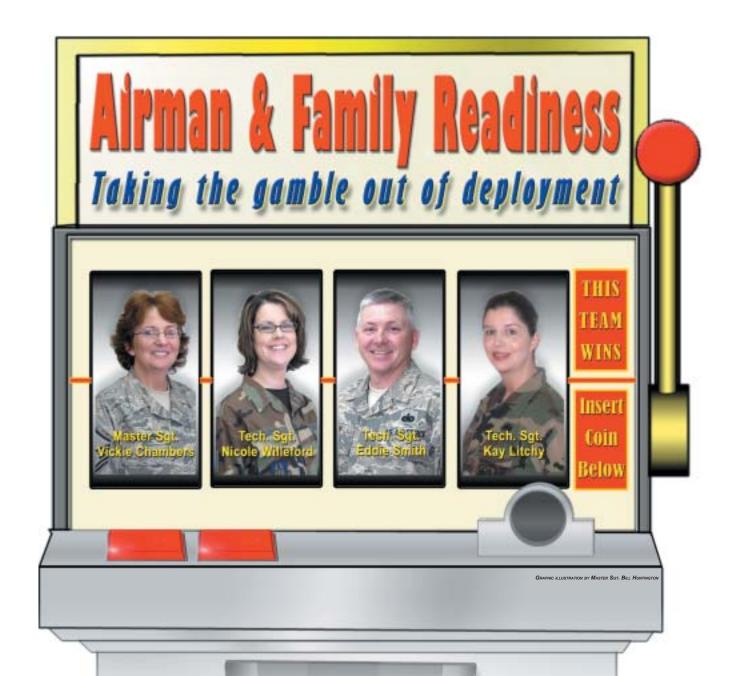
Because of the sensitivities and classifications of portions of the command's mission, and to ensure fairness in the process, officials are not releasing the specific criteria being used in this process.

"You can be assured that each location is receiving a careful and thorough review, but in the end, the needs of the Air Force will carry the day," he said.

The general said they still anticipate narrowing down the choices to the top four places that best meet Air Force needs so the initial site surveys and additional environmental studies may begin. Once the environment studies are completed, which usually take six to eight months, the secretary of the Air Force will announce the final location.

In the meantime, AFCYBER still has a stand up date set for Oct. 1 and it will be assigned an interim location until the final location is announced.

"Our provisional teams will continue moving forward with defining the requirements needed to continue the command's journey toward full operational capabilities, which will take at least another year," General Lord said. "There are many decisions that must be made when creating a new major command. These decisions will affect the Air Force for many years to come. So, it's imperative we carefully consider all aspects of creating this command, including the careful selection of its final location."



By Tech. Sgt. Leo Brown

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The name has changed, but the mission remains the same. Effective last December, Family Support offices in Air Force Reserve Command are now known as Airman and Family Readiness (A&FR), but they will still provide unparalleled support for Airmen and their families.

Offering a host of programs and resources to deal with problems from the profound to the mundane, A&FR is open to military members and civilian employees, along with their family members. If someone has a concern – from finances to deployments – chances are the A&FR staff is going to at least point the person in the right direction, if not help them directly.

Master Sgt. Vickie Chambers, 442nd A&FR non-commissioned officer in charge and Tech. Sgt. Kay Litchy, A&FR technician, both said the office name change was made, at least in part, to stress that they focus on single, as well as married, Airmen.

"Nothing has changed," Sergeant Litchy said. "We were already helping single Airmen. It's just that the name reflects that now."

"We try to be a link for single Airmen," Sergeant Chambers said. "We have a lot of people who aren't deployed who feel they're alone. We want people to know we're here."

Sergeants Chambers and Litchy said the important issue is for people to make their concerns known, regardless of who they are.

"If they call us, we will help them," Sergeant Litchy said. "If there's a situation, they need to make it known."

"Our motto is 'Let us be your lifesaver,' so we pass out Lifesavers candy at the newcomers briefings each UTA," Sergeant Chambers said. "We may not have all the answers, but we know how to refer people to someone who can help them."

While they may refer some customers to other resources, the shop's staff, which also includes Tech. Sgts. Nicole Willeford and Eddie Smith, will offer direct help if they can.

Among other things, the staff helps with deployments, organizing absentee voting ballots, sending birthday cards to children of deployed Airmen, setting up "deployment lines" for the children so they can experience what their parents go through prior to deploying and running the "home-front hero" award pro-

gram, where deployed parents give their children a medal and certificate to thank them for their support while the parents are gone.

The A&FR staff also distributes books to children of deployed Airmen to help them better understand what is happening.

"We have things for older kids," Sergeant Litchy said, "but the younger ones just know they've been left. They don't understand. So we have some great literature to help them."

The staff also works with parents of deployed troops and said that sometimes their assistance isn't anything more than being a good listener.

"I think parents (of reservists) take deployments harder than spouses," Sergeant Litchy said. "It's hard for parents to see their child going into a dangerous situation and there's nothing they can do to protect them. We're there for the family. We're there to be a friend."

"No problem is too small," Sergeant Chambers said. "If it's important to someone, it's important to us. One of our deployed members' parents wrote me about an issue saying, 'I know this may not be important to you ... "

Sergeant Chambers said the "issue" dealt with a deployed Airman's parents not being able to see a Christmas video from the member.

"I got with Master Sgt. Bill Huntington, (442nd Public Affairs office NCOIC) and we worked it out. We work a lot with other offices," Sergeant Chambers said. "We keep each other informed and that makes our program work well. We truly are a team. This is not a local show. It's a wing show."

When a wing Airman died recently, Sergeant Chambers and Litchy said they worked frequently with the wing's military personnel flight and the member's family to meet everyone's needs.

"We were helping the family and talking with them three, four, five times a day," Sergeant Litchy said. "You get to know them and you get attached to them emotionally."

Cooperation between the A&FR and other agencies isn't

limited to the 442nd Fighter Wing, according to the sergeants.

"Sergeant Chambers has a great relationship with the 509th Airman and Family Readiness Center, which is not always the case with reserve and active-duty units," Sergeant Litchy said.

"I can tell you that our offices work seamlessly," Sergeant Chambers said. "We're here for each other no matter what.

Sergeant Litchy stressed that the A&FR's responsibilities require the staff to be very "proactive. We have to be well organized."

Such organization makes demands on the staff even when they're not "on duty."

"My civilian job is very supportive of our work," said Sergeant Litchy, who is the director of development and sales at the Juanita K. Hammons Hall for the Performing Arts at Missouri State University in Springfield. "I just bring the office cell phone to my civilian meetings and they support me."

Sergeants Chambers, Litchy and Willeford said that when they have to refer customers for various concerns, two excellent resources are the Missouri Military Family Relief Fund, accessed at www.mmfrf.mo.gov, and Military Onesource, accessed at www.militaryonesource.com.

"They're wonderful Web sites," Sergeant Willeford said. "You can look up pretty much anything on them."

"There's information on marriage counseling, adoption assistance, doing taxes," Sergeant Litchy said.

"People need to know we're here for them anytime," Sergeant Chambers said. "We stand behind what we say we're going to do. We keep our promises. I think our efforts have helped retention. If family members are happy, the member is usually happy and they'll stay longer.

"This is such a humbling and rewarding job," she said. "I love my job. I would go 10,000 miles for my people."

For more information on the A&FR office, e-mail Sergeant Chambers at *vickie.chambers@whiteman.af.mil* or call (660) 687-4609 during regular business hours. During non-business hours, call the office cell phone at (660) 909-3820.

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Dollar\$ and \$en\$e help for

By Tech. Sgt. Leo Brown

Dollars and sense. That's what awaits Airmen at the 442nd Fighter Wing's Education and Training office.

A "must stop" for military members wanting financial help in covering educational and training costs at accredited institutions and in select programs, the office has information on the Montgomery G.I. Bill, Tuition Assistance (TA) and the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP).

Tech. Sgt. Ron Watkins, the office's education and training technician for seven years, said he is more than willing to take the time to ensure Airmen understand how each program can benefit them.

"Working with students and getting to see them graduate is very rewarding," he said. "You get to see the end-result of the work you did with each student. I definitely put in a lot of time and effort to ensure each person gets served and gets paid."

Sergeant Watkins said that Airmen, regardless of the program they use, need to be aware of and adhere to several rules so they don't cheat themselves out of full benefits.

The Montgomery G.I. Bill, named after former Mississippi Congressman Gillespie "Sonny" Montgomery, who, in 1984, revamped the original 1944 G.I. Bill, is one of the best known programs in the military. Sergeant Watkins said it can be used for a host of programs aside from traditional universities and colleges.

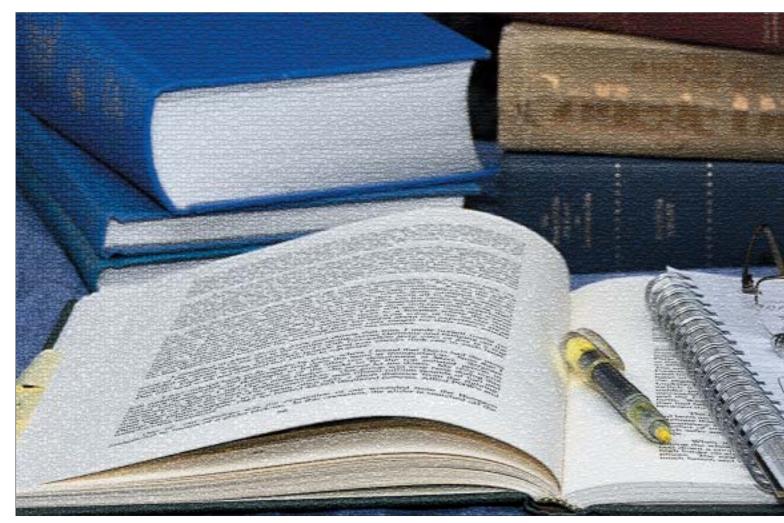
"The G.I. Bill is unique because you can attend technical or vocational schools and use it," he said. "You can use it for teacher certification or even for flight training. Whatever institution you're enrolled at has to be accredited, of course, and there are other guidelines for using it."

Sergeant Watkins said the G.I. Bill money can also be used for apprentice-ships and various other programs offered by companies or unions.

"One person at 3M in Springfield used that money for internal training with her company and she earned college credits for it, too" he said

While G.I. Bill money can be used for a variety of costs, Sergeant Watkins said Airmen need to understand that TA is "strictly a reimbursement program" for tuition costs only. He said it cannot be used for books, fees or other expenses, although it will cover labs as long as they are for credit.

"People, especially younger Airmen who may not have a lot of money, shouldn't count on TA money to fund another semester," he said. "It takes time – typically four to six weeks – for the system to work. It has to go from me to Air Force Reserve Command headquarters



the paper chase

and from there to DFAS (Defense Finance and Accounting Service). Members will get paid, but it's not always timely.

"Probably the number one thing for people to be aware regarding TA deals with supporting documentation," Sergeant Watkins said. "Every semester, bar none, you have to have your degree plan, proof of course cost, proof of semester hours per course and paid receipts."

One such point, he noted, is that since applications for TA are done online, many customers "think that's all they need to do. They'll fill out the forms, but they don't get supporting documentation.

"By Air Force instruction, paperwork has to be in place seven days prior to a course start date," he said. "We have to have time to put everything together."

The sergeant said another consistent problem he encounters is customers not providing him their course grades.

"By Air Force instruction, they're re-

quired to provide me a passing grade within 60 days of course completion," Sergeant Watkins said. "All these directions are included in a 'student briefing sheet' they initial and sign every semester. If they don't follow these directions, they could forfeit reimbursement."

TA and G.I. Bill money can be used for associate, bachelor or master degree programs, but it cannot be used for doctoral programs.

Sergeant Watkins also said members cannot "double-dip" from the federal government.

"You can't use the G.I. Bill and TA for the same courses," he said. "However, you can use the G.I. Bill first as a full-time student and then use tuition assistance for subsequent classes."

Sergeant Watkins noted that REAP, established to help reservists and guardsmen who have deployed for at least 90 straight days since the 9-11 attacks, "was designed to be more in line with the active duty, as far as the amount of GI. Bill money a member receives for the amount of time he spent 'in country.'

"The more time you spend 'in country,' the more money you receive, up to 80 percent of activeduty benefits," he said. "It basically allows a military member to receive more G.I. Bill money than if he hadn't deployed."

For more information on the G.I. Bill, TA or REAP, call Sergeant Watkins at (660) 687-3353 or e-mail him at ronald.watkins @whiteman.

af.mil.

MONTGOMERY GI BILL

TUITION ASSISTANCE REIMBURSEMENT'S RIGHT STEPS

Tuition assistance will be reimbursed at the following rate:

Undergraduate Degree

The basic benefit offers 100 percent not to exceed \$250.00 per semester hour or \$166.66 per quarter hour, with a maximum cumulative benefit not to exceed \$4,500.00, per member, per fiscal year.

Note: This includes students who already have a degree(s) and are pursuing a CCAF degree or Teacher Certification.

Master's Degree

The basic benefit offers 75 percent not to exceed \$187.50 per semester hour or \$125.00 per quarter hour with a maximum cumulative benefit not to exceed \$4,500.00, per member, per fiscal year.

Note: AFRC Students are authorized reserve TA for a "civilian" Master's Degree if their only Master's Degree was awarded due to completion of a degree-granting PME course (such as Air War College, Air Command and Staff College, etc).

Students who want to take graduate degree courses after completion of an undergraduate program during the same FY, and have not capped under the undergraduate program, will only have a maximum cumulative benefit of \$4,500 between the two programs.

R.E.A.P.

TUITION ASSISTANCE





Thunderbolt of Salina nan

SALINA, Kan. — Col. James Mackey, 442nd Fighter Wing vice commander, poses for photos with Donna Vanier, Salina, Kan., resident, and Salina Mayor Alan Jilka, soon after Vanier christened the 442nd Fighter Wing's "Thunderbolt of Salina" at a ceremony here Jan. 23. The dedication was the third naming of an aircraft for Salina by Vanier and the fourth aircraft to carry the name of the

city of Salina, a central Kansas community that was once the home of the former Schilling Air Force Base, now the city's airport. Salina continues to have a military presence with the nearby Smoky Hill Air National Guard Range and, in October, will host Hawgsmoke 2008, the Air Force's biennial A-10 Thunderbolt II bombing and gunnery competition.

SGLI meant to 'take care of loved ones'

By Tech. Sgt. Leo Brown

It's no secret that money is tight for many people, including for Airmen of the 442nd Fighter Wing. But a safe and wise investment, according to Capt. Joe Walter, 442nd Mission Support Flight commander, is Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance.

Available to all Airmen and offering a variety of pay outs, Captain Walter said signing up for SGLI is a "no-brainer," especially if a military member has no life insurance.

While many people may think that life insurance is only purchased if someone has dependents, the captain stressed that everyone should think seriously about getting at least the minimum amount of SGLI, which is \$50,000 and costs \$3.62 per

"You don't think of yourself as dying, and younger Airmen sometimes think they're invincible and they may think of that (monthly premium) money as going elsewhere," the captain said.

"But it's not about you," Captain Walter said. "SGLI takes care of the loved ones you've left behind. There are funeral expenses and those can run into tens of thousands of dollars. It

just makes sense to take care of your loved ones so there's not a financial burden on them. It gives you peace of mind."

Airmen can claim one or more beneficiaries, and anyone can be listed as a beneficiary. SGLI's maximum pay out is \$400,000, which costs \$29 per month.

One benefit to SGLI, which can be purchased in \$50,000 increments, is that it is good regardless of the status a reservist is

"You don't have to be on man days or in annual tour status or here on a unit training assembly," Captain Walter said. "It's good year round."

Signing up for SGLI is a one-stop trip, according to the captain. A member should go to the wing's Military Personnel Flight's customer service section, where he fills out a request form. The MPF will then turn the form in to the Financial Management office, and FM forwards it the Defense Finance and Accounting Service.

For more information on SGLI, call MPF at (660) 687-3500 or e-mail Tech. Sgt. Talaya Hill, in MPF customer service, at talaya.hill@whiteman.af.mil.



U.S. AIR FORCE

ABOVE ALL.

AIR | SPACE | CYBERSPACE

Air Force is 'Above All'

By Staff Sgt. J.G. Buzanowski Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (**AFPN**) — The Air Force has a new advertising campaign to recruit the next generation of Airmen as well as better inform people about the Air Force mission:

"Above All."

"The new slogan is admittedly a bold one," said Col. Michael Caldwell, deputy director of Air Force public affairs, "but so are Airmen." This campaign accurately portrays Airmen and how they're executing the Air Force mission to ensure the security and safety of America now and in the future.

"'Above All' is about what we do and how we do it," Colonel Caldwell said. "The job of the Air Force is to defend America and we do that by dominating air, space and cyberspace. The new campaign and slogan captures our roots, but also illustrates where we're going as a service as the Air Force prepares to contend with future threats."

The purpose of the campaign is to create a dialogue with potential recruits, their parents and those most likely to influence young people to join the military about the critical role the Air Force plays in defending America's future, Colonel Caldwell said.

The "Above All" campaign kicks off this month and will be prominent on television, in print and, of course, in cyberspace. In addition to being shown at several sporting events, "Above All" ads will be seen in magazines and during commercial breaks on many top-rated commercial and television news and entertainment programs, Colonel Caldwell said.

The campaign will feature real Airmen performing their missions, like Staff Sgt. Lee Jones from Barksdale Air Force Base, La. He's featured prominently in the campaign as a warrior on the front lines of the Air Force's newest warfighting domain, cyberspace.

"I'm excited to be a part of this and to represent the Air Force this way," said Sergeant Jones, a computer systems operator and cyberwarrior. "Above All' is a great slogan because it says how we shine in what we do to defend our nation and accomplish our mission."

The Above All slogan was chosen over several other phrases as the best description of the Air Force mission, Colonel Caldwell said.

"From all the research we did about how people feel about the Air Force - including civilians, Airmen and representatives from other services - this was the phrase that stood out the most," Colonel Caldwell said. "This campaign captures the professionalism of our Airmen, our technological edge and our ability to meet today's threats while at the same time prepare for future challenges.

"When anyone in our Air Force family sees an 'Above All' ad, we hope it reminds them that their role is important to America," Colonel Caldwell said. "This campaign makes it clear the Air Force's mission 'Above All' is national defense and protecting the American people."

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE 442ND FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS 931 ARNOLD AVE. WHITEMAN AFB MO 65305-5070

TO THE FAMILY OF:

