

The

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# Mohawk

442d Fighter Wing. Whiteman AFB, Mo.



## The Making of a 442d Airman

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Lasting effects of  
suicide pg. 3

Spring 2016

## ON THE COVER

Trainee Natalie Bang practices her salute as part of the Development and Training Flight during January's UTA. Trainees with the D&TF practice skills they'll need to give them a leg up during Basic Training, including saluting, reporting statements, and drill movements.

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# CSAF celebrates Whiteman Total Force Excellence

by Tech. Sgt. Miguel Lara III / 509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs / Published February 19, 2016



WHITEMAN AIR FORCE BASE, Mo. -- U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III visited here Feb. 16 - 18, to engage with civic leaders and meet the Airmen of the world's only B-2 stealth bomber base.

While at Whiteman, Welsh met with leadership from the 509th Bomb Wing, the 131st Bomb Wing, the 442d Fighter Wing and other tenant units to discuss the evolution of Total Force Integration (TFI) and to see firsthand the TFI model Whiteman has established.

Welsh communicated his support of the TFI mission with Total Force leaders during roundtable meetings and spoke about the modernization of TFI and B-2 bomber missions.

During his visit, Welsh held an all call and stressed his three C's--common sense, communication and caring--to Airmen from the three Total Force wings at Whiteman and expressed how they can integrate these concepts into their unique missions.

"Apply common sense to all we do. If it doesn't seem right, make the change and use the chain," said Welsh. "We have four generations in the Air Force; we must use accountable communication to work as a professional organization. And lastly, know your Airmen better. Every Airman has a story. Care enough to know it."

Welsh also expressed his gratitude and support to the Total Force Airmen in attendance and reminded them that the Air Force is rich in pride.

"Never forget how critically important you are to what we are doing," Welsh added. "We have great people with great training and education and pride--we, the Air Force, are built on pride, and it shows in your performance. That's where we come from."

Brig. Gen. Paul W. Tibbets IV, the 509th Bomb Wing commander, thanked Welsh for the visit and his leadership and echoed his sentiments.

"Our Wing's heritage inspires us to take pride in the work we accomplish," said Tibbets. "We have a legacy of excellence. Through your efforts, we will continue that tradition for many years to come. Our pride will help us remain focused and allow us to face resource-constrained environments and ever-evolving adversaries as we continue our strategic deterrence, global strike and combat support mission."

Welsh wrapped up the all call with a question and answer session and reminded the Airmen why he loves the Air Force and why he's served for so long.

"I will die for you," said Welsh. "We have only met for about an hour, and I'd die for you. I believe you'd do the same for me. That is what's so special about the Air Force."

# Life goes on, but not the same

94th Airlift Wing Public Affairs / Published January 14, 2016

DOBBINS AIR RESERVE BASE, Ga. -- Four years ago Jan. 12, I received a phone call that completely changed my life. I woke up to news that my best friend Robby had been killed. For several hours I felt paralyzed before I broke down. I poured through all the photo albums I had looking at pictures of us from when we were kids hanging out with all of our friends.

It didn't seem real. Barely a week ago, we were hanging out, having a blast celebrating the New Year while I was on leave.

It turned out there were a lot of things going on beneath the surface that no one really knew about.

Robby lost his life to a gunshot wound inflicted by a police officer. A shot was heard from inside his house by a neighbor, and the police were called. When the police arrived Robby stepped outside with a shot gun and refused to put it down when he was warned to. It was later revealed that his gun wasn't loaded.

He purposely forced the officer to shoot him.

Robby was a member of the Air Force Reserve, attached to the 442nd Fighter Wing at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri. After a deployment to Southeast Asia, he transferred from the Air Force to the Navy to become a corpsman so he could help save lives. He was a husband, father and best friend to everyone who knew him. If you knew him, he would have been your best friend too.

But, this isn't about Robby and his struggles. This isn't about him not seeking help or opening up about his issues.

This is about those of us who are left. This is about those of us who have a giant hole in our lives, how a part of us is missing with Robby gone.

Several of us struggled since that day. Many wrestled with their faith, questioning every belief they grew up with. A few threw themselves into alcohol, trying to numb the pain of him being gone.

It's hard when your best friend or brother disappears. His sister and brother-in-law adopted a little boy since his departure, and his nephew will never get to know his uncle. His daughter won't get to have her daddy there when she graduates high school or goes to her first dance.

Her daddy won't walk her down the aisle.

One of our friends had moved to the U.S. from Canada

for school and lived in the U.S. for a decade. After Robby died, he moved back. Robby was the glue that held our circle together.

Robby was the first person to tell me that my wife was interested in me. I didn't really believe him. He would have been the best man at my wedding, but wasn't even around when we started dating.

I flew out the next day after I received the call so I could be there for his funeral. When I arrived back the next week to report for duty, I had to prepare for a contingency deployment to Korea. I had to take a physical fitness test and go to the combat arms range.

At the range, I couldn't help but wonder if the sound I was hearing as I pulled the trigger was the last sound he heard. My heart was barely in it as I prepared to go overseas, an assignment I had previously been thrilled about. After losing Robby, I couldn't get excited about anything.

Four years later, the ache is still there. His family has holidays and there's an empty space. I go visit my hometown and all I can think of is how I want to be able to invite Robby to hang out with us. There's a missing piece in all of our lives that can never be replaced. Memories are made that are supposed to include him.

One of the things that helped me heal was speaking with a chaplain and other friends who had lost people too early. If you've lost someone or are struggling yourself, strongly consider seeing a chaplain or talking to a psychological health professional. It worked for me.

Four years ago, my best friend died. It still sucks.

*Robert Geoffrey Long was born on December 15, 1985 in Lubbock, Texas. Rob joined the USAF Reserves in 2005 and served a tour in Iraq in 2007/2008. (U.S. Air Force/ Courtesy Photo)*



# SHOES on the GROUND

*The Making of a 442d Airman*  
by Tech. Sergeant Bob Jennings



**O**n a cold day in January, 18 civilians lined up outside the Professional Development Center on Whiteman Air Force Base, their hair in tight buns or close-cropped, faces shaven, and matching shirts tucked in. They practically flew into four shaky lines as an Airman barked commands, counting down the ten seconds they'll have to form their flight once they reach Basic Military Training (BMT) at Lackland AFB.

"D.C.I.D!" Senior Airman Ryan McGarrigle of the 509th Bomb Wing shouted. "Dress, interval, cover, distance!" Arms went up in front of them to mark the distance to the next trainee and short, choppy steps brought them into a perfect flight – almost.

"There's always one!" McGarrigle and the other trainers swarmed down upon the one trainee who was unable to find her dress – that is, she was out of line with the trainees to her right.

These 18 civilians' matching shirts proclaim them members of the 442d Fighter Wing Development and Training Flight. Trainees report to Whiteman along with the traditional Reservists during the Unit Training Assembly, where they're given a glimpse of what's ahead while they're waiting to ship out to BMT.

"Our members go into Basic Military Training with the tools and resources to become successful future leaders in the Air Force Reserve," said Tech. Sergeant Otto Briery, the 442d D&TF Program Manager. "At Basic and before ever arriving, they have mastered the fundamentals of what makes all of us America's finest."

Before they arrive for their first UTA, new trainees are sent a packet in the mail containing study materi-

als, dress and appearance standards, and reporting instructions. They're also contacted by their trainee element leader, who becomes responsible for that trainee throughout their D&TF tenure.

The packet includes things like the Airman's Creed, the Air Force Song and the Core Values, which the trainees are expected to know when they arrive. If they don't, they're going to hear about it.

Every Saturday, trainees are put through a simulated "snake pit," where they practice reporting statements and are quizzed on things like Air Force customs and courtesies, current events, and political offices – all while dealing with the ire of a seemingly-enraged training instructor.

The snake pit is designed to keep trainees off their guard and uncomfortable. A barrage of loud questions and a close-up inspection of their appearance allow trainees to work on their bearing. This valuable experience helps them maintain their composure under fire and keep a clear head, despite the chaos around them.

After they answer their own questions, trainees are allowed to sit and watch those that follow, learning from what they see and gaining a sense of perspective on what they just went through. Once the last trainee has been sufficiently grilled, trainers sit them all down to discuss the mistakes that were made. Tense, red faces turn to jovial smiles as the trainers crack jokes

about the more off-the-wall blunders, all the while explaining what went wrong and how it can be fixed for next time. This process gives trainees a few minutes to decompress after the stress of being fed to the snakes.

Sunday sees the trainees out on the drill pad, learning to fall in to a flight and practicing basic facing movements. Trainers shout out conflicting commands, testing to see if their trainees remember the voice that's in charge of the flight. Those who have too many issues, or who haven't yet learned the movements, are pulled to the side and taken through the steps "by the numbers." That is, each movement is broken down and counted out while they repeat it until it feels natural.

Occasionally, when the flight isn't performing up to the trainers' expectations, they're invited to line up against the wall and do push-ups or wall-sits while the flight commander expresses his displeasure. Trainees are prepared for this, though, since the D&TF also incorporates a physical training program, including mock PT tests so trainees can see where they stand in the eyes of





them,” said McGarrigle. Some things, it seems, are to be kept a surprise. In addition to not marching, trainers operate under strict guidelines for how long a specific exercise can be used as a corrective measure.

The D&TF is staffed by volunteers, mostly Active Duty Airmen from the 509th BW, who give up their weekends to serve alongside their Reserve counterparts, building a better total force from the ground up.

the Air Force fitness program.

Recently, longer waits for BMT and technical school classes has extended the amount of time trainees stay in the D&TF. In response to this, Briery and his team have implemented a three-phase system, much like the one trainees will see in tech school. As trainees graduate through the different phases, they learn more about the Air Force, gain more responsibilities and take on leadership roles.

“Our Airman arrives at Basic weeks ahead of the strength and training schedules,” said Briery. The proof of that is in the pudding – from October of 2014 to December of 2015, a full 10 percent of 442d trainees left BMT as honor graduates. Once at BMT, the trainees naturally slide into leadership roles. Armed with advance knowledge, they help their Active Duty counterparts, who don’t have the benefit of this type of program.

They don’t know everything, though. “We’re not allowed to march

But support for the D&TF doesn’t stop at volunteer trainers. It involves people at all levels of the wing, from Chief Master Sergeant James Nudd, the 442d Command Chief – who officially heads the program – all the way to the finance specialists, who make sure the trainees get paid for the time they give and pre-enroll them in all of their benefits before they even get to Lackland.

Every step of the way, the program’s focus is on making sure trainees have the best possible experience at BMT and come out the other end of tech school already among the world’s premier combat-ready Airmen. And, as far as Briery is concerned, it couldn’t be working better.

“I look around and see the accomplishments and progress each of them have made, and I stand a little taller. It’s an honor to call myself their leader.”

## *Lost? We Sure Are!*

With all the recent construction around the wing, you might be having trouble finding some of our organizations. Don’t worry, though. We’ve got you covered. Here are some of the major moves that’ve taken place so far. A lot of these are temporary and are set to change again in the fall. When the dust is settled, though, we’ll update you again. Happy hunting!

### *Airman and Family Readiness*

Building 48  
Rooms 113 & 1102

### *Medical*

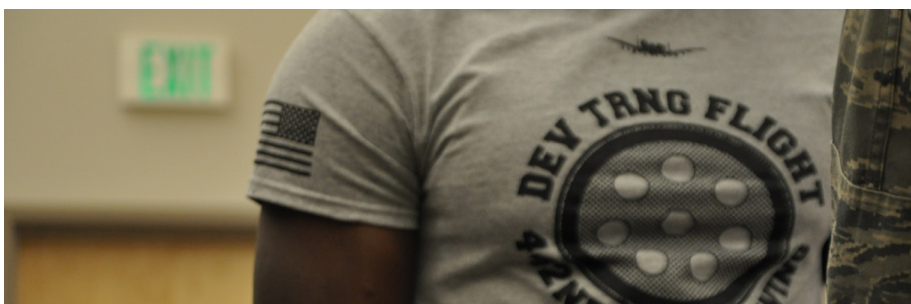
Building 705 Room 2130

### *Civil Engineering*

Building 709 room 129  
(scheduled to move to building 705 in October)

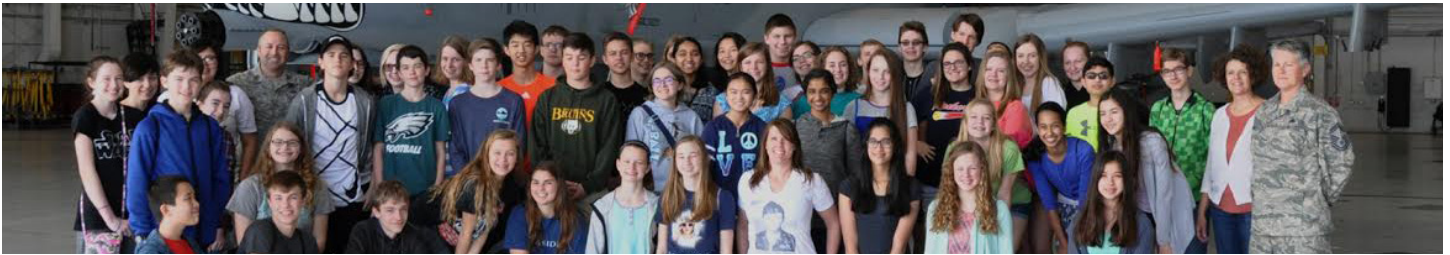
### *Chaplains & Recruiters*

Building 52, North or West Entrances



# 442d Fighter Wing welcomes Wright Flight students

by Airman 1st Class Missy Sterling



**The Skelton Park tables were dotted with empty lunch bags as the Oakland Middle School and Smithton Middle School students from Columbia, Mo., ran around the park.**

More than forty students played together. Some tackled each other, while others climbed the playground sets and tested how many people the teeter-totter could hold.

Suddenly, a great roar filled the air, and a B-2 Spirit took flight off the nearby runway.

For a moment, the students' attention was captured by something bigger.

The students had the opportunity to tour Whiteman Air Force Base as part of the Wright Flight Program of Missouri.

The Wright Flight Program teaches students the mechanics of flying, the history of flying and the history of the Air Force, among other topics.

The program is designed to help students set goals and achieve them with the help of teachers in their area and volunteers from Whiteman AFB.

Senior Master Sgt. Regina Brewer, Propulsion Flight Chief for the 442nd Maintenance Squadron, has been part of the Wright Flight Program for five years.

Brewer is a program director for Wright Flight of Missouri and a liaison for the 442nd Wright Flight chapter. She helps coordinate volun-

teers from the 442nd Fighter Wing to teach and mentor middle school students and helps setup tours for the students.

The students are taught lessons from aviation history, including the Wright brothers and Jimmy Doolittle, for example, said Brewer.

Aside from learning the development and strategic use of aircraft, there are many life lessons to be taught from the history of aircraft.

"They didn't just all of a sudden build an airplane and it flew," said Brewer about the Wright brothers. "There were many obstacles in their way. They were bicycle builders, and they decided they wanted to start building an airplane. It took them four years before the first airplane ever got off the ground."

Andrea Kirkpatrick, a Gifted Education Specialist at Oakland and Smithton Middle Schools in Columbia, Mo., began teaching the Wright Flight Program one year ago.

"Your first idea is not always your best idea and your first idea is not always going to work," said Kirkpatrick. "Just because it didn't work doesn't mean you're a failure or your idea's a failure but that is something to overcome and improve."

The Wright brothers tested many times and failed, said Kirkpatrick. This program works hard to teach kids to work for a goal that's not right in front of their face.

Students' goals range anywhere from getting past 7th grade to attending college, said Brewer.

Lucas Kreutz, a 7th grade student from Oakland Middle School, has his long term goal in mind.

"I've always wanted to be some sort of engineer," said Kreutz. He feels that his talents are in building and fixing things, and he would like to use those talents for aircraft and possibly the Air Force one day.

"I didn't expect to learn a lot about World War II and the planes of the era and actually be able to come to an Air Force base," said Kreutz about his reactions to the Wright Flight Program. "I didn't expect any of that. Seeing the B-2 takeoff was one of the highlights of the day."

A base tour is one way the students are rewarded for their participation and hard work in the Wright Flight program. It is also rewarding for the teachers and volunteers to be able to see the students light up at the sight of a B-2 taking off.

"The result at the end is very rewarding," said Brewer about seeing students rewarded at the end of a program. "It's a lot of work and a lot of time, but it's worth it."

# Full-time help for full-time needs

*The 442d Fighter Wing has hired a Director of Psychological Health and a full-time director of Airman & Family Readiness. Together, the two are ready to serve just about any need you might have.*

by Tech Sgt. Bob Jennings

Everyone needs a little help sometimes. Whether it's a broken-down car that they don't have the means to fix, trouble getting their budget under control, a stretch of unemployment, or just feeling a little down, life has a nasty habit of getting in peoples' way. When you're in the weeds, it can be difficult to remember the resources that are available to provide that help. Reservists, in particular, often overlook the organizations that were created specifically to render assistance to Airmen in need.

Over the past couple of years, Air Force Reserve Command has taken steps to correct this oversight. New directives from "the Mothership" have increased the funding, manpower and presence of these organizations in an effort to shore up the oft-neglected mental and social pillars of wellness.

## **Airman & Family Readiness**

Part of that endeavor is the creation of a full-time Airman & Family Readiness Director, who is on duty every day to help face obstacles in Airmen's lives. The 442d Fighter Wing has appointed Elizabeth Rutherford to this much-needed position.

"There's someone here, now, seven days

a week," says Rutherford, "and [Airmen] can reach me anytime. So, whatever it is – for them, and for their families – there's someone here for them." Rutherford was hired on as the director in December and, since then, has helped dozens of military members and families with everything from diapers to finding a job.

**Basically, bring a need, and we'll find a way to fill it.**

*-Elizabeth Rutherford,  
442d FW Airman & Family Readiness Director.*

Despite the recent push to improve the service, though, many Airmen are unaware of the numerous benefits they can receive through A&FR.

Benefits like:

**Employment and Career Support.** A&FR provides assistance to job seekers through resume writing classes, education and training, and help formulating career goals. They can also help match Airmen with potential employers.

"There's jobs that are calling us, 'Hey we're looking for people,'" Rutherford says.

**School age services.** For those Reservists with children in school, it can be hard for civilian teachers to understand the particular difficulties that come with having a parent (or two) in the military. A&FR will go to the school, sit down with the teachers, and explain to them what the child is likely to go through, or may be having trouble with.

**Key Spouses.** The Key Spouse program ensures that the family of the military member doesn't feel alone. Key Spouses check up on families of deployed members, help out when the water heater inevitably breaks



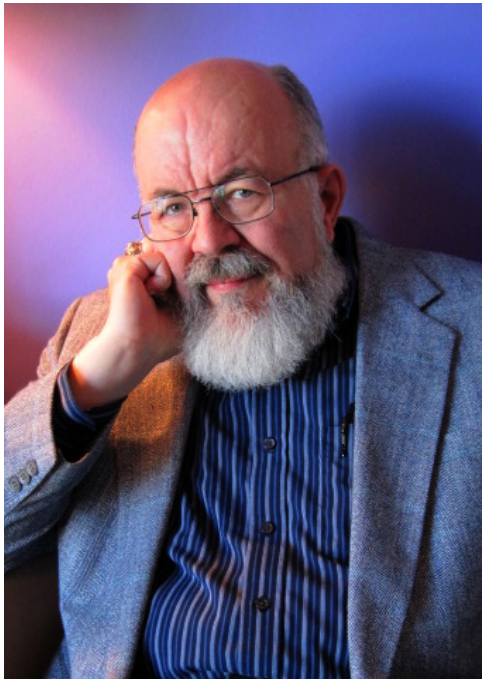
*From left to right: Master Sgt. Nicole Adams, Master Sgt. Robin Smith, and Elizabeth Rutherford, the members of the 442d Fighter Wing Airman & Family Readiness Center. A&FR is now open seven days a week to serve 442d Airmen and their families.*



and even just lend an ear when everything piles up. They provide a much-needed support network for spouses when things go wrong.

“Key spouses get thought of just for deployment, but they’re not just there for that. They make sure you have people in your court at all times.”

**Transition Assistance Program.** TAP is a program that specifically assists Airmen transitioning from



*Dr. Tom Patterson is the Director of Psychological Health in the 442d Fighter Wing.*

active duty back to civilian life. It’s a one- or five-day class that explains benefits like health insurance, life insurance and the various benefits available through the Veterans’ Administration.

**Financial assistance.** A&FR also runs Airman’s Aid, a financial assistance program that offers small loans for those times when unexpected expenses exceed a member’s budget. In addition, they offer counselling from professional financial advisors to assist with budgeting to help members prepare for these

types of emergencies.

**Crisis intervention.** The A&FR is available for to assist with assessing and prioritizing issues when a crisis occurs. While they can’t provide counselling themselves, they can help with referrals to someone who can.

This is a far-from-comprehensive list of all of the things A&FR does. More information can be found on their web page (see inset below), where you can see upcoming events and read about all of the things they do to help Airmen every day.

“Basically, bring a need, and we’ll find a way to fill it.”

### ***Director of Psychological Health***

In addition to the new Director of Airman & Family Readiness, AFRC has also mandated that each wing have a Director of Psychological Health on staff. While this position was created within the 442d a couple of years ago, the wing only recently found the right person for the job.

Dr. Tom Patterson, formerly a mental health provider with the 509th Medical Group, is now with the 442d full-time. His primary mission is command consultation, providing advice to leaders regarding the status of their Airmen and evaluations of Airmen’s mental readiness when necessary.

He also ties in with local resources, providing referrals to get Airmen help with things like drug and alcohol counselling, financial management and spiritual help where necessary.

His mission also includes patient care. As a licensed clinical psychologist, he can provide confidential counselling for any of life’s troubles.

“There’s a very high degree of confidentiality,” Patterson says, “of in-

formation that does not go back to command, and does not get shared, by AFI.” He does caution, however, that there are exceptions to confidentiality. “The basic rule is, if no one is going to get hurt, it remains confidential.”

Patterson is available most mornings for walk-ins, and by appointment during the afternoon. He is also available on UTA weekends, for anyone who needs to talk.

The addition of, as Patterson puts it, “a couple more players on the field,” allows seven-day-a-week assistance for 442d members to help with resiliency in all areas of their lives. The two directors give much-needed support, building up two of the four pillars of wellness and keeping America’s premier combat-ready Airmen prepared to take the fight to the enemy.

Need a little help? Just want to say hi? Here’s how you can reach either A&FR or Dr. Patterson whenever you need:

***Airman & Family Readiness***  
Office

**660-687-3530**

Cell

**660-624-3072**

Email

**442afr@us.af.mil**

Website

**[http://www.442fw.afrc.af.mil/  
Home/AirmanandFamily  
Readiness.aspx](http://www.442fw.afrc.af.mil/Home/AirmanandFamilyReadiness.aspx)**

***Director of Psychological Health***

Office

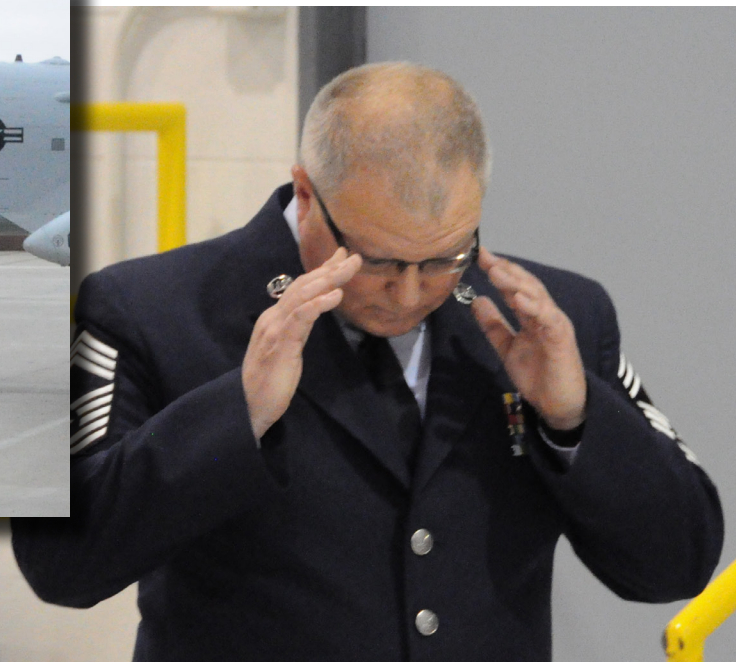
**660-687-7652**

Cell

**660-624-9746**

Email

**thomas.patterson.9@us.af.mil**



**Top:** Chief Cary Brown prepares mentally for his retirement and launches his final jet.  
**Middle:** SSgt Dan Russell shows his family the flightline while waiting to see Santa; MSgt Jamil Goodwin gets coined by Gen Welsh during his visit; Col Greg Eckfeld offers up his glasses to help the "aging" Col Ed Cullumber read his speech at his promotion ceremony.  
**Bottom:** Workers pour concrete on the second floor of what will be CE's new offices in building 705.



## Around the Wing

**Top Left:** MSgt Lance Moore raises his right hand and reaffirms his commitment to the Air Force Reserve and the nation.

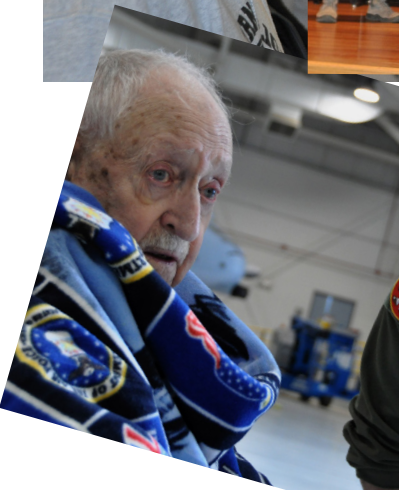
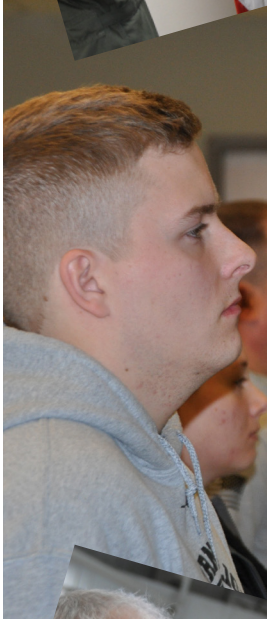
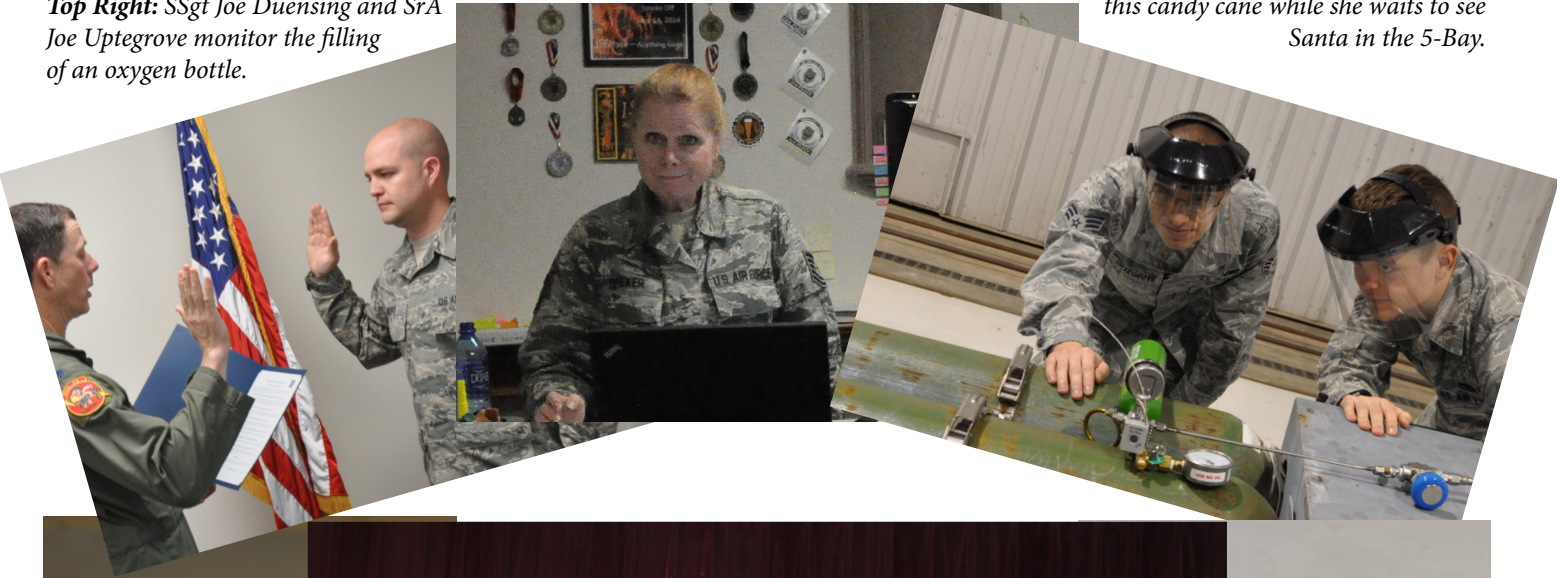
**Top Middle:** Wing Historian TSgt Mandy Spieker has no time for your interruptions. But she usually has cupcakes!

**Top Right:** SSgt Joe Duensing and SrA Joe Uptegrove monitor the filling of an oxygen bottle.

**Middle Left:** Trainee Tyler "Goose" Hermann stands in formation in the Development and Training Flight, learning facing movements.

**Center:** Congratulations to the quarterly and yearly award winners!

**Middle Right:** Chaplain Ed Sanders' daughter wants you to have this candy cane while she waits to see Santa in the 5-Bay.



**Bottom Left:** Capt Kenneth Rogers (Ret) was given the gift of a day with the wing by Crossroads Hospice. Here he is given a tour of an A-10 by Capt Morad Leal.

**Bottom Center:** SrA Jimmy Bittel rolls up hoses on a hydraulic "mule."  
**Bottom Left:** Behind the scenes shots of the making of a video highlighting the Development & Training Flight



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During his retirement ceremony, Tech Sgt. Ron Watkins presented Lt. Col. Joe Walter with a pair of flip-flops to commemorate their time working together. Congratulations, Ron! Enjoy your retirement!

