THE 446th Associate Press
November 2006 www.446aw.afrc.af.mil/

Personnel actions a mouse click away

By Senior Airman Desiree Kiliz
Wing Public Affairs

MCCHORD AIR FORCE BASE, Wash., – Since June, military personnel flights across the Air Force have been experiencing a change from face-to-face service to a new web based service, which allows customers to conduct personnel business at any time and from any computer.

Air Force Personnel Center officials believe this transition to the virtual personnel center for Guard and Reserve will improve accuracy and expand capabilities, in addition to saving money and resources.

"The vPC-GR provides access 24/7 to request personnel actions," said 1st Lt. Len Sobieski, Chief of Reserve Personnel Service Delivery.

"It's not any different than online banking or an ATM," said Master Sgt. Nancy Teal, 446th Mission Support Squadron chief, personnel systems manager. "It's self service that lets you control your own records and career."

To access the site, members should go to http://arpc.afrc.af.mil and click on the vPC-GR logo at the top of the page. Once at the site, all forms and applications can be retrieved with a log-in and the click-of-a-button.

Chief Master Sgt. Janice Kallinen, 446th Mission Support Squadron chief of military personnel here, enthusiastically describes her experience working through the forms on the Web site. "Very simple. The screens pop up and won't let you go on until you've done what it has asked."

Customers can not only fill out, update and verify forms, but information from their personnel records can also be retrieved and saved on, or printed from, their home computer.

Sergeant Teal emphasized "It's a lot faster than having to drive in to base and wait in line."

There are numerous documents already available for Reservists to access online, including the 20-year letter, current duty history, retirement applications and mortgage letters.

The ARPC is continually updating and adding new features to enhance the web site.

Tentatively scheduled for release this month, the site will also include forms for awards and decorations, evaluations, enlisted promotions and separation, said Chief Kallinen.

Another added offering is the ability to monitor transactions through an e-mailed tracking number.

For customers who are having difficulties or just need questions answered, a call center is available for assistance, Monday through Friday 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. MST and the first Saturday and Sunday of every month from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m., at (800) 525-0102 or DSN 926-6528.

"Essentially the call center is here to assess and take action for basic needs," said Sobieski. "If they say this is unique case and they can't help you, then they can refer you or move your case to the next person that can."

Members can also receive additional assistance through their squadron orderly rooms and military personnel flights.

What's available

- 2-year letter copy
- Current duty history
- Correct retirement points
- Current retirement points
- DD 214 records copy
- EPR/OPR request
- IMA CTA cadre support
- Mortgage letter
- Personnel data update
- RCSBP election
- Retired pay assistance
- Retirement application
- RIRP request
- TRS request
- ROPMA board counseling
- ROPMA promotion board letter

What's to come

- Awards & Decorations
- Evaluations
- Enlisted Promotions
- Separations
- Assignments
- Retraining
- Re-enlistments
- Duty Status
- Classification
- Adverse Actions
- Accessions

The 446th Associate Press
Volume 28, No. 11
November 2006

Nov. 22 is the deadline for articles in the December issue of **The 446th Associate Press**. All articles and photographs must be turned in to the 446th Airlift Wing Public Affairs office, Bldg. 1214, Room 124 by 4 p.m.

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Working smarter with fewer people

SMART Operations 21

By Brig. Gen. Eric Crabtree
Wing commander

Most of you have probably heard about the pending cuts in personnel coming to the active duty and Reserve portions of the Air Force. The active-duty number is 40,000 and the Reserve portion is slightly more than 7,700. The question most people in the military are asking is "How are we going to continue to do all the tasks we are doing now with that many fewer people?"

The answer from Secretary of the Air Force Michael Wynne is that we are going to initiate a program called "Air Force Smart Operations 21," or AFSO 21, to find ways to take advantage of technology and streamlined business practices to accomplish the same quality and quantity of work with a leaner force. The program is not unique to the Air Force and is a model for things to come as the business world flattens out to spread more evenly across the globe.

If you have seen a book called "The World is Flat," by Thomas Friedman, you should read it. It is a good description of where the world is headed in the 21st Century. Part of that direction is finding ways to accomplish work smarter and faster, not cheaper and harder.

All of us have seen the time wasters in things we do as part of our duties. AFSO21 is our opportunity to fix those things and get credit for being innovators and good business people.

The AFSO 21 CONOPS and Implementation Plan describes AFSO 21 as a mind set to select and use the right tools and techniques to identify problems to attack and opportunities for improvement. It goes on to say we must use our greatest resource - our innovative, dedicated Airmen - guided by world-class leadership and unique core values. The program is a leadership challenge for commanders and supervisors at every level to work smarter to deliver warfighting capability to the Department of Defense.

There are several examples of initiatives that have already been successful in starting the program off on the right footing.

At a recent Phoenix Rally Conference I attended, the wing commander from Dover AFB, Del., outlined an initiative they studied for streamlining isochronal inspections. On their C-5 aircraft, the inspections were taking too long. The average time was as high as 38 days before the airplane was returned to the flightline to fly missions.

AFSO 21 processes include an analysis called "value stream mapping." A complete analysis of every step and action of a job or task is analyzed for its contribution to the end task. Some things turn out to be time wasters that add nothing to the completion of the task. Others are accomplished in the wrong sequence, etc. By identifying these contributors to wasted time and effort, the whole process can be streamlined and done quicker and more efficiently.

In the Dover study, some of the things identified as wasteful or inefficient were the removal of panels, positioning of repair parts, positioning of required tools and reorganization of the hangar layout. Many aircraft panels were being removed and replaced as many as 17 times for various inspections. Now they are all removed once and not replaced until the end of the inspection process. Parts that are required to be replaced as part of the inspection process are placed as near the point of use as possible. That means no more walking back and forth to the parts supply source every time you need a part. Likewise, tools are pre-positioned near the job they support to save climbing up and down maintenance stands many times to get specialized equipment. And finally, the whole hangar layout was functionally organized and marking boxes painted on the floor for the most sensible placement of all required equipment.

Brig. Gen. Eric Crabtree

The result was a reduction to less than 14 days for the

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Mentors key to career successes

By Staff Sgt. Paul Haley
Wing Public Affairs

Brig. Gen. Elizabeth Grote, the Air Force Reserve Command director of logistics, came to McChord Saturday, October 14 to speak at Moosefest. She also spoke at a luncheon regarding her early career and progression through the ranks. Afterward, I had the opportunity to speak with her on some of the topics she discussed at the luncheon.

Q: How did mentoring help you early in your career?

A: I think that what mentoring allows a person to do is benefit from other people's experience. When you first start any new job, you are trying to figure everything out and you're going to make plenty of mistakes. But having a mentor really helps. It was especially helpful having Capt. Marcelite Jordan (now retired Maj. Gen. Marcelite Jordan Harris) as my first active-duty sponsor and subsequent mentor, because in 1971 she became the first woman aircraft maintenance officer in the Air Force.

I joined the Air Force in 1972 and it was difficult being a female in a non-traditional career field, but it wasn't as intimidating for me because she was there. She was successful and having the opportunity to see how she discharged her duties gave me a lot of confidence.

Q: Did you find that there was a glass ceiling?

A: There definitely was a glass ceiling when I came in. There was General (Jeanne M.) Holm, and that was it. In 1971 she was the first woman appointed to the grade of brigadier general. She was the director of the Women in the Air Force personnel office in the Pentagon. In those days women assigned to the unit were also assigned to a WAF Squadron.

When females first started entering the Air Force after World War II, they were not allowed to fly and I believe they were initially capped at lieutenant colonel. It wasn't about ability, it was a strict number. Look at (Col.) Jackie Cochran. She was an internationally renowned pilot. I don't think anybody would say there was really anybody who was a better pilot than she was, but she couldn't fly (in the Air Force).

It's different now. There aren't the closed career fields. There are more female general officers in a wide range of jobs. It's now more about what your abilities are and what you can do. There is a lieutenant general vice commander at AFMC (Air Force Material Command), General (Terry) Gabreski. People are being successful based on merit. It's a much different world now, 34 years later.

Q: What's the most important thing you can tell Airmen to make their time in the Air Force successful?

A: I don't think there's one thing. I think it's pretty much like the rest of life. You've got to be true to yourself. By that I mean you have to know yourself – your strengths, weaknesses and experience and have confidence in yourself. Don't think about what someone else might do in a similar situation; do what you think is right. If you make a mistake; you make a mistake. Learn from it and move on. Don't be a phony; you've got to be yourself.

Q: Is there anything you'd like to add?

A: As you go through your career, have your eyes open for opportunities, have faith in yourself and in your abilities, and understand your strength is with the team that you're working with. If you're successful, the team is what made you successful. I don't feel that any of the successes that I've been fortunate enough to come by in life have been because of "I," it's been because of "we."

Photo by 1st Lt. Reed Robertson

Brig. Gen. Elizabeth Grote speaks to 446th Airlift Wing Reservists during lunch at the McChord Aerospace Dining Facility Oct. 14.

Brig. Gen. Elizabeth Grote is the director of logistics, Air Force Reserve Command, Robins Air Force Base, Ga. The directorate of logistics is comprised of 120 military, civilian, air reserve technician and traditional reserve personnel who ensure logistics management, planning, support and oversight for day-to-day operations of 673 flying and support units. The command supports more than 445 aircraft of 13 different mission/design/series. There are more than 20,000 logisticians in Air Force Reserve Command units supporting these missions.

General Grote was commissioned a second lieutenant upon completing Officer Training School in 1972. She then attended the Aircraft Maintenance Officer Course at Chanute AFB, Ill. The general served on active duty for five years, entering the Air Force Reserve in 1977. During her career, she has held positions as numbered air force director of logistics, maintenance group commander, squadron commander, deputy commander for maintenance, job control officer, and squadron maintenance officer. As an air reserve technician, the general holds dual status as a civil service employee and an Air Force Reservist.

AFRC changes officer promotions

WASHINGTON – Air Force Reserve Command is changing its officer promotion system to meet future total force requirements.

The command implemented the changes starting with the Oct. 16 Air Force Reserve line and non-line colonel promotion selection board, with results of the board to be announced early next year.

In one change, the command will combine Selected Reserve (Categories A and B) and Participating Individual Ready Reserve, or PIRR, (Category E) officers into a single promotion group.

"All participating members should have the same opportunity and compete with each other for promotion," said Lt. Gen. John Bradley, chief of the Air Force Reserve and AFRC commander.

"This change is especially prudent in light of our strategic shift to an operational Reserve, increased total force integration, and challenges posed by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission and Program Budget Decision 720," General Bradley said.

In addition, in recent years the Air Force Reserve promoted more lieutenant colonels to colonel than it had available colonel positions. This prompted the command to adjust the promotion opportunity for its line officers competing for colonel from 45 percent to 40 percent.

At the same time, command officials decided to stop holding continuation boards for lieutenant colonels to remain in the Air Force Reserve beyond their mandatory separation date of 28 years total federal commissioned service.

The decision to form one competitive promotion category was not done in a "vacuum," according to General Bradley.

"I chartered a general officer-led promotions working group in July 2006 with cross-functional representation to weigh all the different options of changing the competitive categories and taking better care of our people," he said. "This was the best recommendation the group proposed and the right thing to do for our citizen Airmen."

The team consisted of a cross-section of reservists. They included senior officers from AFRC headquarters, a wing commander, a squadron commander, a readiness management group detachment commander and functional managers from line and non-

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Air Force News At A Glance

America soars on Air Force wings

By Gen. T. Michael Moseley
U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff

WASHINGTON (AFPN) – The United States of America depends on its Air Force to defend the population, deliver global effects and jointly accomplish national objectives to an extent unseen in the history of mankind.

In my 35 years of service, many things have changed. Yet, what has remained constant is the extraordinary dedication, courage, and skill of the men and women we call "Airmen" who deliver for the nation every minute of every day in air, on the surface, in space, and cyberspace. http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123029134

President, military leaders dedicate Air Force Memorial

By Staff Sgt. Julie Weckerlein
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON (AFPN) – On behalf of a grateful nation, the president of the United States accepted the Air Force Memorial in a dedication ceremony here attended by military leaders of the past and present, political and business representatives and thousands of ordinary citizens and Airmen alike.

"A Soldier can walk the battlefields where he once fought," said President George W. Bush. "A Marine can walk the beaches he once stormed, but an Airman can never visit the patch of sky he raced across to defend freedom. And so it is fitting that from this day forward, the men and women of the Air Force will have this memorial." http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123029178

Air Force leaders to discuss new 'Cyber Command'

By Staff Sgt. C. Todd Lopez
Air Force Print News

Graphic by Adamarie Lewis-Page

WASHINGTON (AFPN) – Air Force leaders are gathering in early November to discuss plans for creation of a new command, one chartered with flying and fighting in cyber space.

Cyberspace became an official Air Force domain, like air and space, on Dec. 7, 2005, when Secretary of the Air Force Michael W. Wynne and Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. T. Michael Moseley introduced a new mission statement. http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123028524

Editor's Note: *Air Force News – At A Glance features the top stories on the Air Force News web site recommended by Air Force leaders as essential reading. For the full story, type the hyperlink into your web browser.*

Smart operations future for force

By Staff Sgt. C. Todd Lopez
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON – The Air Force Smart Operations 21 office, created in response to an initiative by Secretary of the Air Force Michael W. Wynne, will look at process improvement across the service.

The new office provides top-level guidance for implementing AFSO21 initiatives. These initiatives will enhance a mind set in the Air Force that is already geared toward innovation, said Brig. Gen. S. Taco Gilbert III, director of the Air Force Smart Operations 21 office.

"The Air Force has always fostered a culture of innovation," General Gilbert said. "We are trying to take that culture of innovation to the next level, where we look at all the processes involved in what we do. We look at not doing 'more with less,' but at being smarter about the way we are doing business -- eliminating work that is unnecessary. We have tried to capture lessons learned from industry and government agencies involved in process improvement."

Senior leaders designed the program specifically for the Air Force, and it is based on similar industry process improvement practices like Lean, Six Sigma and Theory of Constraints.

"Air Force Smart Operations 21 is a term coined by Air Force senior leadership to represent not only a program to institutionalize continuous process improvement, but also to describe a new way of thinking about the Air Force," General Gilbert said. "We want to be smart about the things we do for the future."

Process improvement involves looking at the way something is done, from beginning to end, and determining how it can be done better. By outlining a process, people can then look for redundancies and "non-value added work" to eliminate.

Non-value added work is that which adds nothing to a process. Examples could be forms that are filled out unnecessarily, or excessive travel to get replacement parts when it would be more practical to house those replacement parts at a work center, General Gilbert said.

Even after teams apply initiatives to a process and improve it, there is still more work to do, General Gilbert said. Every process can continue to be improved and more waste can always be found. Continual process improvement is the nature of AFSO21.

"This isn't about a one-time pass and you're done," he said. "It's a continual process. After you go through once, you then examine the same process again and again. Generally, you find every process will require review four or five times and each time you find more to eliminate or that can be streamlined."

General Gilbert said Air Force leaders have identified 10 main processes divided into three areas: governing, core and enabling. The processes are: planning and executing strategic initiatives, managing processes and programs, developing and sustaining warfighting capability, deploying personnel and materials, conducting kinetic and related operations, conducting non-kinetic and related operations, caring for people, providing information support systems, caring for infrastructure and managing financial resources.

Photo by Abner Guzman

Senior Airman Alexander Rojas, 62nd Maintenance Squadron, demonstrates equipment in the award-winning wheel and tire shop to Gen. Duncan McNabb, commander of Air Mobility Command. The 62nd MXG wheel and tire shop earned the "2005 Chief of Staff Team Excellence Award" recognizing mission improvement and cost savings as part of AFSO 21.

Each of the processes has several sub-processes. In actuality, there could be thousands or tens of thousands of actual processes used in the Air Force to accomplish specific parts of the overall mission. Each one, no matter how small or large, can be improved, General Gilbert said.

"Every process we have needs to be improved," he said. "Even in world-class organizations, you find that 60 to 70 percent of the activity in a particular process is waste -- activity that doesn't add value to the overall output."

By using AFSO21 initiatives, process times can be reduced, so work can be done more quickly .... people can be freed up to do other work, General Gilbert said.

AFSO 21

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inspections. The efficiencies gained allowed 60 Airmen to be returned to the flightline to work other repair actions on C-5s. A savings of 4,500 man hours annually was the result of ridding the process of wasted motion. The wings at Dover AFB now have the potential to accomplish 45-plus isochronal inspections annually, as opposed to 17 per year before the study.

If you want to learn more about AFSO 21 and see if there are possible process candidates for improvement in your work area, there is great information on the Air Force Reserve Command web site. Go to https://wwwmil.afrc.af.mil and click on "Hot and New Items" in the upper left corner. Then click on the "AFSO21 Starter Kit" and you will see a whole menu of materials to guide and help you. We need to lead the way on working smarter and faster, something we can do as this wing has always been blessed with first line innovators. Let's show the Air Force we can lead the way into the 21st Century.

Maintainers quickly get airlifters moving in, out of harms way

By Senior Airman James Croxon
322nd Air Expeditionary Wing

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq (AFPN) – With aircraft valued at $150 million and up, these assets are too valuable to sit in harm's way in Iraq. To get the large cargo aircraft gassed and maintained and on their way, the 721st Air Mobility Operations Group, Detachment 5, Airmen work to move the airlifters in the air quickly and out of the path of incoming mortars and rockets.

Balad AB's mission begins with strategic airlift, primarily the C-5 Galaxies and C-17 Globemaster IIIs. Like giant albatrosses, these T-tailed behemoths are vulnerable on the ground.

"Neither the pilots nor the maintainers want the aircraft on the ground any longer than absolutely necessary," said Airman 1st Class Mark Mano, a C-17 crew chief deployed from Charleston Air Force Base, S.C. "The main thing we focus on is gas, engines and wings. If they can safely fly home for maintenance, then they go home. They don't stay overnight here unless they absolutely have to."

The detachment's mission is to provide aircraft maintenance, launch and recover all Air Mobility Command aircraft traveling through Balad AB, said Lt. Col. Jay McSweeney, 721st AMOG, Det. 5 commander. Colonel McSweeney is a Reservist and commander of the 446th Maintenance Operations Flight at McChord..

"To put this plainly, it means we have to refuel, service and repair all C-17s and C-5s as quickly as possible to minimize the ground time in order to limit exposure to possible enemy attacks," the major said.

The Airmen work as a team on every task, blurring the lines between Air Force specialties.

"I'm a crew chief. Back home, it's checking tires, marshaling and fueling day in, day out for Airmen like me," Airman Mano said. "Here, I work with the engine troops, guidance and control, hydraulics and the other AFSCs. I get to see how the plane works on the inside."

Teamwork also spans airframes.

"We're split fairly evenly between C-5 and C-17 troops," said Master Sgt. Leon Payne, a guidance and control craftsman deployed from Charleston AFB and one of two superintendents assigned to Det. 5. "When the C-5 Airmen are fixing a part, the C-17 Airmen will help out. It's common for maintainers to be signed off on some core tasks for different airframes."

Deployed maintenance has a different focus than maintenance at home.

"In comparison to home station, Balad would be considered a 'gas-n-go' stop," Colonel McSweeney said. "We have limited repair capabilities here. We do have the expertise to repair almost any maintenance problem, but much lower manning, no organic back shop capability, and limited parts support.

Lt. Col. Jay McSweeney, 446th Maintenance Operations Flight commander, is currently deployed as the commander of the 721st Air Mobility Operations Group, Detachment 5, in Balad AB, Iraq.

"One way we offset these limitations is our direct line of communication with AMC's Tanker Airlift Control Center," the major said. "When we have maintenance problems that require parts we don't have in stock, we communicate this information to the TACC logistics control division and we receive the parts via AMC airlift within 24 to 36 hours."

Repairing aircraft so quickly takes teamwork and it's evident everywhere. Airmen work with NCOs and 5-levels work with 7-levels.

"About half of us are junior enlisted, many on their first deployment," Sergeant Payne said. "These young Airmen are really charged up and have embraced the team concept."

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line career fields, as well as legal and personnel experts from the Air Reserve Personnel Center, AFRC headquarters and the Office of Air Force Reserve.

Under force shaping actions, the Air Force Reserve will shift some of its member authorizations from paid positions in the Selected Reserve to non-paid status in the Participating Individual Ready Reserve.

"This change confirms the command's commitment to a robust and viable PIRR," said Col. Becky Lewis, director of personnel in the Office of Air Force Reserve. "It considers all participating members together, allowing us to follow personnel management policies that enable and identify the force most suited to meet mission requirements."

Changing promotion opportunities for lieutenant colonels and eliminating boards to keep them beyond their mandatory separation dates were necessary, according to Col. Shaun Kelleher, chief of the directorate of personnel's force management policy division in the Office of Air Force Reserve.

"These changes will help manage our colonel production more efficiently and enable a reasonable expectation for colonel-selects to pin-on in a timely manner," he said. "Simply stated, we have too many people making colonel and not enough positions for them. This has made it increasingly harder for colonel-selects to find Reserve jobs in a timely manner and pin on their new rank."

(Courtesy of Air Force Reserve Command News Service)

Employers learn ins, outs of duty

By Staff Sgt. Nick Przybyciel
Wing Public Affairs

MCCHORD AIR FORCE BASE, Wash., – Thirty-six civilian employers came out to McChord Air Force Base for Employer Orientation Day Oct. 21, the semi-annual event designed to highlight 446th Airlift Wing Reservists and their mission.

The event includes a mock mobility line, where civilian employers learn the process Reservists go through when deploying. After processing through the mobility line, employers meet their Reserve employees at a C-17 Globemaster III and go on an orientation flight.

"It renewed my respect for the men and women who are serving our country," said Michael Walker, one of the employers who participated in the event. "I always thought that Brad (Staff Sgt. Brad Sharp, 36th Aerial Port Squadron) just kind of disappeared for a few days every month. I never realized all that he does during the weekends. Personally, I'd rather be at home drinking beers."

Culminating with an air drop, the flight awed many of the employers.

"I'm amazed at how the plane performs," said David Enger, the civilian employer of Tech. Sgt. Mikhail Ekshtut, 446th AW Chapel.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Nick Przybyciel

Staff Sgt. Bradley Sharp, 36th Aerial Port Squadron, talks with his civilian employer, Michael Walker, during Employer Orientation Day Oct. 21. Culminating with an orientation flight, the semi-annual event highlights the 446th AW's mission to civilian employers and the importance of their employees' service.

Dipping down low over the Cascade Mountains after completing the air drop, Mr. Enger keenly spotted a familiar site in the mountains below. "We passed over Stevens Pass Ski Resort. We went right over a trail on the backside that I've skied before."

Another employer, Sheri Forbes from the National Park Service, was impressed with the design of the Employer Orientation Day event. "I liked the overall sense of involvement and interaction. It was especially engaging for people like me who haven't had a lot of exposure to a military environment," she said. Ms. Forbes is the supervisor of Staff Sgt. Barry Fraissinet, 446th Maintenance Squadron, when he is at his civilian job.

The next Employer Orientation Day will be April 7.

ESGR supports Reservists, employers, law

MCCHORD AIR FORCE BASE, Wash., – The National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is an agency within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. ESGR operates programs directed toward U.S. employers, employees, and communities to ensure understanding of the role of Reserve component members.

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act was enacted in October 1994 to provide job protection and rights of reinstatement to employees who participate in the Guard and Reserve.

The Act seeks to ensure that members of the uniformed services are entitled to return to their civilian employment upon completion of their service. They should be reinstated with the seniority, status, and rate of pay they would have obtained had they remained continuously employed by their civilian employer. The law also protects individuals from discrimination in hiring, promotion, and retention on the basis of present and future membership in the armed services.

Major sections of the USERRA law include:

• Placing a 5-year limit (with some exceptions) on the cumulative length of time a person may serve in the military and remain

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Workshop hears Airmen's concerns

By Tech. Sgt. Wendy Beauchaine
Wing Public Affairs

MCCHORD AIR FORCE BASE, Wash., – More than 200 members of the Air Force Reserve team converged on Colorado Springs the last week in October and then headed home with ideas for improving their Human Resources Development Councils.

The 446th Airlift Wing sent a delegation of 13, to include Senior Airman Nicole Cyrus who was selected to serve on the First-Term Airman Panel.

Air Force Reserve Command's HRDC played host to a three-day workshop at the Sheraton Colorado Springs Hotel that attracted participants from around the country. HRDCs, both at the local and command level, advise commanders and make recommendations on anything related to their people.

In a large organization like the Air Force Reserve, sometimes Airmen feel unimportant in the decision-making process. As a First-Term Airman Panel member at the Human Resources Development Council conference, Airman Cyrus, a personnelist from the 728th Airlift Squadron, discovered that Air Force leaders appreciate and respect the opinions servicemembers of all ranks, career fields, races and sexes.

Senior Airman Nicole Cyrus

"I realized how our experiences, diverse backgrounds, opinions and values are heard by senior leaders and command chiefs," said Airman Cyrus, who was selected to participate with six other Airmen on the First-Term Airman's Panel.

"I was nominated to sit on the panel to answer questions from senior Air Force Reserve leaders, attend break out sessions, and speak about the diversity within our wings. I was very encouraged by the warm reception we received as first-termers."

Airman Cyrus has served in the Reserve for a little more than a year now.

"Airmen want to know about career opportunities, to be recognized, earn awards, sit on various panels, and represent the Reserve," she said. "We are all very different people, but we share many of the same goals regardless of our ethnic backgrounds, financial situations, or career paths. Many of the panel questions related to what we would like to see change in the Air Force, what the climate was like at our units, the mentoring program, and whether or not we needed more training."

Airman Cyrus left feeling more inspired to volunteer with the HRDC, participate in outreach programs with Washington state schools, and support the 728th AS as best she can.

"Within my squadron, I plan to assist our new Airmen in anyway I can, so that they are comfortable within the squadron and know how they are contributing to the overall mission," she said. "I think it's important to know how we can improve ourselves within the Air Force and make this career everything we want it to be."

Making the conference everythingn the command leadership wanted it to be was the goal for Maj. Gen. Peter Sullivan, mobilization assistant to the assistant secretary of the Air Force, Manpower and Reserve Affairs at the Pentagon and chairman of AFRC's HRDC.

"We want to provide updates on current Air Force human resources initiatives and efforts; we want to provide tools and practices you can take back to improve your unit HRDCs; we want to provide networking opportunities so you can learn from other councils' successes and failures; and we want you to have fun."

(Bo Joyner, Air Force Reserve Command Public Affairs, contributed to this story.)

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eligible for reemployment rights with the pre-service employer;

• Requiring an individual to give written or verbal notice to their employer prior to departure for military service;

• Establishing time limits for reporting back to work, based on the length of time in the uniformed service, rather than on the type of service, and requiring documentation of such service, if available;

• Providing for the continuation of employer provided health insurance (at the service member's request) for an 24-month period, with payment of up to 102 percent of the full premium by the servicemember;

• Requiring that an employee's military service not be considered a break in employment for pension benefit purposes, and providing that the person's military service must be considered service with an employer for vesting and benefit accrual purposes;

• Providing that the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service shall assist all employees, including federal government workers.

Other highlights of the law are:

• Employees must be excused from work to attend inactive duty training (drill) or annual training and the employer must reemploy the employee as if he or she has not been absent.

• Employers may require an employee to provide documentation of military service after periods of military leave of absence for more than 30 days, which can be used to establish the employee's basic eligibility for protection under USERRA.

• Employers can't require an employee to reschedule drills, annual training, or any other military duty obligation. However, the employer may contact the military commander of the employee's military unit to determine if the duty could be rescheduled or performed by another member. If the military commander determines that the military duty cannot be rescheduled or canceled, the employer is required to permit the employee to perform his or her military duty.

• While many employers offer differential pay or a specific number of paid military leave days, an employer is not required to pay an employee on military leave of absence.

• If an employee is injured or incurs a disability during military duty, the deadline for reinstatement may be extended for up to two years for persons who are convalescing due to a disability incurred or aggravated during military service, and employers must make reasonable accommodations for the impairment.

For more information, visit the Web site www.esgr.org or contact the 446th Airlift Wing Public Affairs office at 982-2060.

Reservist follows The Silk Road

By 1st. Lt. Reed Robertson
Wing Public Affairs

The Grand Canyon, Washington D.C., Niagara Falls, Route 66 – these are just a few of the most sought after destinations and routes many Americans aspire to visit in their lifetime. For others, their long-awaited destination may take them 6,000 miles and many time zones away.

Following one of her long awaited goals, Staff Sgt. Grace Qiu from the 36th Aerial Port Squadron here recently flew to Beijing, China to travel on the ancient transcontinental trade route called The Silk Road.

Sergeant Qiu was born in China and lived there until her family moved to California to live with her grandparents when she was 10 years old.

"When we moved to California, I didn't speak English. I didn't even know my ABCs. It was a difficult transition for all of us, but because I was the youngest, I think it was easier for me," she said.

In what would equate to someone driving from the West Coast to the East Coast and half way back, Sergeant Qiu and others traveled along this now museum-laden road that represents thousands of years of Chinese history.

"Seven of us traveled along the Silk Road for 7,000 kilometers. We were piled into two cars for our 12-day trip," said Sergeant Qiu.

Sergeant Qiu was accompanied by her best friend, her husband and four of his cousins who still live in China.

"The two cars we used belonged to our relatives there and one in particular had a few mechanical problems," she said.

Day one saw a broken fuel gauge, that was followed by a flat tire. Then on the third day, the fuel pump went out. Throw those delays in with the poorly maintained roads, forcing them to slow to 10 mph, and it makes for several long days.

"The further we went from the center of China, the worse the roads were. Big trucks destroy the roads and make it really difficult for smaller cars to travel on," she said.

Even the long days were not enough to dampen the spirits of these seven traveling companions.

"We had wanted to take this trip for a long time and we finally decided to all get together and do it," she said. "The Silk Road represents several thousand years of Chinese history and we stopped at many museums along the way."

"There are several things that stand out to me as memorable moments during our trip. We were surprised to see snow on the ground after driving for hours in a sandy desert environment. We were so shocked that we pulled over and had a snow fight with each other," she said.

She continued, "Another thing that stands out to me is how blessed I am. As we drove through farming villages, I saw folks so poor that their houses had no roofs and their restrooms were nothing more than a hole in the ground. Seeing how poor many of these villages are really makes me appreciate the opportunities I've been given. It was a little uncomfortable going to a restaurant in one of these villages, realizing that what is just a few dollars for us means a week's pay for some of them. It was hard to see the poverty that is their reality."

Even before her trip to China, Sergeant Qiu was not ignorant to the benefits granted to all Americans. Awareness of her blessings inspired Sergeant Qiu to join the Air Force Reserve and serve her country. After completing college, she enlisted in 2000.

Photo courtesy of Staff Sgt. Grace Qiu

Staff Sgt. Grace Qiu tries to squeeze this nine story high temple at MoGaoKu, China.

Salutes

Promotions

Senior Master Sergeant
Stanley Harris, 446th AMDS
Stephen Harris, 446th SVF
Sherril Fison, 446th AMDS
Kenneth Mazzuca, 446th SFS
Saudi McVea, 446th AES

Master Sergeant
Jo Blake, 36th APS
Mark Blom, 446th MXG
John Gan, 446th MXS
Marla Gilson, 446th AES
Brian Horton, 97th AS
Michael Hughes, 97th AS
Eric Letourneau, 86th APS
Paul Melkers, 446th OG
Regina Rollis, 313th AS
Max Sorenson, 86th APS

Technical Sergeant
Chris Brandaberry, 446th MXS
Emory Cass, 446th OSF
Douglas Gannon, 313th AS
Jonathan Goularte, 446th MXS
Loretta Lawton, 313th AS
Eric Maland, 97th AS
Melissa Oberg, 446th AMDS
Christopher Pierce, 446th SFS
Justin Pollard, 446th CES
Tyson Scholes, 446th MXS

Staff Sergeant
Garrett Biehler, 446th MXS
Sean Bolstad, 446th AMDS
Randall Cathcart, 313th AS
Allen Ellzey, 446th MXS
Rebeca Forgey, 446th CES
Paul Haley, 446th AW
Nicholas Krissie, 446th CES
Maria Lockard, 446th AMDS
Kenneth Massey, 446th ASTS
Allison Masey, 446th AES
Alexander Pirolo, 446th AMXS
Brianne Rembert, 446th ASTS
John Tally, 36th APS
Gary Washington, 313th AS

Senior Airman
Rebbeca Aho, 446th MXS
Alexandria Bailey, 36th APS
Thomas Barrett, 446th MXS
Steven Bills, 36th APS
Lindsey Coffelt, 446th MXS
Genese Concepcion, 446th MXS
Chris Couchman, 446th AMXS
Tristan Davis, 446th AMXS
Victor Dinarte, 446th SVF
Owen Duff, 446th CES
Jesse Emig, 36th APS
Nickolas Greising, 446th ASTS
Andrew Kalmbach, 446th AES
Zendi Mamaril, 446th MSS
Suzanne Young, 446th AES

Airman First Class
Mariah Ryding, 446th AMDS

Newcomers

Major
Robert Legg, 446th AW
Kelli Molter, 446th MSG
David Walter, 446th CES

First Lieutenant
John Dyson, 446th LRF

Senior Master Sergeant
Linda Edwards, 446th AMXS

Master Sergeant
Edward Angle, 446th MSS
Kenneth Rochefort, 446th AMXS
David White, 446th AMXS

Technical Sergeant
Keith Aldred, 446th AMXS
Terrance Harris, 446th AMXS
Michael Heckman, 446th AMXS
Erik Mark, 446th MXS
Lisa Salas, 36th APS
Daniel Sanford, 446th AMXS
Wade Sullivan, 446th MXS

Staff Sergeant
Jan Hurtgen, 728th AS
Kevin Kirchgraber, 446th MXS
Stewart Lyall, 446th AMXS
David Matson, 446th MSS
Bradley Shafer, 446th AMXS
Eugene Sprouse, 446th AMXS

Senior Airman
Christopher Fezer, 446th CES
Ashley Mearns, 446th AMXS
Daniel Williamson, 446th AMXS

Airman First Class
Lindsey Coffelt, 446th MXS
Brandi Cundiff, 86th APS
Thomas Hathaway, 446th AMXS
Newton Nagata, 446th MXS
James Pierce, 446th CES
Vikash Prakash, 86th APS

Retirements

Lieutenant Colonel
Thomas Dundon, 446th ASTS

Major
John Kelchen 313th AS
Joyce Mejia, 446th ASTS

Master Sergeant
Danilo Balbuena, 446th AMDS
George Berthiaume, 97th AS
John Fennell, 446th AMXS
Terry Osburn, 446th AMXS
William Walter, 446th MXS
Philip Zurcher, 446th AES

Technical Sergeant
Gary Osborn, 446th AMXS

Remember When

Nov. 8, 1950 -- First all-jet plane aerial combat in history took place over Korea. A U.S. Air Force F–80 Shooting Star, piloted by Lt. Russell J. Brown, downed a North Korean MiG–15.

A lasting memory

A maple sapling planted on a grassy knoll between parking lots of Bldgs. 1214 and 1216 was dedicated to the memory of Col. Harold Iverson, Army retired, who served the 446th Airlift Wing as an executive officer in his more than 55 years of federal service. Mr. Iverson passed away in August.

Photo by Sandra Pishner

Just Briefly

What does Veterans Day mean to you?

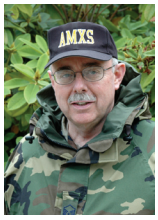
Honor

To honor all of the servicemembers who fought before us and gave themselves above all.

◆ *Senior Yvonne Chass*
446th Aeromedical Staging Squadron

Appreciate

It is a time to honor those who are giving everything - for what we appreciate and what we don't appreciate.



◆ *Master Sgt. Terry Osburn*
446th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

Time of war

It is a time to honor the men and women who served before us, especially during a time of war.

◆ *Senior Airman Melissa Reimer*
446th Aerospace Medicine Squadron

Sacrifice

It's about the sacrifice people made before me. I lost an uncle who was a Marine on Iwo Jima. I think of him each year.

◆ Lt. Col. Robert Berg
446th Aeromedical Staging Squadron

446th Airlift Control Flight in hands of new commander

Maj. Martin Oliver became the newest commander of the 446th Airlift Control Flight in a ceremony Nov. 5. Lt. Col. Steve Tank, who handed over the reins of the flight to Major Oliver, goes on to a position with the National Guard.

Maintenance earns Outstanding Reserve Nonflying Unit Award

Fourth Air Force recently announced that the 446th Maintenance Group earned the 2006 ROA Outstanding Reserve Nonflying Unit Award. The unit should be extremely proud of their many achievements and contributions resulting in this prestigious award. Our congratulations and best of luck as their nomination goes forward to AFRC.

4th AF Aerial Porter new mission support group commander

Lt. Col. Craig Petersen, who has headed the aerial port function for 4th Air Force, has been selected as the 446th Mission Support Group commander here. He will officially be assigned to the 446th Airlift Wing in December and will be in place mid-January.

'1095 Rule' ruling allows Reservists to continue to serve

Office of Secretary of Defense, Reserve Affairs officials announced it had reviewed the DoD options related to Public Law 108-375-OCT. 28, 2004 Sections 415 and 416, more commonly known as the "1095" rule, which allows Air Reserve Component Airmen to be on continuous orders for three years in any four year period without counting against end-strength. The ruling is in relation to the National Defense Authorization Act language that limited Reserve members to 1,095 non-mobilized active-duty days in a four year period. The OSD/RA ruling will allow 446th Airlift Wing members to continue on volunteer orders indefinitely if they choose to do so.

Commanders, first sergeants set to serve holiday meals on UTAs

Commanders and first sergeants of 446th Airlift Wing units will be serving lunch at the McChord dining facility during the December UTAs, from 10:30 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.

Legal Office has limited staffing – call first for appointments

The 446th Airlift Wing Legal Office is temporarily short staffed on the UTA. Because of their limited availability, it is best for Airmen to call prior to going to the office. The legal office is located in Bldg. 100, Room 3115 and their phone number is 928-6587. The legal office is on the third floor, Parade Grounds side of the building. The easiest way to find the office is to enter Bldg. 100 through the front-right set of doors, turn right down the hall, and take the stairs to the third floor. At the top of the stairs turn right and go down the short hallway. The office is on the left at the end of the hall (just before the courtroom).

Photo by Senior Airman Desiree Kiliz

Tech. Sgt. Sean Cargill guides fellow 446th Security Forces Squadron Reservist Staff Sgt. Jennifer Jankord, blindfolded, through a plastic bottle "mine" field, while Staff Sgt. Donald Ducay, 446th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, waits patiently for his turn. This exercise, along with many others, aid in teaching leadership skills to enlisted members in the Noncommissioned Officers Development course here. The lastest NCOLD class graduated Nov. 2.

Share holiday spirit through giving

By Staff Sgt. Paul Haley
Wing Public Affairs

MCCHORD AIR FORCE BASE, Wash., – The holidays are once again upon us, bringing with them the joy of the season, highlighted by the fellowship of family and friends, and the spirit of generosity.

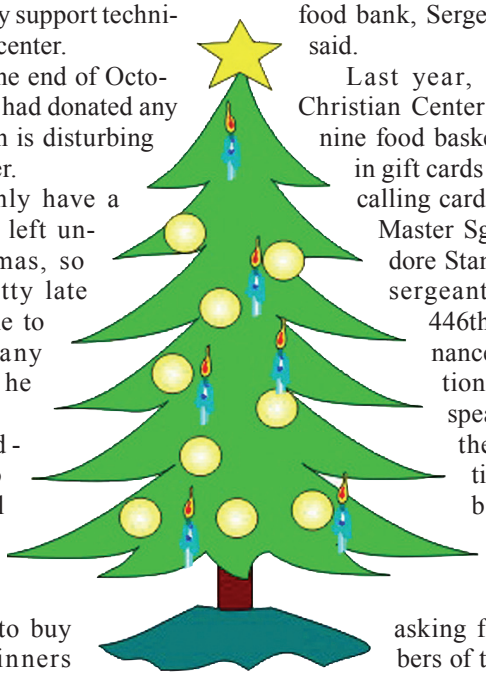
The 446th Airlift Wing Family Support Center is providing easy access to the joy of generosity by soliciting donations for the Angel Tree and holiday baskets for families in need.

The Angel Tree is an anonymous gift exchange for children of Reservists and civilian employees of the wing. The tree is located in Bldg. 1207 near the Family Support Center and has cards hanging as ornaments indicating the age, gender and size of children hoping for a Christmas gift, said Tech. Sgt. Michael Bray, family support technician at the center.

As of the end of October, no one had donated any gifts, which is disturbing to the center.

"We only have a few UTAs left until Christmas, so this is pretty late in the game to not have any presents," he said.

In addition to the Angel Tree, the center is accepting donations to buy holiday dinners for families of the 446th AW.



People can give money to buy dinners, or donate to the food bank, Sergeant Bray said.

Last year, Destiny Christian Center donated nine food baskets, $650 in gift cards and nine calling cards. Senior Master Sgt. Theodore Stanley, first sergeant for the 446th Maintenance Operations Flight, spearheaded the collection effort by Destiny.

As well as asking for members of the 446th to provide help to the programs, the Family Support Center also needs to be referred to families that could use help this holiday season.

Anyone can refer a family. Simply download the referral form from the sharepoint under 446 AW>446 MSG>446 MSS>Family Support, and turn it in to the Family Support Center personally or attached to an e-mail, Sergeant Bray said.

One problem with the program, however, is participation. Many families who could use help this time of year aren't getting it, and donations don't always come in from those who can afford it, said Sergeant Bray.

"We can put together this great program, but if no one participates, it won't work. If no one picks up cards or refers people, it won't go anywhere," he said.

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