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AEDC engine test team benefitting from Combined Test Force

By Deidre Ortiz
ATA Public Affairs

While AEDC personnel are adjusting to performing as a Combined Test Force (CTF), Lt. Col. Anthony Walker, Materiel Leader of the Aeropropulsion Ground Test Branch and Director of the Aeropropulsion CTF, said he's already seen progress

in process improvement and enhanced efficiency within the Aeropropulsion Ground Test Branch.

"It's going well," Walker said. "I feel that this has opened up lines of communication, and now there's insight as to what everyone, as a team, is doing. So, actually it's helping our people make better decisions for

their job."

He added that the ones working at ground level are now able to have more input on the test projects they're working on than they perhaps had in the past.

"Now when we're talking [about a project] we're able to make a decision instead of having to go through all these different levels. CTF has definitely

been well received, and for me, it provides more insight into the full scope of effort required to maintain and operate the Aeropropulsion facilities vs. 'just execute the testing.'"

Walker noted the switch will be challenging in some aspects because AEDC has been functionally-aligned for the last 50 years.

"The previous functional alignment, while effective, was vertically aligned with some decisions being made with a functional lens versus customer focused," he said. "The new mission alignment increases our ability to quickly respond to customer changes by reducing functional barriers and

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Workers remove cooler parts in engine test facility



A worker with the National Boiler Service, Trenton, Ga., cuts pipes in the AEDC Aeropropulsion Systems Test Facility (ASTF) EC1 cooler for removal. Once the pieces are removed, new parts will be installed. The cooler assists in conditioning high temperature exhaust generated from jet engine tests. (Photo by Rick Goodfriend)



Lt. Col. Anthony Walker speaks to the crowd at the African American Heritage Luncheon held Thursday, Feb. 26. (Photo by Deidre Ortiz)

Influential African Americans throughout history remembered at AEDC luncheon

By Deidre Ortiz
ATA Public Affairs

The annual AEDC African American Heritage Luncheon was held at the Arnold Lakeside Center as part of Black History Month.

"A Century of Black Life, History and Culture" was celebrated at the Feb. 26 event, which was attended by a broad cross-section of the AEDC workforce and residents from Tullahoma, Manchester, Winchester and other local communities.

Keeping with the theme of this year's luncheon, Lt. Col. Anthony Walker, director of AEDC Aeropropulsion Ground Test Branch and the Aeropropulsion Combined Test Force, gave a heartfelt speech reflecting on the many African Americans who played a role in gaining equality among all races in the United States.

Larry Wyche, procurement technician at AEDC, stated Col. Walker's words emphasized the importance of remembering the nation's past.

"Walker's speech touched the heart, for the history of all that he spoke was the truth, but much of this history has been forgotten," he said. "We have come so far that we have forgotten what it took for us to get where we are now.

"Half of the children and people today don't know what, when or why they have the rights and freedom that we have today. They do not know about the beatings, the discrimination that faced those who marched for equality."

ATA Management System Branch Manager and Quality Manager Jerry (J.T.) Northcutt mentioned the luncheon allows the opportunity for reflection.

"I have attended and supported this event consistently for more than 20 years," he said. "I attend because I believe it is important to remember the road traveled and sacrifices made by many for black Americans to have the rights and opportunities that exist today, and to recognize the accomplishments, contributions and importance the race has contributed to our country and the world."

Northcutt noted that Col. Walker did a great job as presenter, delivering a speech that drove home a meaningful message.

"His message was based on facts, thought provoking and his delivery kept the audience's attention. There

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HIGH MACH

Arnold Engineering Development Complex
An Air Force Materiel Command Test Complex

Col. Raymond Toth
Commander

Jason Austin
Chief,
Public Affairs



Steve Pearson
General Manager,
Aerospace Testing Alliance

High Mach Staff:
Kathy Gattis, ATA Public Affairs Manager & Executive Editor
Raquel March, Editor

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- Demonstrate the highest integrity and ethical standards
- Communicate clearly and openly
- Deliver professional and technical excellence
- Nurture, enable and treat people fairly
- Align with customer goals and objectives
 - Use disciplined and innovative processes
- Continually improve in all that we do

It's not what it appears to be

By AEDC Industrial Security

We buy devices for a purpose, and don't even think about how they may have been modified somewhere in the supply chain to have other capabilities.

To allow for the theft of sensitive information, or to exploit exposed computer systems to follow on cyber activities, many consumer products are being infected with malware at various points in the assembly process.

Electronic devices are increasingly produced with built-in networking capability, providing a path for the malware to propagate on accessible devices, media, networks and systems. The best rule of thumb if you work in or pass through classified areas is to leave all person-

ally-owned smart devices outside the area.

Consider the examples below and think about how your key fob, smart watches, cell phones and other electronic devices may have been modified during production to record, transmit, photograph, infect, etc., resulting in unintended situations that could affect your personal life when used outside work, or place protected information and systems at risk within AEDC work environments.

In December 2014, security researchers found a Trojan known as Death Ring preloaded onto Chinese-manufactured smartphones distributed in Asia and Africa. The well-known brand smartphones contained malware disguised as a ringtone application in the firmware,

which indicated that the compromise occurred within the supply chain process.

Late 2014 information technology specialists at a large corporation determined the source of a malware infection on an executive's computer to be an e-cigarette charging on a USB port. Malware had been hardcoded into the e-cigarette's charger, and when plugged into the USB port of the computer, the malware infected the system.

At the same time, household electronics, such as electric irons, tea kettles, dashboard cameras, and cell phones, manufactured in China and sold in Russia, contained embedded malware capable of infecting unsecured wireless networks and devices within 200 feet.

Ever hear the claim that "Apple stuff" never gets viruses?

Researchers at security company, Trend Micro, said they found iOS spyware as part of their investigation into an active cyber-espionage operation aimed at the military, governments and defense industries.

The cyber-espionage campaign included other tools such as phishing emails/websites and malicious iframes injected into legitimate websites. While the spyware targeted Apple users, it is also involved in a targeted attack. One validated scenario is that Apple iPhones can be infected after connecting them to a compromised or infected Windows laptop via a USB cable.

What can the spyware do?

Collects and steals text messages and photographs, makes screenshots, gets contact lists, collects geo-location data, switches on the voice recorder, etc.

Effective security is critical to our society – whether concerned with personal, government, military, economy or intellectual property, we need to be aware and take actions to avoid possible infection or compromise.

At work, comply with prohibited device warnings. Do not plug personal devices into network computers, printers, or other peripheral equipment, including laptop docking stations. Do not charge personal devices using anything but an electrical outlet. Obtain Security approval before taking devices into posted areas.

Financial readiness equals mission readiness

By Ingrid Bruns

FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, Md. (AFNS)

– As a long-time military spouse, I have held various jobs – and I know many of you can relate. I served as a military and family life counselor at an Airman and Family Readiness Center and had the privilege of working with fellow military families to create budgets, develop debt-payment plans, manage credit and save toward goals.

I remember one military spouse in particular who came to see me while her Airman was deployed. She "handled the family finances just fine" by doing what the couple had always done (even before the deployment). She came to see me after hearing about how the readiness center offers free financial counseling at a spouse meeting. She thought she and her husband could be better at paying down debt and saving for a trip to see family when her husband returned. I only met with her twice, but together we developed a plan she knew she could follow and commit to by making minor tweaks to her everyday expenses during the deployment. I happened to see her again shortly before he came home and she gave me a big hug and shared with me she had managed to save enough for the visit home and pay off some of the credit card debt. I do hope that she and her Airman were able to stay on track and reach their goals – healthier finances usually means healthier Airmen.

The financial well-being of our military community is a significant

readiness issue. Today's complex financial environment and uncertain future demand we have the knowledge to make informed choices about budgeting, saving, credit and debt, the Thrift Savings Program, and many more "fact of life" issues. To further complicate financial readiness plans, our military lifestyle includes frequent relocations and deployments. But our way of life doesn't have to hinder our ability to manage family finances successfully.

There are a wide variety of resources available to help put us on the path to financial freedom. Whether you prefer a classroom setting, an online experience, a multimedia approach, or an individual consultation in person or virtually, there is a solution to help meet your needs.

The Airman and Family Readiness Center provides educational opportunities to help you take charge of your finances. There are classes and workshops on specific topics, but you can also meet with a certified financial counselor to get personal assistance with your unique goals.

Emergency financial assistance organizations, such as the Air Force Aid Society can meet immediate financial needs in an emergency situation. The Society provides interest free loans and grants based on the individual situation for needs such as: basic living expenses, emergency travel, vehicle expenses, funeral expenses, medical/dental care, child care/respite care, or moving expenses.

Military OneSource

"Money Matters" provides financial calculators, articles, DVDs and CDs to help with topics, such as financial wellness, how-to strategies, sample budgets, mortgages and foreclo-

sures. Financial consultants are available all day, every day to provide up to 12 sessions (per person, per issue) of no-cost, confidential financial counseling with a certified finan-

cial professional. Counselors are available online and by phone at 800-342-9647.

Several non-profit organizations offer financial counseling. See **READINESS**, page 3

2015 AEDC FELLOWS

Nominations due by March 25

Nominations are currently being accepted for the 2015 AEDC Fellows Program.

Nominations must be submitted in written form with supporting materials to:
AEDC/CZ, 100 Kindel Drive, Suite A327
Arnold AFB, TN 37389-1327.

For information, including the format for AEDC Fellows nomination submissions, contact the AEDC Chief Technologist Office at (931) 454-6505.

Smoking Policy

1. The following revised AEDC smoking policy is effective immediately. Smoking is permitted solely in designated areas identified by a plastic "smoke genie." This receptacle is for the sole purpose of cigarette butt disposal. If there is no receptacle, smoking is not permitted in that area. It is the responsibility of all smokers to clean up the area surrounding the receptacles for any cigarette butts on the ground. Smoking in government-owned vehicles is strictly prohibited. Personnel are allowed to smoke in their personal vehicles at any time. Smoking areas will be held to the absolute minimum and will be located in low traffic, low visibility areas away from points of building ingress/egress and air intakes. A map of all authorized smoking areas is available on the Team AEDC SharePoint site. Smoking near a facility in an area not designated on the map is prohibited and any smoking receptacles located in areas not shown on the map will be removed. All "smoking permitted" and "no smoking" signs will be removed unless specifically required by OSHA.

The fact a person smokes has no bearing on the number of breaks they may take. Breaks should be taken in accordance with the company/agency personnel policies that apply to all employees.

Smoking, including the use of electronic cigarettes and smokeless tobacco, is prohibited in any area, at times when official business is being conducted with government clients, test customers, outside visitors and dignitaries, and where official business is being conducted including conference rooms, auditorium settings, business meetings, or in any other area where Air Force regulations specifically prohibit use. Containers of tobacco waste product, including sealed containers, must not be left unattended or disposed of in trash receptacles. Users of smokeless tobacco must flush tobacco waste down the toilet. Due to the nature, appearance, and safety concerns of electronic cigarettes (also known as "e-cigs"), the use of said products will abide by the same rules for tobacco products stated above and governed by AFI 40-102, *Tobacco Use in the Air Force*.

2. Supervisors at every level will ensure this policy is followed. Disciplinary action is appropriate for repeated violations.

3. Updates to this policy will be made in the future to further align with Air Force guidelines.

4. This policy remains effective until rescinded. (This policy is dated December 20, 2013)

Action Line

Team AEDC

I believe in free and open communications with our Team AEDC employees, and that's why we have the Action Line available. People can use the Action Line to clear up rumors, ask questions, suggest ideas on improvements, enter complaints or get other issues off their chests. They can access the Action Line in one of two ways: via the AEDC intranet home page, and by calling 454-6000.

Although the Action Line is always available, the best and fastest way to get things resolved is by using your chain of command or by contacting the organization directly involved. I encourage everyone to do that route first, then if the situation isn't made right, give us a chance.

Col. Raymond Toth
AEDC Commander

AEDC firefighters ready to receive EMT certification

By Raquel March
ATA Public Affairs

After completing a 12-week Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training course and practical evaluations on Feb. 24, 12 AEDC firefighters are set to gain national certification through successful completion of the National EMT Registry examination.

The Complex EMTs are trained to respond quickly to emergency incidents that involve medical issues, traumatic injuries and accident scenes. They may also respond to some incidents in surrounding counties as part of a mutual aid agreement.

Daryl VanCise, the deputy fire chief with the AEDC Fire and Emergency Services, explained that EMTs are essential to the success of on-duty paramedics at the scene of a vehicle or equipment accident.

"The new EMTs will enhance emergency response capabil-

ity by placing more EMTs at the emergency scene," VanCise said. "Having additional EMS [Emergency Medical Services] capable personnel on scene to assist them [on-duty paramedics] will enable paramedics to treat more victims in a shorter amount of time."

With the addition of 12 EMTs, AEDC Fire and Emergency Services will have 15 basic level EMTs, 11 advanced level EMTs and 6 paramedics on staff.

AEDC Firefighter and Paramedic Shane Clark, who is a state certified paramedic instructor coordinator, was the instructor for the course. VanCise applauded the instruction from Clark as well as the firefighters who volunteered for the certification course.

"We have a truly outstanding group of firefighters," he said. "Our EMT personnel, both basic and advanced levels, volunteered to gain these certifications; it's a testament to their dedication to serve the AEDC community and I'm extremely proud of them."



Shown here, with their instructor, are 12 AEDC Firemen who passed the 12 week course for Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) on Feb. 24. Pictured left to right are Firefighters Brandon Gunn and Whit Ross; Driver/Operator Lee Brassfield; Firefighters Sam Teat and Eli Johnson; Assistant Chief Jim Wenger; Paramedic/Firefighter and course instructor Shane Clark; Assistant Chief Gary Horn; Firefighters Brian Barnes, Chevis Vaughn and Marvin Greeson; Assistant Chiefs Jim Evans and Tom Lombard. (Photo by Rick Goodfriend)

AEDC blood drive scheduled March 17 Red Cross recommends iron-rich foods prior to blood donation

By Lana Butaud
American Red Cross

Donated blood is a lifesaving gift, one most healthy people can give. But even healthy people are sometimes temporarily deferred from donating due to low hemoglobin, which is often caused by low blood iron levels.

While a well-balanced diet is generally adequate to have normal iron levels, the American Red Cross recommends eligible donors eat extra iron-rich foods like fish, poultry, red meat, beans, peas, lentils, iron-fortified cereals, bread and dried fruit prior to their donation appointment.

In addition, foods rich in vitamin



American Red Cross

C, such as oranges, broccoli, tomatoes, kiwi, strawberries, peppers, potatoes and cabbage, can increase iron absorption. Iron supplements should be taken only after consulting with a personal healthcare provider or pharmacist.

The Red Cross encourages those who have been temporarily deferred to try to donate again soon.

All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age (16 with parental consent in some states), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities at AEDC

- March 17 – Commissary
- March 18 – A&E building
- March 19 – Propulsion Wind Tunnel
- March 20 – Main Auditorium
- Noon-5 p.m. each day

Donors will receive free T-Shirts while supplies last.
Walk-ins are welcome. Appointments can be made at redcrossblood.org and enter sponsor code: ADEC019.

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ganizations, such as The USAA Educational Foundation and the Consumer Federation of America's Military Saves program, provide financial education, resources and programs to service members and their families. These programs aren't about selling you products. They are strictly educational and focus on setting financial goals, managing credit and debt, saving and investing, and risk management.

Financial woes can negatively affect your personal and family well-being and it can critically injure the effectiveness of your mission readiness. These resources are ideally used as a preventive measure rather than a corrective measure, but like the spouse I worked with years ago, you must be proactive in identifying what you need assistance with and seeking it out.

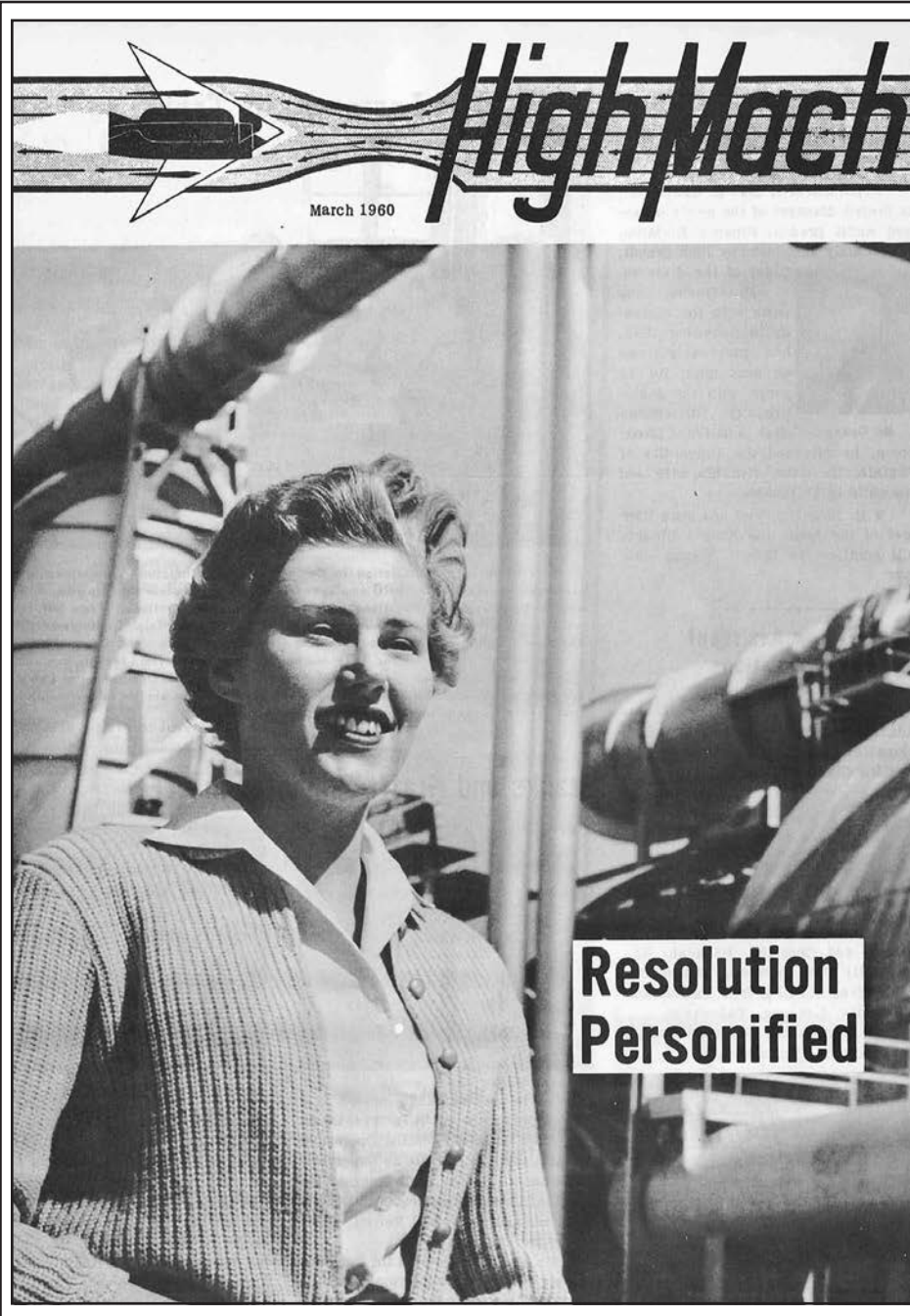
In spite of any perceived stigma, seek out help and take action for your financial security. Use the resources exclusively available to you as a military community to help you make effective financial decisions and improve your financial capability. Always remember that financial readiness is critical to mission readiness.

(The inclusion of information for local businesses, activities or resources does not constitute endorsement by the U.S. Air Force or the Defense Department of the external website or the info, products, or services contained therein.)

Company Grade Officers host Polar Bear Plunge



Tennessee has experienced frigid temperatures and snowy weather recently, but this didn't stop a group of officers, government civilians and contractors from jumping into the freezing Woods Reservoir on Feb. 25. The high for that day was 36 degrees Fahrenheit. The Company Grade Officers' Council (CGOC) hosted its Polar Bear Plunge, a fundraiser in which donations are pledged in someone's name and then he or she must either pay up or take a leap into the lake. All donations go toward events and charities on base or in the local area that are supported by the CGOC. Pictured here in these photos is Lt. Col. Jay Orson as he takes his plunge. (Photos by Jacqueline Cowan)



High Mach remembers AEDC women during Women's History Month, March 1-31

Wanda Little(above) – First female aeronautical engineer hired in 1958 under an AEDC training program. Little received her B.S. degree in aeronautical engineering from the University of Oklahoma in 1958. Little is shown here in one of the AEDC test facilities. (*High Mach, March 1959*)

Emily Hudgens(left) – hired in 1959 as an AEDC female electrical engineer. Hudgens, a 1959 Vanderbilt University engineering graduate, is pictured with the Propulsion Wind Tunnel in the background. (*High Mach, March 1960*)

Women's History Month: Remembering the past, looking toward the future

By Senior Airman

Matthew Lotz

31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs

AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy (AFNS) – During the 1900s, answering phone calls, maintaining records and providing minor health care were some of few roles women who served in the military were permitted to fill. Jobs left open because men left for war, gave women the opportunity to step up and volunteer on the home front.

A century later, women across the Department of Defense carry responsibilities from maintaining multi-million-dollar aircraft, leading troops through battlefields and serving in higher leadership positions.

Women's History Month honors the hard work and contributions made in the past and present.

"Those women paved the way for me to be able to serve as a United States Air Force firefighter," said Senior Airman Chelsea Westfall, a 31st Civil Engineer firefighter. "Because of them, I can come to work and feel like I be-

Those women paved the way for me to be able to serve as a United States Air Force firefighter.

Senior Airman
Chelsea Westfall

long. Women are no longer seen as the outsiders."

Knowing the efforts of women in the past allow for today's women to prevail and make their own history, not defined by their gender.

"We celebrate Women's History Month to remember the struggles women went through to get the equalities we have today," said Chief Master Sgt. Dorothy Olson, the 31st Operations Group chief. "We have achieved what our ancestors worked so hard for."

Today, in the U.S. military, there aren't many jobs women cannot volunteer for. Serving as a testament to this, John McHugh, the secretary of the Army, an-

nounced that women, for the first time, will be eligible to participate in U.S. Army Ranger School.

"Physically, there may be things that women might not be able to do," Olson said. "But technically or academically, we are the same. The Air Force offers everyone the same opportunities. That's the best part about being in the military – no one has to worry about whether or not a woman will be able to accomplish a task."

Individuals like Col. Linda McTague, the first female fighter squadron commander and the Honorable Sheila Widnall, the first appointed secretary of the Air Force, have led by example and proven women can perform in non-traditional jobs.

Technical careers, equal pay and voting rights were merely dreams for women in the past, but now those dreams are constitutional rights.

"If you're a technical sergeant, you get paid as a technical sergeant. If you want to make chief master sergeant during your career, with hard work, you are eligible to make chief," Olson said.

According to the Air Force Personnel Center, more than 58,000 women serve in the U.S. Air Force. They have the opportunity to ensure the empowerment given to them is carried on

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increasing the integration of functions at the project level. Further, it helps to ensure we have adequate information and holistic understanding as we make decisions."

He stated that while some ETF staff may have been hesitant when Sept. 30 rolled around last year, everyone has continued working together and "all-in-all, it's going much better than anticipated."

"We're still doing everything we've done before," Walker said. "We have a lot of smart people with a lot of experience, and what this has done is allowed us

to the next generation.

"In an ideal world, people wouldn't focus on our gender, rather how we can be better together," Westfall said. "We go through the same training as men. If

I'm wearing a duty badge on my uniform, you should know without hesitation that I belong. We are strong women who fought to be here and we aren't going anywhere."

to empower those people and capitalize on their decisions."

Walker also mentioned another positive outcome of the CTF may be reducing duplication of effort.

"Because the solutions we come up with will be more missioned aligned," he said. "So, while functions will still help in getting the work done, it will broaden our horizons by having staff think outside of their functions."

In addition to the test teams, customers will also benefit from CTF, according to Walker.

"Focus is on making sure customer questions are answered and geared toward getting the customer what they need."

"I honestly think it's going great and that it's working because of our people," Walker continued. "They understand the direction we're going and they're the ones making the mission happen. More importantly, this reorganization facilitates accomplishing AEDC's strategic goals and better aligns the Aeropropulsion CTF to meet the needs of customers today and the future customers of tomorrow."

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are several things he said I thought that should be remembered but if I had to point to one thing he said, it would be 'Black History is also American History.' That is indeed a profound fact."

Melvin Turner, ATA project manager of the Project Management Group, said he too thought the luncheon was a great success and is always glad to be a part of it.

"I appreciate the base

observing Black History month and I want to support and continue this program," he said.

The event was organized and hosted by members of the African American Heritage Committee.

Be aware of how much sleep you need

By AEDC Safety, Health and Environmental

Getting the right amount of sleep keeps us alert and ready for the challenges of the day. Whether that sleep fuels us for work, school, parenting, vacation, or some other activity, it is essential to our daily function, performance, and even appearance.

Each year as we approach the change to Daylight Saving Time, the National Sleep Foundation encourages us to take stock of the importance of sleep and provides information to help us catch enough Zzz's. Let's review some of the facts:

- While there's no single answer to the amount of sleep we need, the typical recommendation for adults is seven to nine hours each night. To ensure you're getting the sleep you need, make sleep a priority. Set a routine bedtime and create a comfortable, supportive sleep environment.
- Sleep needs remain unchanged throughout adulthood. You can train yourself to sleep less, but not to need less sleep. Just one hour less sleep a night can prevent you from

functioning at a normal level. Your body will notice if you borrow an hour from your nightly rest and use it during the day. The effects worsen the more hours you borrow.

- Not getting enough sleep on a regular basis won't just make you tired, it will likely cause you to gain weight. In fact, those who sleep less than five hours a night are almost a third likelier to gain weight (30 pounds over the course of 16 years) than those who get seven hours of shut-eye a night.

- Sleeping too little doesn't just lead to weight problems for adults. Kids who don't get enough sleep are at a higher risk for weight gain. And it starts early. A three-year-old who is sleeping less than 10½ hours a night (compared to the recommended 12), has a 45 percent higher risk of being obese by age seven.

- Stress and poor health – particularly chronic or acute pain – are key contributors to sleep problems. In turn, lack of sleep can compound these conditions. Try to

work through troublesome issues and put stress behind you at the end of the day. Seek help if stress becomes overwhelming. Your doctor can recommend resources or you can find free and confidential help through our Employee Assistance Program. If persistent pain or other health concerns are an issue, follow the advice of your primary health care provider.

- Take care of yourself during the day. Proper diet and exercise are important. Like sleep, these are most benefi-

cial when they follow a routine. They work together with proper sleep to help maintain physical and emotional health.

Don't fall into this trap.

People who work or go to school often skip on sleep during the week and attempt to catch up by sleeping late on weekends. This disruption in sleep schedule makes Sunday night the time most people experience difficulty falling asleep. When you can, try to maintain the same schedule on weekends that you keep throughout the week.

Key defense suppliers recognized for stellar delivery to warfighters

By David Vergun

Army News Service, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON (AFNS) – Getting top-notch materiel to the warfighters in the most cost-effective and efficient manner is what the American public expects of defense contractors.

Some do that very well and others not as well as they should, say top Defense Department officials who oversee delivery of such gear.

One of the things the military services are now doing to incentivize industry to improve is by recognizing their top performers. This is accomplished using the Superior Supplier Incentive Program (SSIP).

"We're doing this so people get some feedback from us about how their performance is, relative to their peers," said Frank Kendall, the undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics. "Then, they can take whatever action they think they need to do to improve their ratings."

SSIP uses performance data gathered through the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS), to rate the 25 largest companies doing business with each of the three services, based on contract obligations, and categorizes their business segments into one of three performance tiers, with "Tier I" being the best.

Within a large defense contractor, for instance, one business segment might develop electronic systems products, while another develops missiles and fire control products. Both of those business segments would be given a separate rating by each of the military departments that work with them.

Business segments "benefit because they receive recognition and it's also useful for companies that are not at the top end to understand where they are and to benchmark themselves against others," Kendall said.

While the SSIP will not be used to give anyone a direct competitive advantage or monetary incentives, there are some other potential incentives, he said. Tier I business units may be invited to meet with military department acquisition leaders to discuss ways which both parties can streamline administrative burdens. This may result in increased efficiency.

Military department acquisition chiefs said they expect SSIP to result in improved performance of their suppliers.

"It's recognition for business units that have been doing a superb job," said Heidi

Shyu, the assistant secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology.

William A. LaPlante, the assistant secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, highlighted another reason for publishing the list.

"We do this in all parts of our society," LaPlante said. "We rank/order people, businesses and frankly, we owe it to the taxpayer and the companies to show where people are."

Being in Tier I is "a big deal. There's a huge amount of pride when you worked your butt off," Shyu said, speaking from decades of private-sector experience.

"Industry presidents and business segment managers are very competitive. They know it reflects on their leadership and it shows the company and the shareholders that you're a great leader. You've executed well what you've promised your customer. Your customer is happy with your work. To the employees, it's a huge morale booster," Shyu said.

"People tend to underestimate that recognition," she said. "It means you contributed to the fight" in a meaningful way.

According to LaPlante, "It's a point of pride for companies to be called out for being at the top of their game."

David Weber, the chief of Air Force Industrial Liaison Office, said the 25 largest companies were selected for comparison using data from USASpending.gov, which was used to identify the businesses with the highest contract obligations during the previous three fiscal years.

Within each company, business sectors were determined based on the best available information; e.g., publicly traded companies were broken out in the same way they are reported to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, he said.

Planning for the Army and Air Force SSIP started last year, Weber said, after the Navy SSIP pilot was announced in June 2014.

Now, the Army, Navy and Air Force each do their own ratings based on the CPARS for each service's awarded contracts, Weber said. For example, F-35 Lightning II contracts are managed by the Navy so CPAR scores associated with F-35 are included in the Navy's SSIP ratings.

Future SSIP scores are expected to be released annually in late spring or early summer, Weber said.

Curtis M. Smith, a senior procurement analyst with the assistant secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistic and Technology, said in the future, there may be potential to expand the SSIP

program to include categories such as small business, services, information technology, and others.

Smith said business units that earn a Tier III rating will also benefit from the candid assessment of their performance by their customers.

"I think that will allow them to focus and engage more with the customer regarding their performance," Smith said. "It should serve as an incentive to improve."

Weber said he thinks it's possible large investors will look at SSIP ratings over time and as trends become evident, use them to gauge future competitiveness of companies, creating additional incentives for companies to improve.

Results for the Air Force and Army are given below. Navy results were compiled last year.

Air Force – Tier 1 business segments:

- BAE Systems Electronic Systems
- Boeing Commercial Aircraft
- General Dynamics Aerospace
- L-3 Communications Systems
- Lockheed Martin Aeronautics2
- Lockheed Martin Information Systems & Global Solutions
- Lockheed Martin Mission Systems & Training
- Lockheed Martin Space Systems
- Northrop Grumman Information Systems
- Rockwell Collins Commercial Systems
- Rolls Royce
- Sierra Nevada Corp
- United Technologies Pratt & Whitney

Air Force – Tier 2 business segments:

- Boeing Military Aircraft
- Boeing Global Services & Support
- Boeing Network & Space Systems
- GE Aviation
- Honeywell International Aerospace
- L-3 Aerospace Systems
- L-3 National Security Solutions
- Lockheed Martin Missiles & Fire Control
- Northrop Grumman Aerospace Systems
- Northrop Grumman Electronic Systems
- Raytheon Integrated Defense Systems
- Raytheon Space and Airborne Systems
- Textron Aviation
- United Technologies UTC Aerospace Systems

Air Force – Tier 3 business segments:

- BAE Systems Intelligence & Security
- Exelis C4ISR Electronics and Systems
- Exelis Information & Technical Services
- General Atomics Technology Corp Aeronautical Systems

- General Dynamics Information Systems and Technology
- Jacobs Engineering Tybrin
- L-3 Electronic Systems - Leidos Corp (formerly SAIC)
- Northrop Grumman Technical Services
- Raytheon Intelligence, Information and Services
- Raytheon Missile Systems
- Rockwell Collins Government Systems
- Textron Systems
- ULA/ULS
- United Technologies Sikorsky

Army – Tier 1 business segments:

- BAE Electronic
- BAE Global Combat Systems
- Boeing Global Services & Support
- Finmeccanica DRS Technologies
- General Electric Aviation
- Harris Corporation
- Lockheed Martin Info. Systems & Global Solutions
- Lockheed Martin Missiles

- & Fire Control
- Lockheed Martin Mission Systems & Training
- Science Application International Corporation – Research and Development
- SRC Tech Inc.

Army – Tier 2 business segments:

- Aerovironment Inc.
- Boeing Military Aircraft
- Booz Allen Hamilton Inc.
- Chemring Group PLC
- Cubic Inc.
- General Dynamics Info. Systems and Technology
- Northrop Grumman Aerospace Systems
- Northrop Grumman Electronic Systems
- Northrop Grumman Information Systems
- Raytheon Integrated Defense Systems
- Raytheon Space and Airborne Systems
- Science Application International Corporation – Government Services
- Thales-Raytheon Systems

Army – Tier 3 business segments:

- Alliant Techsystems Defense Group
- BAE Systems Land & Armaments
- Boeing Network & Space Systems
- CSC North American Public Sector
- General Atomics Technology - Aeronautical Systems
- General Dynamics Combat Systems
- Honeywell International Aerospace
- Oshkosh Corporation
- Raytheon Intelligence, Information and Services
- Raytheon Missile Systems
- Textron Bell Helicopter
- Textron Systems
- United Technologies – Sikorsky
- United Technologies Aerospace Systems

Better Buying Power is based on the principle that continuous improvement is the best approach to improving the performance of the defense acquisition enterprise.

Handheld imaging tool expands aircraft inspection capability

By Jeremy Gratsch

Air Force Research Laboratory
Materials and Manufacturing
Directorate

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE (AFNS)

— When pilots climb into the cockpit they expect their aircraft to perform as expected, regardless if take off is from a home or deployed location; but ensuring that the aircraft is healthy enough to fly has become a challenge for the Air Force.

Currently, the Air Force employs a large piece of support equipment to inspect the outer surface of an advanced aircraft to verify its health. The current technology weighs over 1,200 pounds, which creates the need for a more logistic-friendly equipment designed for field use.

In response, the Air Force Research Laboratory, through a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) contract managed as an Advanced Technology Demonstration Program, developed a first of its kind handheld imaging tool (HIT) that provides the Air Force with a portable, nondestructive method to inspect and verify aircraft health. The HIT consists of a handheld unit weighing less than 7 pounds attached to an 11-pound backpack that can image 100 percent of an aircraft's surface.

The HIT collects a larger amount of data with equal or better quality than the current baseline support equipment. For



An operator demonstrates the portability of the handheld imaging tool. The technology provides maintainers the ability to evaluate aircraft in the field to ensure mission readiness. (Courtesy photo/Sensor Concepts Inc.)

example, in one particular zone configuration, the HIT is able to image the entire zone within 15 minutes with one maintenance operator. The current equipment requires two operators and takes nearly three hours to accomplish the same task.

An on-aircraft test and demonstration at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, in late 2014, led to the culmination of the five-year

research and development effort.

Joel Greenleaf, senior logistics subject matter expert for the F-35 Lightning II, said this is the most successful SBIR project he has been involved with in over 24 years.

“The AFRL team’s unyielding cooperation ensures this premier expeditionary imaging capability didn’t languish two or more years awaiting the stan-

dard requirements identification-to-contract execution that we frequently encounter,” he said. “I estimate AFRL’s efforts will provide the F-35 warfighter with the HIT at a minimum of three years sooner than we expected.”

As a testament to the final demonstration’s success, the F-35 Joint Program Office requested that AFRL manage a low-rate initial production effort

to harden, meet support equipment requirements, and produce the first six HIT systems.

The AFRL Materials and Manufacturing Directorate develops materials, processes, and manufacturing improvements that enable advancements in Air Force technology. It also provides unique technical expertise critical to sustaining the current aircraft fleet.

Leaders discuss Combat Air Forces future at symposium

By Mike Meridith

Air Combat Command
Public Affairs

ORLANDO, Fla. (AFNS) — Four senior Air Force leaders gathered Feb. 12, to discuss the key issues facing the nation’s Combat Air Forces.

Gen. Hawk Carlisle, the commander of Air Combat Command, joined Gen. Frank Gorenc, the commander of U.S Air Forces Europe-Air Forces Africa; Gen. Lori Robinson, the commander of Pacific Air

Forces; and Lt. Gen. Stephen Wilson, the commander of Air Force Global Strike Command, on a CAF panel at the Air Force Association’s annual Air Warfare Symposium.

During the hour-long discussion, the leaders touched on a variety of issues including budget concerns, ongoing operations against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant terrorist group, the future of fifth-generation fighters like the F-22 Raptor and F-35A Lightning II, and

the challenges of emerging cyber-based threats.

The impact of sequestration

With the Budget Control Act still the “law of the land”, the leaders were unanimous in their concerns about its potential future impact on the Air Force based on what they saw during the 2013 sequestration.

“An important thing we learned about operating in a sequestered environment was the effect of not flying airplanes,” Gorenc said. “If you

have a squadron sit down for a month, it takes an exponential effort to get it back to readiness. The corrosive effect of having squadrons not flying can’t be understated ... it does long term damage to our Air Force.”

Carlisle reinforced the point, noting that although the Air Force is better prepared than in 2013 in terms of planning, operating at BCA-level budgets would have a significant impact on the CAF’s capabilities.

“We have to produce the very best Air Force we can, given the resources the American people give us,” he said. “If we live through BCA-level budgets into the next decade, we will not be able to do what we do today.”

Robinson added that beyond lost capabilities, the cost of sequestration extended to international relationships.

“We did pay a price in partnerships when we had to cancel exercises and TDYs,” she said. “It is a concern for the long-term commitment, trust and confidence of our partners and allies.”

Collectively, the leaders pointed out that at least one positive impact of sequestration was that it highlighted Air Force capabilities to the American public, serving as a reminder of the importance of the service’s mission. The point was made especially clear by Wilson as he discussed America’s nuclear enterprise.

“Most people don’t think much about the ICBM leg of the [nuclear] triad. Our missiles are foundational to our national security because they prevent an out-of-the-blue attack on the U.S.,” he said, reaffirming the Air Force’s commitment to ensure

a credible strategic deterrence for the nation which became all the more important when planes were not flying.

Operation

Inherent Resolve

Combat operations against ISIL took center stage during the panel discussion with audience members questioning the effectiveness of air power in Operation Inherent Resolve. Carlisle expressed some frustration with the perception by some that air power was “not working”, noting that substantial impacts had been made against ISIL.

“Air power is actually very effective,” he said. “We have changed the way they [ISIL] operate. Their ability to mass, communicate, and control their forces has been degraded significantly.”

The general also noted that while there is still talk of “an influx of [ISIL] fighters,” they can’t be as effective if their command and control is interrupted.

Fifth-generation fighters

In praising the effectiveness of airpower in OIR, Carlisle highlighted the important role the F-22 has played, noting the fifth-generation fighter has “exceeded expectations”. In particular, he noted how the aircraft’s capabilities enhance the effectiveness of other aircraft operating with it.

“When you have F-22s in a strike package, every aircraft in the package does better,” he said.

Discussion of the F-22 also raised questions about the future of the Air Force’s other fifth-generation aircraft, the F-35. Carlisle addressed concerns about whether the aircraft would reach its initial operating capability, projected between

August and December 2015.

While Carlisle noted issues with maintenance manning were compelling, he believed the Air Force would reach IOC as projected. However, he added that IOC was “merely the beginning” of important issues the service would need to face moving forward.

“The Air Force is not getting any bigger,” he said. “We have to figure out how to retire aircraft as we bring the F-35s online. Maintenance is just one part of the equation.”

Cyber threats

The officers also addressed the growing threat of cyber-attacks and the need for the U.S. to grow its own capabilities to address them.

“One of the things I think that is interesting is the integration of cyber and kinetic effects. We’re good at predicting the result of kinetic actions, not as good with cyber,” Gorenc said. “The problem is the ability to predict creates so many branches and sequels it exceeds the capacity of the AOC [Air Operations Center] to do the work, particularly in a high-speed conflict.”

Robinson echoed those concerns adding that she also worried about the problem of degraded communications versus merely the loss of them. “We’ll either have comms or we won’t. But I am worried about degradation and how we can detect it.”

The leaders drew their discussion to a close by noting that while the CAF faces a challenging future, the future is still bright as its success is ultimately secured by its greatest asset: the men and women who daily carry out their missions in defense of the country.

Fueling the Strike Eagle's fire



An Airman prepares an F-15E Strike Eagle for hot pit refueling Feb. 10, at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C. Hot pit refueling alleviates stress on an aircraft's engines by reducing the number of times they are switched on and off. The Airman is assigned to the 335th Aircraft Maintenance Unit and the F-15E is assigned to the 335th Fighter Squadron. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Ashley J. Thum)

By Senior Airman Ashley J. Thum
4th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

SEYMOUR JOHNSON AIR FORCE BASE, N.C. (AFNS) – The shimmering heat waves that emanate from jet exhaust, the rumble of twin Pratt and Whitney engines, the unmistakable aroma of pure Jet A fuel. The sights, sounds and smells of F-15E Strike Eagles in flight are made possible in part by the tireless efforts of a group of Airmen strategically placed just minutes from the flightline.

The 4th Logistics Readiness Squadron petroleum,

oil and lubricants (POL), or fuels shop takes charge of the base's entire fuel supply from the moment delivery trucks carry it on base to the second it leaves a refueling hose – whether it's attached to a fighter jet or a support vehicle.

Senior Airman Kurtis Schiemann, a 4th LRS fuels service center controller, explained how the group manages their tasks.

"The fuels service center is like the brains of the operation," Schiemann said. "We're responsible for ordering all of the fuel on base and keeping track of every single gallon of fuel, jet or

ground."

After receiving calls from the maintenance operations center notifying them of an aircraft's location, Schiemann and other controllers use a standardized program to coordinate a refueling run within the mandated 30-minute response time. Distribution operators are then called to the small window of a room, similar to a command post, where they're given a kit that gives them all the pertinent information about the truck they've been assigned. Then the operators jump in their truck and make their way to the flightline.

Senior Airman Brandon Osborn, a 4th LRS fuels specialist, is one of those operators.

"A typical day for us is when a jet lands and we go out and fill it up," Osborn said. "Usually, we each fill from five to seven jets a day."

Although the squadron's main priority is refueling the base's fleet of F-15Es, Osborn explained they're also capable of handling different types of transient aircraft.

"The process is usually the same, other than the lo-



Airmen perform a hot pit refuel on an F-15E Strike Eagle Feb. 10, at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C. Petroleum, oil and lubricants Airmen provide the fuel trucks for hot pit refueling operations and monitor the process. The Airmen are assigned to the 335th Aircraft Maintenance Unit and the 4th Logistics Readiness Squadron, and the F-15E is assigned to the 335th Fighter Squadron. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Ashley J. Thum)

cation of the fuel tanks," Osborn said. "Some aircraft also have two single point receptacles."

Refuels are accomplished with the help of Airmen from the base's aircraft maintenance units (AMU). An operator parks near a jet and hands over the refueling hose to the crew chief. Once it's been coupled to the single point receptacle, the operator adjusts the throttle to control the speed of refueling, all while gripping the emergency cutoff switch known as the "dead man."

Once the operation has been accomplished, the operator packs up, notes the transaction and moves on to the next aircraft.

An exception to this rule comes in the form of hot pit refueling, a process developed to return jets to the air faster and limit their time on the ground. A jet's engines remain live during hot pit refuels, decreasing the strain on them by reducing the number of times they're switched on and off. This requires Osborn and other

operators to position their trucks where crew chiefs can marshal in jets to pull up for a refuel one after another, similar to normal vehicles pulling up to a gasoline pump.

Throughout hot pit refuels, POL Airmen work hand in hand with Airmen from the AMUs to maintain control of the situation and complete the refuel safely.

Safety is the standard in the world of fuels, and the POL laboratory is no exception.

Senior Airmen Noah Lazarzka and Derek Wilson, 4th LRS fuels laboratory technicians, uphold that standard by performing regular tests on the base's supply of jet and ground fuels.

"A big part of our job is sampling the jet fuel to make sure it's clean and dry," Lazarzka said. "Every time fuel comes on base, we sample it. We also sample our refueling units once a month to make sure the filter elements in the filter separators, that catch water and particulates that could

make their way into aircraft, are still good."

Wilson explained the frequency of fuel deliveries varies, but it normally adds up to about 700,000 gallons per week.

"We flush our pump houses monthly and we also sample the liquid oxygen our trucks carry for aviators' breathing," Wilson said. "Transient aircraft that come in sometimes need lox (liquid oxygen) tank refills. We don't test it here, but we do sample it and send it away for testing."

One of their regular tests involves assessing the free water and particulate content, as well as the color, of Jet A. They do this by extracting fuel from a tank and exposing single weight and aeronautical engineering laboratory pads to the fuel and reading the results.

"Sometimes you catch fuel that's bad," Lazarzka said. "Jet A has additives that are put in it, and they each have a specific purpose. It's our job to make sure the right amount of additives have been put in the fuel so the aircraft can operate correctly."

Each task in POL could be a simple one were it not for the sheer volume of fuel and the number of tanks the shop is responsible for.

"It's good to know that we're vital to the mission," said Staff Sgt. Chris Erickson, a 4th LRS fuels accountant.

In fact, the work the POL shop does every day has an effect that is even more far reaching than most people might realize.

"It's a really good feeling because all of the F-15 aircrews come here to train, so what we do has a big impact around the world," Osborn said.

Milestones

35 YEARS

Joseph Gallagher, ATA
Robert Gray, ATA
Stephen Reynolds, ATA
Patricia Winters, ATA

30 YEARS

Mark Felts, ATA

25 YEARS

Dennis Holmes, ATA
Randy Nunley, ATA
Carey Rose, ATA

20 YEARS

Anthony Askew, ATA

10 YEARS

John Allan, ATA
Charles Brannan, ATA
Thomas Campbell, ATA
Mike Champion, ATA
James Daniel, ATA
Kristen Deardorff, ATA
Gary Hammock II, ATA
Carl Hill, ATA
Marty Land, ATA
Jean Mihigo, ATA
Jeremy Morris, ATA
Joel Nalin, ATA
Ezra Owens, ATA
Stacy Parker, ATA
Charles Ray, ATA
Nicolas Reed, ATA
Charles Trussell, ATA
Kenneth Vassar, ATA
Randy Vinke, ATA

RETIREMENTS

Steve Faini, AF
Bob Lock, AF
Carl Schweinfurth, AF
Loretta Smith, AF

NEW HIRES

Shannon Allen, AF
Tyler Anderson, Premiere
Jesse Humbert, AF
Dan Johnson, AF
Brian Kocher, AF
Nathan Lister, AF
Michael Malloy, AF
Nathan Payne, AF
Brian Rice, AF
Travis Rowe, Premiere
Tammy Shetters, Premiere
Barbara Stewart, AF
Kyle Todd, AF
David Yoder, AF

PROMOTIONS

Lt. Col. Colin Morris to colonel
2nd Lt. Kyle Monsma to first lieutenant

What is your most memorable AEDC moment during your years of service?



Patricia Winters
35 years, Administrative Assistant
ATA Integrated Test and Evaluation Department

“When I first started working at AEDC in 1980, I found that several of the buildings on base had nicknames, such as the Green Fly, Fish

Camp, the Chicken Gun, the Orphanage, the Cow Barn, Little Tin Building, etc. At that time there was a taxi service on base that everyone was encouraged to use going from point A to point B. The light blue taxi looked like an old New York taxi that had bench seats in the back facing one another. Once you were inside the taxi you told the driver which building you were going to and he knew the right location even if you used one of the nicknames. One day when I stepped into a taxi, there was an elderly couple and a young lieutenant already sitting in the back of the taxi. As we rode down South Second Street, the lieutenant was explaining to the couple what testing was done in each facility. As we passed VKF

[the von Kármán Gas Dynamics Facility] he explained that is was the von Kármán facility where hypersonic and supersonic testing was performed. Next we passed Tunnel F and the lieutenant explained that the building was converted to offices since the base no longer needed the testing facility. Then we rounded the corner, the lieutenant explained that we were passing through the ranges. He told them that one of the ranges was called the Chicken Gun where a chicken was fired into the canopy of an aircraft. He said, ‘by testing the cracks and blood spatters on the canopy we can assess the damage it will cause during live flight.’ The elderly woman was horrified and began to ask questions. ‘Does the air force base raise the

chickens, are they alive when they are fired down the cannon?’ The lieutenant assured her they were purchased, frozen, and then thawed before testing. Next we headed toward PWT [the Propulsion Wind Tunnel] and turned right on Schriever Street. As the next building was coming up on the right the lieutenant pointed out the blue building and said, ‘Now this is a building that we call the Cow Barn.’ At that point the lady’s face was priceless as she placed her hands on each side of her face and said, ‘I don’t even want to know what they do in there!’ I tried so hard not to laugh. This is a memory that has become priceless and I am so glad I happened to be in the taxi on that particular day.”

WWII pilot reunited with P-47

By Senior Airman Jensen Stidham

20th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

DAVIS-MONTHAN AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz. (AFNS) – Sitting in a wheelchair with images of airplanes on his shirt and a U.S. Army Air Corps hat on his head, 92-year-old retired Air National Guard Chief Warrant Officer 2 Robert Hertel was reunited with the P-47 Thunderbolt during the Heritage Flight Training and Certification Course Feb. 28.

After being wheeled out to the flightline, Hertel was greeted by Gen. Hawk Carlisle, the commander of Air Combat Command, Charles Hainline and Tom Gregory, both P-47 Thunderbolt Heritage Flight pilots.

Hertel flew the legendary Thunderbolt while stationed on Iwo Jima, Japan, during World War II and had not seen the aircraft since retiring from the military in the 1960’s.

“When I found out it was going to be here I just had to bring him,” said Hertel’s daughter Peggy Hertel. “It’s been his dream for so long to see one again.”

Although he does not remember a lot of his past, there is one thing that has stayed clear in his memory.

“He has always remembered his airplanes,” Peggy said. “I think he was thinking he was going to get in



Retired Air National Guard Chief Warrant Officer 2 Robert Hertel, laughs while under the wing of a P-47 Thunderbolt during the Heritage Flight Training and Certification Course Feb. 28, at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz. Hertel, a 92-year-old World War II veteran, was given the opportunity to visit the aircraft he used to fly. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Jensen Stidham)

and fly it.”

Hertel smiled and laughed as he was wheeled around the aircraft, stopping to reach out with his war-fought hands to touch his old friend.

Just as seeing the aircraft was exciting for the veteran, Carlisle and the P-47 pilots were in for a treat as well.

“I brought some of his pictures and log book, everybody wants to see the log book,” Peggy said. “It

shows some of the bombing flights that he went on and firefights and even has a couple of tourist tours that he flew. It’s quite a bit of history to see.”

The P-47 pilots ended WWII with 3,752 air-to-air kills while flying more than 423,000 sorties.

“Thanks for making us the greatest Air Force in the world,” Carlisle told Hertel. “You are a part of our heritage. We wouldn’t be where we

are at if it wasn’t for people like you that set us up for success.”

Hertel left the aircraft with an ACC commander’s coin, P-47 patch, and Heritage Flight memorabilia to remember the day he was finally reunited with his old pal.

“I am just really glad that I was able to bring him here and that everybody has been so kind with showing the plane and talking to him,” Peggy said.

ATA makes donation to Cowan Little League



The ATA Employee and Community Activities Committee (E&CAC) recently donated \$150 to the Cowan Little League Baseball Organization. The Little League President Tina Lindsey (center) and Vice President Matt Timbs (right) accept the donation check from ATA E&CAC committee member Andrea Stephens. (Photo by Kylee Stephens)



Huntland School receives donation from ATA

The Huntland School Pre-K department recently received a \$100 donation from the ATA Employee and Community Activities Committee (E&CAC) for the Hatch iStartSmart App. With iStartSmart, students can engage in activities that develop readiness skills, teachers can access individual progress reports and parents can view progress in 18 skills areas. Pre-K Teacher Carlene Tucker (center) and Principal William Bishop II (left) accept the donation check from ATA E&CAC committee member Andrea Stephens. (Photo by J.C. Stephens)

Air Force places 18 A-10 aircraft into 'Backup Status'

By Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (AFNS) – The Air Force, with congressional authorization, will convert 18 primary combat-coded A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft from active units and place them into Backup-Aircraft Inventory (BAI) status with the possibility to convert another 18 at

a later date in fiscal year 2015.

The secretary of Defense has authorized the Air Force to place up to a total of 36 A-10 aircraft into BAI status. Although Congress has authorized 36 of the A-10 aircraft to be put into BAI status, the Air Force has elected for the time being to place fewer in BAI status.

“At this time the Air

Force is moving into BAI status only 18 A-10s of the 36 authorized in Sec 133 of the FY15 National Defense Authorization Act,” said Secretary of the Air Force Deborah James. “While we are authorized by Congress to put 36 aircraft into BAI status, doing that now would require taking down an entire squadron. Out of respect for the intent of

Congress, we’re placing 18 aircraft in BAI status.”

The Air Force will assess whether this action adequately balances ongoing requirements and the need to modernize.

“We will revisit this action as the year progresses to assess the need to put the additional 18 aircraft into BAI status,” said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh III. “This action represents the difficult choices required to balance between maintaining the capacity to meet current operational requirements and the resource investment required to keep our modernization efforts on schedule.”

The A-10s placed into BAI will serve as replacement aircraft for ones that become unserviceable. The A-10s slated for BAI status are currently assigned to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona (9); Moody AFB, Georgia (6), and Nellis AFB, Nevada (3).

Converting aircraft to

BAI status will free up experienced maintainers so they can be integrated into the F-35 Lightning II program.

“The secretary of Defense has certified that placing up to 36 A-10 aircraft into backup flying status is a necessary step to reduce the Air Force’s shortage of experienced fighter maintenance personnel,” said James.

The decision to put the 18 A-10’s into back-up status comes on the heels of the need to field maintainers for the F-35 program and on the recommendation of a Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE) study in 2015. The independent study confirmed that a limited supply of experienced fighter maintenance personnel is constraining legacy fleet readiness and the standup of F-35A squadrons. Additionally, the CAPE study found that the transfer of even the limited number of A-10s to back-up flying sta-

tus was far from sufficient to counter current maintenance manning and experience shortfalls.

As such, the Air Force will begin an early transition to the F-35 by converting one of the two F-16 Fighting Falcon squadrons at Hill AFB, Utah. The 4th Fighter Squadron will transition early in order to free up additional maintenance manpower for the F-35. While the Air Force plans to add an F-35 unit at Hill AFB, prohibitions on retiring A-10s prevent the Air Force from retraining enough maintainers to add an F-35 unit there, at this time. Transitioning one of the two F-16 squadrons early at Hill will allow the Air Force to retain critical in place maintenance personnel to support the F-35 reaching initial operational capability in August of 2016.

BAI conversions do not impact planned A-10 deployments through the end of fiscal year 2018.

Evolution of perspective: Airman finds balance after diagnosis

By Tech. Sgt. Vanessa Kilmer
92nd Air Refueling Wing
Public Affairs

FAIRCHILD AIR FORCE BASE, Washington (AFNS) – Senior Master Sgt. Daphne Soto never meets a stranger because each encounter opens a door to a potential new friend, or to someone who just needs to talk, and she'll keep the door open for both.

This 24-year Air Force veteran will weave a serpentine path through cubicles and offices just to say hello to every Airman, regardless of rank. Her conversations are sprinkled with laughter and seasoned with southern flavor when she reveals her roots with the occasional use of the word, "child."

For Soto, the 92nd Air Refueling Wing Equal Opportunity director, it's not just part of her job. A self-proclaimed "sweet girl from South Carolina," Soto has always held tight to one goal from the moment she enlisted: to always give her personal best.

Soto said she knew her lofty goals would require more attention, and possibly sacrifices, but she didn't recognize the magnitude of the impending imbalance. Her aspirations formed blinders that cloaked lost time with her family, and shrouded symptoms as her body began to rebel against her.

Early in her career, as a telephone switch operator ("Operator 22") and then as combat crew communications, her ambition was the ever-present shove toward more responsibility.

"I wanted to be the chief master sergeant of the Air Force," she said. "I think everyone's had that little moment."

Soto's appetite for responsibility left her family hungry for her presence back home.

As a mother of three and wife of an active-duty crew chief, she described 12-hour days that didn't end when she returned home. She said she would bring work with her, and take phone calls on her home phone, even late in the evening. This was when cellphones were new, she noted.

"I've always tried to be a good mom, and a good wife and a great Airman," she said. "But I soared at a cost ... because I sacrificed all of that precious family time. I was on every TDY; I never turned down an opportunity.

There was a time that my husband and I weren't even seeing each other. I would kiss my kids goodnight, read a quick bedtime story and then get right back on the phone."

She was on that cycle for almost 18 years, which she admitted took a toll on her as well.

"When you're used to being that go-to person and having to live up to that expectation, and not being able to say no – it takes a lot," she said. "And then you find yourself saying, 'You've got to say no.'"

Soto said she justified this brutal schedule because she saw it as purpose, a part of her legacy.

"I thought I was being a role model to my children, and making my husband proud being that breadwinner," she said. "So you lie to yourself. You lie to yourself to say, it's all worth it in the end. You convince yourself that it's going to justify it all once you hit that goal."

For almost 20 years, Soto charged through, made rank, earned more awards and accolades, with the support of her husband, Master Sgt. Damon Soto pushing her forward.

Every extra hour she put in meant an extra hour away from Damon, but he accepted the sacrifice, "...because I love her, and that's what she wanted," he said. "And she's way smarter than I am."

He acknowledged that it was difficult to balance school, work and children, but their partnership kept them going.

"When her schedule was hard, I picked up as much slack as I could and vice versa," he said. "My thought was if we didn't, everything would fail."

It was 2010 when life for Soto changed. In two months, she had inexplicably lost weight – down from a size 6 to a size 00.

For about two years, Soto had noticed changes in her body, nothing to raise alarm, but the weight loss began to bring everything in focus. She advocated for a referral to see a doctor who would be able to diagnose her symptoms.

After Soto's doctor heard about her weight loss, he waived his three-month wait list and agreed to see her within the week.

It was just 30 minutes between the beginning of the examination and the diagnosis she had begun to



Senior Master Sgt. Daphne Soto is the 92nd Air Refueling Wing Equal Opportunity director and is a 24-year Air Force veteran who spent 18 years of her career on the fast track until a diagnosis forced her to find balance between work, family and herself. Today, Soto dedicates her time to helping Airmen find balance and prepare them for life beyond the Air Force. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Alexandre Montes)

expect – cancer.

Soto described driving home from the appointment and pulling over because she was overwhelmed with the weight of the diagnosis and blinded by uncontrollable tears. She said she distinctly remembers the primal urge to talk to her mother.

"My mother said, 'It's going to be ok, we're going to get through it.' And you know, I didn't really have a choice, because I had three kids and a husband to worry about."

For Soto, whose life and career had been going at full-tilt for more than two decades, everything suddenly stopped, and her life aligned itself along a completely unexpected trajectory.

After her diagnosis, Soto said she had a crash course in cancer. Because of the aggressiveness of the disease, she had to make very quick decisions to determine the course of her treatment and elected to undergo two invasive surgeries.

Prior to her diagnosis, Soto was chosen as the primary organizer for her career field's upcoming utilization and training workshop. This is the workshop where attendees develop all of the equal opportunity career field's training requirements.

After her second surgery, she was confined to her home for six weeks, facing a six-month convalescent period and completely dependent on the man whom she called her rock – Da-

mon. During that time, she said she came to a powerful realization: The workshop was held on schedule and her career field's training curriculum was developed – without her. The mission went on.

"I think that's when it all started coming together," she said. "I said I have to shift my priorities, and it's ok to take care of me."

Upon returning to work, Soto said she had a new perspective. She said she found a new rhythm, and started feeling more effective at a slower pace.

The slower pace gave her time to think things through, be clearer with expectations and the confidence to say, "no," instead

of trying to complete the task no matter the cost.

"It's ok to say, 'no.' It's ok to say, 'I can't do it all,'" she said. "'I can't' is not a bad part of your vocabulary, unless you are completely giving up, and I wasn't doing that."

Not only did her work improve because of her honest communication, she said that by taking care of herself she saw more value in taking care of others.

"I was so worried about my career; what was I doing for others?" she said. "And now I realize, I don't have to supervise a soul – it's the Air Force's Airmen, they are all my Airmen."

These connections, Soto said, helped her embrace

and understand the importance of, "Mission First, People Always."

"I'm not here just to transition an individual to the next rank," she said. "I'm here to transition them to things that are going to be ... throughout life."

With only a few months left until retirement, Soto has Florida and her dream tea shop in her sights, but is still focused on her Airmen.

"I don't believe in ROAD (retired on active duty)," Soto said. "I will work until that last duty day, even if that is just walking around and saying hello to every Airman. I will do my personal best. That is my goal with leaving the Air Force and living life."

