

THE **STINGER**

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ABOUT THE STINGER

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COMMANDER'S COMMENTS



I have a confession to make: I was never particularly good at anything. Everything I know I learned from someone else. Everything I can do I failed at when I first tried. I'm pretty sure I fell down when I learned to walk or ride a bike – a lot. I'm also sure my parents didn't always pick me up when I fell, and there's probably a lesson in that too. I was a terrible engineering student at Notre Dame (you definitely don't want to fly in an airplane I designed) and I failed my first check ride in pilot training. Life is a series of struggles, but I take solace in the belief that I'm no different than most people. I recognize innate talent in others, and physical gifts that raise their potential, but I didn't grow to be 6'8" with the ability to run a 4.3 second 40 yard dash or jump with a 48 inch vertical leap. I struggle to hit golf balls straight and I don't understand quantum physics. I didn't win the genetic lottery. If I have any ability besides my remarkable capacity for failure, it's that I have a drive to know how to fix it – to understand... everything.

I often say that I never learned anything by doing it right the first time – those rare accomplishments were probably just accidents. I only learn when I fail and analyze the errors. Coach Tom Landry once said if you want to win you have to teach, and if you fail you have to learn. And when I learn something, I'm so excited I want to share it. That's why I have loved teaching, and leading. There's nothing better than deconstructing a complex problem to simpler parts, and then sharing the answer with someone else. That search for answers means I pay attention to details, and make connections that some might overlook. I see lessons in the stories around me and I'd like to share a recent one with you.

My son Sam loves to play basketball. He's a tall, athletic left hander with a soft jump shot. When he was in grade school he had the potential to be the best player on the court – not NBA or major college kind of talent, but a very good high school player. He came to identify as an athlete and life was good. Until he blew out his knee playing soccer his freshman year, and tore up his shoulder each of the next two years. Each time he faced painful surgery and long rehab. He couldn't play basketball for 3 straight years. He had to confront the question: who was he, if not a basketball player? With the obstacles he faced, there was little hope to get where he wanted to go. Granted, this is just a teenager's issue in the big world, but I see parallels in other people's struggles. Is your career or life on track to get you where you want to go? If not, what's holding you back? Maybe education is in your way. The mountain of information and indecipherable tests seem impossible. Maybe you have stumbled, or have made a bad decision or two. Now you're sitting in an office being counseled or reprimanded. Or maybe your timing is just bad. The pyramid gets skinny as you go up and there's just no opportunity because there are people in front of you that aren't moving. You feel capable and full of potential, but you just can't reach your goal. Who are you if you don't reach that goal?

The first thing I'd say is don't give up. Continue to fight the good fight every day. There is nobility and honor in refusing to quit. And realize that your efforts are preparing you for something – maybe just not what you're expecting. You've probably heard that you are interviewing for your next promotion every day. I'd add that

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THE CHAPEL CONNECTION

By Chaplain Peter Drury



Post-traumatic growth is different from resiliency. Resiliency is the ability to bounce back from a crisis or challenge. PTG is more than returning to the same, previous level of functioning. PTG means that we can actually become higher functioning. PTG refers to the change in us, through and after the challenges. When have you experienced this? What made the difference, where you came out stronger, rather than weaker or unchanged?

The human has amazing abilities to adapt, to change the way we understand the world and our place in it. PTG is a main theme of virtually every story. PTG is being followed and documented as people recover and grow from natural and human-made tragedies, like disease, war, abuse, and grief. In fact, we can be encouraged that reports of growth far outnumber reports of disorders - but it takes time and intention to learn and grow.

As we live, we don't return to the same place we were. We can change in deeply meaningful ways. It's just not automatic and certainly not easy. So too, we can come out of an event stronger, more fragile, more anxious, more cynical, any number of ways. Can you identify times in your life when troubles produced each of these? What, going on inside you, made the difference?

Ancient wisdom literature from many worldviews shows that suffering and distress have the potential to yield positive changes in our lives. We can become more grateful, live with more or better purpose, develop warmer and more intimate relationships, be more open and charitable. It's not so much about the adversity, but our response to it. Studies which track people who are healthy shows that it isn't that they haven't experienced hard times, it's that they've been positively shaped in the crucible and aftermath of the experience.

Stay in open communication with your family, friends and wingmen. Find mentors to help develop you as a person, not just as a worker. Consider talking with a chaplain, DPH or some other helping professional. You're not alone.

Remember, Post Traumatic Growth goes above and beyond just resiliency. You can actually grow to become a stronger and better person. Next time you experience PTS, you don't have to just bounce back. You can bounce forward. 🐦

BEYOND EXPECTATIONS SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

By Staff Sgt. Shane Hughes

While many Airmen volunteer their time to different charities and causes, Tyran "Ty" Boyd has a passion for serving the community above and beyond expectations.

He is one of the founding members and a former chair of the United Way Emerging Leaders program in Toledo, a program aiming to engage the next generation of professionals in the community through meaningful service opportunities, leadership development and exclusive networking opportunities.

Boyd was one of six founding members who created the Emerging Leaders program and played a key role in taking the Emerging Leaders program from a start-up to a functioning organization with a clear focus and vision, and the potential to last far into the future. As the program evolved, the team focused on creating an organization that would be sustainable and beneficial to the community.

Kirsta Tull, the volunteer staff liaison for Emerging Leaders, said Boyd embraced his leadership role as the chair of Emerging Leaders and was essential to establishing the strategic vision for the group.

"He's always very passionate and knows exactly what he wants for the organization," Tull said. "He's helped us stay mission-focused and philanthropically focused because that's what sets us apart from other organizations that are only focused on the

networking aspect."

"I wanted to bridge the gap between executives and young professionals within the community," Boyd said.

The development stage for the program took two years before it was ready to be launched, but within 48 hours of launching, the program expanded to over 100 people and currently has over 160 members.

Erica Parish, the chair of the Community Impact Council, said his role as a founding member was critical.

"The program has grown by leaps and bounds under his leadership," Parish said.

"If it wasn't for Ty, we wouldn't have the number of active members we've been getting or the exposure we've had," Tull said. "His role was essential to building the program."

The unexpected interest and rapid expansion in membership propelled the organization to new heights.

"We've grown tremendously as a group," Boyd said. "We were dynamic when we first came together, but then you add 154 other people and you begin to tap into an unbelievable magnitude of potential."

In addition to his work with the Emerging Leaders program, Boyd is a member of the Community Impact Council where he helps oversee how funds and resources are allocated to the various Community Support Teams that implement programs to improve the income, health and education in the local community. His leadership has allowed both

these programs to excel.

"He's unique," Parish said. "Ty challenges us to be better and push ourselves further. His impact is vital."

"He's really prodding us to think about the long-term success of the organization," Tull said

While the Emerging Leaders program and the Community Impact Council take up most of his spare time, Boyd still manages to find the time to serve on the African-American Leadership Council, which supports literacy and mentorship programs for underprivileged kids in local schools.

He is also an active member of Engaging People Inspiring Change (EPIC), an initiative of the Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce which strives to attract and retain diverse young talent and to develop future business and community leaders.

If that wasn't enough, he also volunteers with the local Boys and Girls Club, where he helps with fundraising and mentors at-risk children, and the local YMCA where he coaches youth sports. Last year, Boyd was awarded the prestigious "20 under 40" award for his unwavering commitment to public service and outstanding leadership in the community.

"I want to give back to the community that gives so much to me," Boyd said. "The success of my company, the success of the military, the success of everything we have is driven by the community." 🐦

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Ty challenges us to be better and push ourselves further. His impact is vital. He's really prodding us to think about the long-term success of the organization.

SHOTS FIRED



Story & Photos by Staff Sgt. John Wilkes

Shots fired! Possible hostage situation! For Airmen with the 180th Fighter Wing Security Forces Squadron in Swanton, Ohio, these words were the only information given before breaching a house during urban combat training Oct. 1, 2016, at the Maumee Police and Fire Training Center in Maumee, Ohio.

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Security Forces personnel began the day-long exercise with a series of attacks and seizures of the training site. Airmen split into groups of two and four and engaged each other while moving from obstacle to obstacle. Afterward, Airman breached a training building to gain a foothold, save hostages and eliminate threats.

“Shoot, move, communicate and military operations on urban terrain training is a three-dimensional battle space where the enemy can be above, in front, below or behind you,” said Senior Master Sgt. Robert York, operations supervisor with the 180FW Security Forces Squadron. “It is a very slow, violent and deadly (process), making MOUT crucial to the success of the Air Force in the modern climate.”

“We qualify at the range every year with both the M4 Carbine and the M9 Service

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<http://www.180fw.ang.af.mil/>

Pistol,” said Master Sgt. Russell Bacon, unit training manager with the 180FW Security Forces Squadron. “Following qualification we conduct shoot, move, and communicate and MOUT training.”

The 180FW conducts exercises regularly to ensure we are ready to provide for America; protection of the homeland, effective combat power and National Guard civil authorities, while developing Airmen, supporting their families and serving in our community. Daily training, conducted in realistic environments under realistic circumstances, ensures our forces maintain the highest levels of

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proficiency and readiness for worldwide deployment.

Reliance on autonomy is vital in urban environments to save lives and keep pressure on the enemy, according to York.

During the exercise, they donned face masks, goggles, flak jackets and Kevlar helmets. Airmen used training ammunition similar to paintballs to create more realistic training. Using training 2.23 mm ammunition, Airmen entered the building, not knowing what they would encounter once inside.

“During the training we moved tactically, in fire teams, from area to area while

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[neutralizing threats],” said Bacon. “This ensures everyone is communicating and practicing proper technique.”

“The training was very good,” said Senior Airman Spencer Cupples, a security forces specialist with the 180FW Security Forces Squadron. “It was as real-world as possible.”

Security Forces personnel are the first line of defense for the United States Air Force and it is their job to maintain the rule of law on all Air Force installations. The 180FW conducts multiple annual training scenarios to maintain a high state of preparedness and readiness in the event of an emergency.

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The safety of our Airmen and community members is paramount. With 60 percent of the U.S. population lying within a 600 mile radius of Ohio, Northwest Ohio offers convenient access to a multi-modal transportation hub including an extensive interstate highway system, one of the most active railroad centers in the country and one of the largest seaports on the Great Lakes.

“We prepare for as many scenarios as we can, maintaining readiness to protect the base and ensure the safety of our Airmen,” said Cupples. “Training like this builds confidence when responding to a real-world emergency.”

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A DAY TO REMEMBER

In April, 2016, 22-year old Whitehouse, Ohio native, Ashleigh Hunt, waited for results of her latest scans, anticipating similar results to her January scans showing no new growth of her lung tumors.

The news was not good. The scans showed a new large tumor pressing against a major artery and her spine which would require yet another round of intensive chemotherapy to shrink the tumor enough so it could be safely removed. Additional scans showed other potential tumors on both lungs and around her heart.

The cancer was back, for the third time in less than three years and it was growing fast. This time the diagnosis was terminal.

Story by
Senior Master Sgt. Beth Holliker

In August, 2013, at the age of 19, Hunt was an ordinary college student attending The Ohio State University, pursuing her degree in early childhood education and her dreams of graduating, getting a place of her own, teaching and one day starting a family of her own, when she began suffering from pain and swelling in her left knee.

Assuming it was tendinitis, much like the diagnosis of her right knee several years before, Hunt and her family were speechless when they learned she had a six-inch tumor appearing to be bone cancer.

After several appointments with orthopedic oncologists and even more tests over the next couple of weeks, Hunt was diagnosed with high-grade osteosarcoma, an extremely rare form of bone cancer, most prominent in children and young adults, and only diagnosed about 400 times each year in patients between the ages of 10 and 30.

Adding to the already devastating diagnosis, additional tests concluded that the cancer had already spread to both of Hunt's lungs, upgrading her diagnosis to stage IV.

In September, Hunt began a year-long treatment plan to stop the cancer from spreading, including 10 weeks of intensive chemotherapy, resulting in six weeks of in-patient treatments. She then underwent surgery to have the tumor in her knee removed, followed by an additional 20 weeks of chemo and more tests to ensure the cancer had not spread to other areas of her body. In May, 2014, Hunt's oncologist declared that she was finally in remission.

Celebrating one year in remission May 25, 2015, Ashleigh gave her Facebook supporters an exciting update on her post-cancer life.

"I have been in remission for one year. Wow! One year! A lot can happen in one year, and a lot has happened in one year," said Hunt. "I've gone on my first road trip with my best friend. I've gone back to school and have gotten straight A's the whole year for the first time in a long time! I've joined a small group with some of my friends. I've gotten my first job!"

The celebration didn't last long. Just four months after celebrating one year of being cancer free, Hunt went in for regularly scheduled scans to monitor for potential regrowth of cancerous cells. The scans showed a tumor in her lungs. The cancer was back and growing quickly. Surgery to remove the tumor and another round of chemo was required to prevent it from spreading.



Honorary 2nd Lt. Ashleigh Hunt tries on a pilot's helmet May 26, 2016 during Pilot for a Day at the 180th Fighter Wing in Swanton, Ohio. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Shane Hughes)

Good news came again in January, 2016, with scans showing no signs of regrowth, but the celebration ended quickly in April with the new scans and devastating, terminal diagnosis.

"Ashleigh has been so strong, and I know that is for me," said Hunt's mom, Jodi Rupp. "I believe reality is starting to hit her. My mom's heart is ripping in two. I would do anything. I don't want her to be strong for me. That is my job."

After learning the shattering diagnosis, with help of her family and friends, Hunt decided to make a bucket list in an effort to fulfill as many of her dreams as possible. Her list included graduating college, learning

how to apply make-up, seeing concerts, even a ride in a fighter jet.

Too old to be part of the Make-A-Wish program, Hunt's family and friends set out to help check items off of her bucket list. Her grandfather reached out to the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard, to see if there was a possibility Hunt would be able to ride in one of the unit's F-16 Fighting Falcons.

Though her health did not allow her to meet the minimum requirements for a flight in a high-performance fighter jet, the 180FW jumped at the chance to support Hunt and her bucket list dreams in any way possible. A small team of 180FW Airmen worked with Hunt's family to surprise her with an

all access day at the unit by making her a pilot for a day.

On May 26, 2016, Hunt was prepared for a short tour at the 180FW, but had no idea what was really about to happen.

Partnering with the U.S. Army Reserve's 983rd Engineer Battalion, in Swanton, Ohio, to make the day even more special, Hunt was greeted at 8:30 a.m. by two of the battalion's Humvees – her ride for the day.

Hunt rode shotgun in the lead Humvee with her family following behind, a true Army convoy with the second Humvee trailing, to the 180FW where the unit's electronic sign proudly welcomed 2nd. Lt. Ashleigh Hunt.

Once at the 180FW, Hunt was ushered into

the Aircrew Flight Equipment shop where she was issued a flight suit, boots and her very own U.S. Air Force name badge before being escorted to the pilot training room filled with 180FW Airmen waiting to watch Hunt be sworn into the Ohio Air National Guard as an officer in the U.S. Air Force.

180FW Commander, Col. Craig Baker, greeted Hunt and her family before issuing the oath of enlistment and explained to her the responsibilities in her role as an officer in America's Armed Forces.

While Hunt was all smiles, her family was misty-eyed, she raised her right hand and stated, "I, Ashleigh Hunt, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the

Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Ohio against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the Governor of the State of Ohio, that I make this obligation freely, without any mental reservations or purpose of evasion, and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the Office of 2ndLt. in the Air National Guard of the State of Ohio on which I am about to enter, so help me God."

Following the enlistment ceremony and the signing of her official enlistment papers, Hunt met the pilot, Lt. Col. Keith Kelly, who would be flying in her honor that day. Kelly explained his training mission for the flight, presented Hunt with an official set of Department of Defense dog tags, and exchanged name tags so he could fly as 2nd Lt. Ashleigh Hunt.

After Kelly departed to finalize flight plans, Hunt and Maj. Brian Cherolis, an F-16 pilot with the 180FW and her escort for the day, headed out to the aircraft ramp where Hunt assisted with preflight inspections on the F-16 Kelly would fly that day, an F-16 that had 2nd Lt. Ashleigh Hunt proudly displayed on its side as the dedicated pilot. With the help of aircraft mechanic, Master Sgt. Kathryn Dohrmann, Hunt performed aircraft launching procedures, complete with a salute as Kelly taxied to the runway.

Members of the 180FW Fire and Emergency Services Department arrived to take Hunt on a high-speed ride down the taxiway to a spot alongside of the runway where she had a front row seat to watch her F-16 take-off before heading to lunch.

Already a day filled with one happy surprise after another, lunch with Hunt's family and several 180FW Airmen proved to be another unexpected, yet emotional surprise.

Waiting for Hunt at local 180FW lunch spot, dressed in a flight suit, was Lt. Col. Becky Ohm, the Ohio Air National Guard's first female fighter pilot, who was also undergoing treatment for breast cancer.


As Hunt and Ohm sat side-by-side, sharing their stories, struggles and successes through laughter and tears, it was a touching site for all in attendance as well as those passing by.

Back at the 180FW, Ohm spent the rest of the afternoon by Hunt's side as Kelly conducted a mission debrief with Hunt and her family and as unit members presented her with mementos from throughout the day and her time as a pilot assigned to the 180FW.

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THE YEAR IN PHOTOS





A U.S. Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcon pilot assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing in Swanton, Ohio, conducts a mid-air refueling Feb. 11, 2016, over the Pacific during exercise Cope North 2016, a multilateral field training exercise to improve combat readiness, develop a synergistic disaster response and increase interoperability between the U.S. Air Force, Royal Australian Air Force and Japanese Air Self-Defense Force. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Shane Hughes)

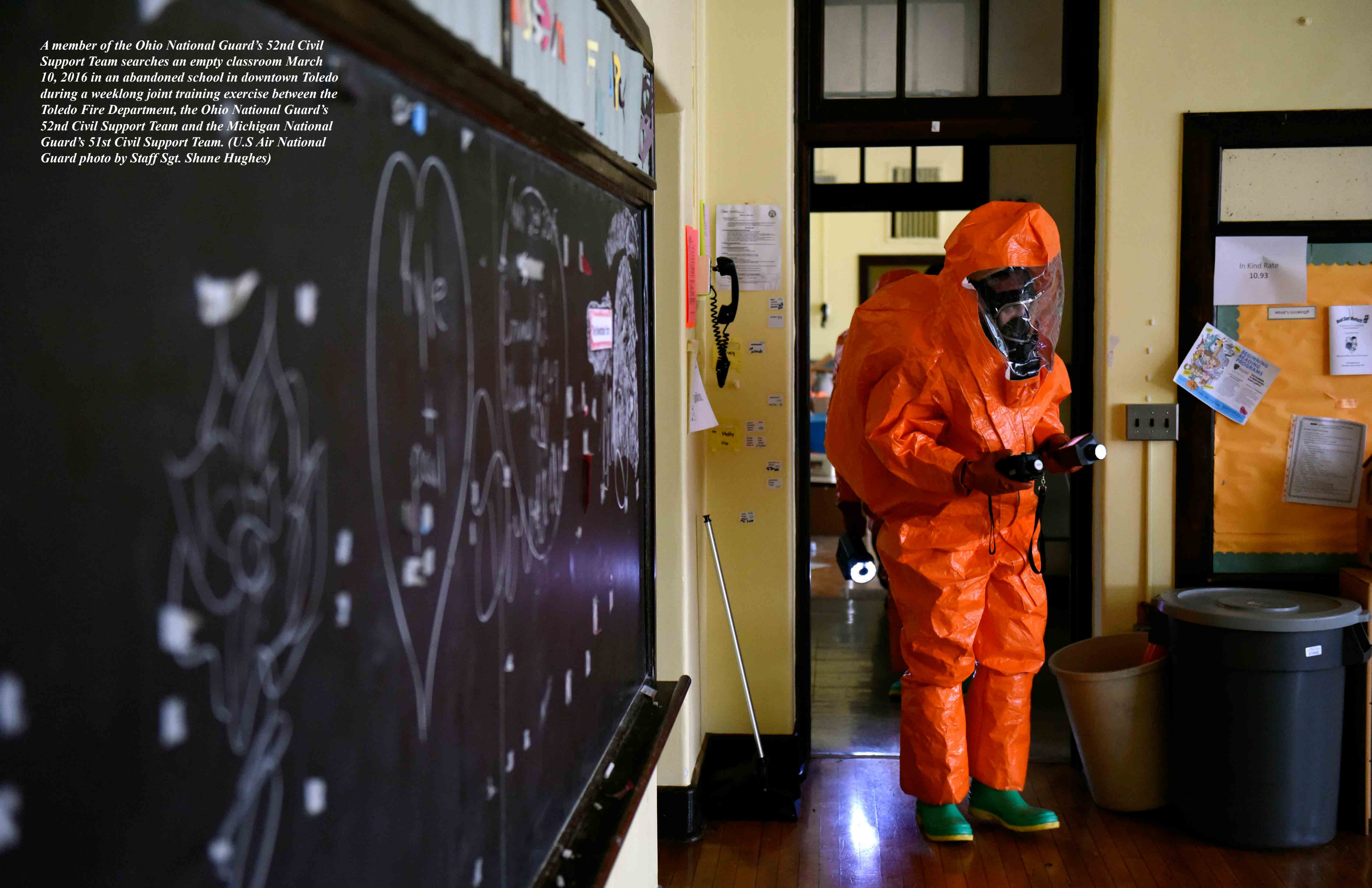
U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. James Rasor, a crew chief assigned to the 112th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, marshals an F-16 Fighting Falcon Feb. 18, 2016, during exercise Cope North 16 at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Shane Hughes)



U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. David Mills, a weapons load crew chief assigned to the 112th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, signals Staff Sgt. Devon Childress, a weapons load technician, while conducting a cross-load Feb. 18, 2016, during exercise Cope North 16 at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Shane Hughes)



A member of the Ohio National Guard's 52nd Civil Support Team searches an empty classroom March 10, 2016 in an abandoned school in downtown Toledo during a weeklong joint training exercise between the Toledo Fire Department, the Ohio National Guard's 52nd Civil Support Team and the Michigan National Guard's 51st Civil Support Team. (U.S Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Shane Hughes)






Staff Sgt. Adam Long and Capt. Bob Yarnell, members of the 51st Civil Support Team, Michigan National Guard, observe operations of a weeklong joint counter-hazmat exercise in the Mobile Emergency Operations Command Center for possible hazards and team risks March 10, 2016, in Toledo, Ohio. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Benjamin A. Maciejewski)



U.S. Air Force Maj. Christopher Uecker, a fighter pilot assigned to the 112th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, performs operational checks prior to his F-16 Fighting Falcon's launch while deployed to Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, March 21, 2016. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Joseph Boyer)



U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Nick Muir, Security Forces specialist at the 180th Fighter Wing in Swanton, Ohio, enters a building on base after the initial sweep for suspects during an active shooter exercise on May 15, 2016. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Nic Kuetemeyer)



Honorary 2nd Lt. Ashleigh Hunt launches an F-16 Fighting Falcon as U.S. Air Force Maj. Brian Cherolis, an F-16 pilot assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, supervises on the flight line May 26, 2016 during Pilot for a Day, a program supporting children and young adults who live with chronic or life-threatening illnesses. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Shane Hughes)



The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds perform aerial maneuvers July 16, 2016 during the Toledo Air Show (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Nic Kuetemeyer)



U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy Hackett, tandem videographer, watches from 3,000 feet as his Golden Knights teammates descend to the landing zone at the Toledo Air Show in Swanton, Ohio on July 16, 2016. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Nic Kuetemeyer)



A U.S. Army Golden Knight demonstration parachutist descends to the target landing zone with an Ohio flag streaming from his parachute at the Toledo Air Show on July 17, 2016 in Swanton, Ohio. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Nic Kuetemeyer)



Pyrotechnics explode during the Toledo Air Show on July 17, 2016 in Swanton, Ohio. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Jordyn Sadowski)



A U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds pilot taxis on the runway July 17, 2016 during the Toledo Air Show in Swanton, Ohio. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Nic Kuetemeyer)

The shadow of the flagpole falls across the clock face of the Northwest Ohio 9/11 Memorial located at the center of the 180th Fighter Wing in Swanton, Ohio, on the morning of the 15th anniversary of the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, marking the exact time the first plane struck the north tower of the World Trade Center. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Shane Hughes)



Airmen of the 180th Fighter Wing reveal steel beams recovered from the Ground Zero, part of the Northwest Ohio 9/11 Memorial, during the Remembrance Ceremony honoring the 15th anniversary of the attacks on Sept. 11th held in Swanton, Ohio on Sept. 11, 2016. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Nic Kuetemeyer)



The Northwest Ohio 9/11 Memorial, located at the 180th Fighter Wing in Swanton, Ohio, was unveiled following the completion of construction phase 1 on Sept. 11, 2016. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. John Wilkes)



U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Adam Hill kisses his fiancée, Lindsay Miller, after she accepted his proposal on the flight line at the 180th Fighter Wing, Ohio Air National Guard during a homecoming reception April 20, 2016, in Swanton, Ohio. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Shane Hughes)



Pilots greet their children for the first time in three months April 20, 2016 during a homecoming reception in Swanton, Ohio. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Shane Hughes)



An F-16 Fighting Falcon sits on the ramp at the 180th Fighter Wing Air National Guard base in Toledo, Ohio prior to morning sortie take-offs. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Hannah Ortloff)

LEAVING A LEGACY

180FW builds foundation of success for Total Force Integration

*Story by
Senior Master Sgt. Beth Holliker*

Baker's assignment to the 180FW was one of the first steps in building the framework to increase overall integration between the Active Component, or AC, and the Reserve Component, referred to as RC, which is comprised of the Air Force Reserves and Air National Guard.

"Col. Baker's selection was borne out of the desire to more closely integrate the three components," said Maj. Gen. Mark Bartman, adjutant general for the Ohio National Guard and ANG representative for the Total Force Task Force, or TF2. "One method to that end is through the integration of leadership positions."

In 2013, together with former Commander of Air Combat Command, Gen. Gilmory Hostage, III and Lt. Gen. Stanley Clark, former director of the Air National Guard,

Maj. Gen. Deborah Ashenhurst, former adjutant general of the Ohio National Guard, drafted an official memorandum to the Acting Secretary of the Air Force, The Honorable Eric Fanning.

Highlighting the wing's long tradition of excellence, the memo boasted the 180FW as a "Top-notch F-16 wing" and a great opportunity to provide an excellent experience for an active duty officer.

It was the forward-thinking initiative of Ashenhurst that put the 180FW and Baker at the forefront of TFI, becoming a benchmark as the Air Force strives to become "One Air Force."

The Secretary of Defense approved Baker for a dual-status commission in February, 2014, as both an active duty officer as well as an officer assigned to the Ohio Air National Guard.

"We are one Air Force," said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III,

following the submission of recommendations from the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force, submitted to congress in March, 2016. "We're committed to this idea and it's foundational to the way we present our capabilities. We're not going to be operationally successful any other way."

This assignment laid the groundwork for the wing's future role in the Total Force Plan which will bring four active duty pilots and 40 aircraft maintenance personnel to the 180FW, in addition to the wing's current manning.

With the process already in full swing, in addition to Baker's assignment as commander, one of the four pilots was assigned in 2015. The remainder of the pilots and maintenance personnel are slated to begin arriving at the 180FW in the next few years.

"The Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve provide the nation a vital capability that is functionally integrated and operationally indistinguishable from

the active force," said Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James. "This maximizes our total force and secures (our) top priorities of taking care of people, balancing today's readiness with tomorrow's modernization, and making every dollar count."

Baker said he was both excited and humbled when he learned of his selection to command an ANG wing, a first in the history of the Air Force.

"My job as a wing commander was to leave the 180FW better than I received it, in mission and in purpose," said Baker. "I hoped to accomplish making a better, more lethal, innovative and efficient wing."

Baker's list of accomplishments during his short tour with the 180FW is astonishing. Most notable, and in line with the TFI concept and his vision for the wing, maximizing the force through innovation and efficiency while balancing readiness and modernization was a primary focus for Baker.

In 2015, Baker led the charge in developing an exercise requiring 180FW aircraft and personnel to deploy quickly and arrive at

another Air Force installation with no notice.

"We exercised that concept, the first ANG wing to do so, by sending jets to Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, unannounced," said Col. Scott Reed, 180FW vice commander. "All of the planning and coordination was closely guarded and proved that we could plan, generate and execute these kinds of missions without signals or warnings to our enemies."

The exercise was a success and proved that the ability to show up anywhere in the world, unannounced, is an incredible capability for the Air Force.

"This is really 'tip-of-the-spear' and operationally relevant," said Reed.

Additionally, in 2016, Baker was instrumental in coordinating a Sortie Production Assessment for the wing, another first-ever for an ANG wing. This assessment is a no-notice inspection of the maintenance and operations groups, aimed at evaluating daily processes and operations for maintainers, pilots and support staff.

"This assessment has no written reports,

all feedback is from the inspector team chief directly to the wing commander," said Reed. "This surprise visit allows for a brutally honest assessment of a wing's day-to-day ability. We received valuable recommendations which we have already acted upon to improve our processes."

Understanding and embracing the term Citizen Airman, a term largely unknown by our active duty counterparts, was another significant accomplishment, not only for Baker, but also for those communities surrounding the 180FW.

"The feeling is one of accomplishment and achievement because now I know and understand, after serving as the 180FW commander for more than two years, what it means to be a Citizen Airman," said Baker. "This is a role I take very seriously because it involves and details the military warrior ethos."

Baker continued, explaining how the military relies on Americans to be connected to its military and that the ANG Citizen Airmen are the connection, embedded in the communities and building enduring relationships with those communities.

"The Citizen Airman culture, a culture that I now understand, serves as the real connection between America and its military," said Baker. "A critical role that each of us in the military play in keeping our military connected to those, in whose name we fight."

The 180FW also boasts a long tradition of supporting and serving in surrounding communities and those communities are the foundation on which the 180FW was built.

"The success of the 180FW is founded upon the steadfast support, trust and generosity of the local community," said Baker.

Baker's drive to embrace the ANG culture only served to strengthen the unwavering bonds the 180FW has with its surrounding communities. The relationships built between Baker and civic leaders throughout Northwest Ohio opened new doors, providing hundreds of opportunities for both the 180FW and its community members.

Perhaps, the largest community partnerships built during his tour was the Toledo Air Show Foundation. Baker pulled together a robust team of local civic leaders, paired them with military liaisons and bridged the communication gaps between military and civilian counterparts in less than seven months to produce an event second to none. The event brought in more than 52,000 spectators and allowed for the Toledo Air Show Foundation to donate more than \$30,000 to local charities.

continued on pg. 46

Making it a day to remember, the wing presented Hunt with a framed print of her official military photo and Lt. Col. Kelly presented Hunt with an American Flag, which he flew on his mission in her honor, as a symbol of her bravery and true American patriotism as an officer in the U. S. Air Force.

Ending the day with the most touching presentation of all, Ohm gave Hunt a set of her official pilot wings as a symbol of inspiration and a reminder that anything is possible and that even the biggest dreams can come true.

“I am so excited! This is awesome. I never would have dreamed this!” Hunt said.

“I could not ask for better people in my life,” Hunt continued. “They’re amazing and I can’t thank them enough for everything

they’ve done.”

“I don’t even have words for it. It’s amazing the people that have jumped up and opened themselves up to helping her out and making her life great,” said her mother, Jodi Rupp.

Through it all, Hunt has been a symbol of bravery and inspiration to anyone she meets, especially to the men and women of the 180FW, who had the distinct honor to spend the day with such a strong, bright and happy young lady.

“Ashleigh showed us all the strength and resilience of the human spirit when faced with adversity,” said Staff Sgt. Shane Hughes, a member of the 180FW. “It was an honor to help her check off an item from her bucket list.”

Since her visit, still fighting to recover and powering through a few minor set-backs from time to time, Hunt continues to make the most of life, traveling the country completing her list, one item

at a time, with help from family, friends, her community and some of her most special supporters like singer, Justin Timberlake and NASCAR driver Joey Logano, who both helped with her trip to New York City.

Over the summer, Hunt has had professional make-up lessons, traveled to New York City to see the Broadway plays Wicked and Cats, traveled to Hawaii and California, attended some of her favorite concerts and even got to be part of Logano’s NASCAR pit crew.

“We believe you get more than you give when you serve others, and Ashleigh’s visit certainly proved that,” Reed said. “Her attitude, strength, and courage lifted everyone around her during her visit. It was a privilege to share the day with her.”

For updates on Hunt or how you can help her accomplish her bucket list, visit her Facebook page [@Prayers for Ashleigh, Fighting Osteo Sarcoma.](#)



a Legacy, from pg. 42

The Toledo Air Show had been absent from Northwest Ohio for more than a decade.

Baker also spearheaded the Air Force Public-Public, Public-Private, or P4 program, the first initiated in the Ohio Air National Guard. The program is focused on building innovative relationships with community organizations and leaders such as The Boy Scouts of America, local universities and law enforcement agencies to leverage capabilities of military installations, local governments or commercial entities to reduce operating costs and the costs of services while retaining or enhancing quality.

The goal of the P4 program is to bring Air Force leadership and resource support to installation and community leaders as they develop, prioritize and implement partnership initiatives. The 180FW is currently in the process of finalizing 30 partnerships in the Northwest Ohio area.

“He has left a lasting impression on the community,” said Wendy Gramza, president of the Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce, during Baker’s Change of Command Ceremony. “He stands tall and makes the rest of us stand a little taller too.”

Another powerful lesson learned as commander of an ANG wing and one that he will take with him as he begins a new chapter in

his career, back within the active duty component, is that the ANG is ALWAYS on mission.

“Historically reserve components were intended to provide a strategic reserve, called upon only in a time of war or national emergency, when active component forces were insufficient or unavailable,” said Bartman. “However, in the 15 years since 9/11 that is no longer the case. The Air National Guard today, is an operational reserve that provides strategic depth to America.”

“The ANG is always on mission,” said Baker. “It means that the ANG deploys alongside of active components and you cannot tell the difference, its Airmen doing the same mission regardless of component.”

While Total Force Integration is well underway and the 180FW has marked its place in the history books with Baker’s selection to command an ANG wing, the Air Force continues to make history with the recent selection of the first ANG officer, Col. April Vogel, to command an active duty wing, when she assumed command of MacDill Air Force Base, July 8.

“While there will be challenges moving forward toward an Active Association wing, there is no doubt that the men and women of the 180FW will prove successful in leading the way for the Total Force,” said Baker. 🇺🇸



“

I learn so much from other people, and I have so many heroes here in this Wing, from our youngest Airman to the crusty old fossils.

”

Commander’s Comments, from pg. 3

you should be preparing for that promotion every day. The only catch is that you won’t immediately know the second order effects of your actions or your ultimate destination.

I’m absolutely sure my purpose has not been to single handedly do anything. I have flown combat missions, trained hundreds of fighter pilots and made tough decisions. I have tried to build teams and lead people where they want to go, even when they didn’t want to do the things to get them there. I have been successful and been promoted beyond my ambitions, but I don’t believe that’s why I’m here – this is not my destination. And I accept that I probably will never know all the reasons why I ended up here, but my hope is that along the way I’ve helped somebody else – that I’ve planted a seed that grows into something good. We all do that. The greatest impact you may have in your life may be in the simplest gesture of kindness. So realize that in your daily struggles, something else is happening.

My son had to reorganize his life without the central focus of sports. He had to fill the void, so he became more active in other things: youth groups, student government, academics and his relationships. He didn’t know it, but he grew as a person much faster than if he had been just an athlete. I would never have wished the pain and suffering on him, but the silver lining was incredibly clear. He thought his destination was to go back to being a basketball player, but once he figured out his new identity, and became confident in that new reality, he became a different, stronger, better-rounded person instead. If you are depressed about your current situation, remember that there is a better version of you in your future.

The second thing I’d say is that you need to focus on the right things. Coach John Wooden said “The more concerned we become over the things we can’t control, the less we will do with the things we can control.” I saw a great presentation on leadership last year and one of the main points was that E+R=O, meaning an Event plus your Response equals the Outcome. You can’t control the things that happen – your span of control is about

a three-foot circle around you that you can reach within arm’s length. So “stuff” happens. Get over it.

You also can’t completely control the outcome. You don’t get the outcome you deserve, you get the outcome you earn through your disciplined response. The only thing you own is your response. And be careful about how you measure your success. The other team can score more points than you, but you can still win. I am admittedly hypercompetitive; I love to keep score and come out on top; win the argument, win the game, win the league, win the battle, win the war. But if that’s all there is, then after the last game is over, who am I?

Struggles don’t define us. It is our response that defines us. Robert Louis Stevenson echoed Cervantes when he wrote “to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labor.” When you give it your all but come up short with your head held high – you have still won. That’s a far greater lesson for my kids than any recognition I have ever received.

You may think you need to control every detail in your life and your children’s lives. The world can be harsh and we instinctively try to avoid that adversity, especially for our kids. We try to control every danger in our child’s life: no playing in the muddy creek because there might be germs; everyone gets a trophy because losing might make them feel sad; don’t challenge anyone with an alternative view because it might upset them – we need “safe” zones in our colleges to avoid conflict. We’re missing the point – control the response, not the event. In your careers, work every day to be better than yesterday. Act with deliberate intention. You may not reach your original goal, but if you change your focus to a pursuit of excellence, if you make that your response to every challenge, you will find success you didn’t even know was there. And your excellence will inspire those around you.

Finally, and maybe most importantly, don’t let fear stop you. I know – it’s easy to say. Everyone thinks “what if I fail?” But think about it this way: not trying because you’re

afraid to fail is the biggest failure of all. Recognize your fear as normal and rational. Be specific about it; what exactly do you fear and why? Follow the trail with each answer to get to the root cause. You may find there are easy workarounds, or that it’s not such a big deal once you have given a name to it. Then give yourself a break and don’t beat yourself up over your perceived weakness. You’re stronger than you think and you can overcome the fear. It’s just an emotion and you can still act as you choose.

My son was finally cleared to play basketball again this year. He has started practices and I asked him if he ever thinks about his reconstructed shoulder. He said “every single minute.” But I still saw him go headfirst diving for a loose ball in his last scrimmage.

I love Teddy Roosevelt’s speech where he says, “The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

I learn so much from other people, and I have so many heroes here in this wing, from our youngest Airman to the old fossils. I was more surprised than anyone when I realized my son was one of my heroes. Follow his lead and work hard every day to become a better you, whether that means winning a promotion or finding more compassion in your relationships. Make conscious choices to respond to the things you can control and conquer your fears. Reinvent yourself and go into your future with conviction. My son plays his first high school game next week. They may lose and he may not get off the bench, but I’ll be the proudest guy in the gym. 🇺🇸



**AIRMEN
OF THE
YEAR**



AIRMAN OF THE YEAR AIRMAN 1ST CLASS ADAM COE

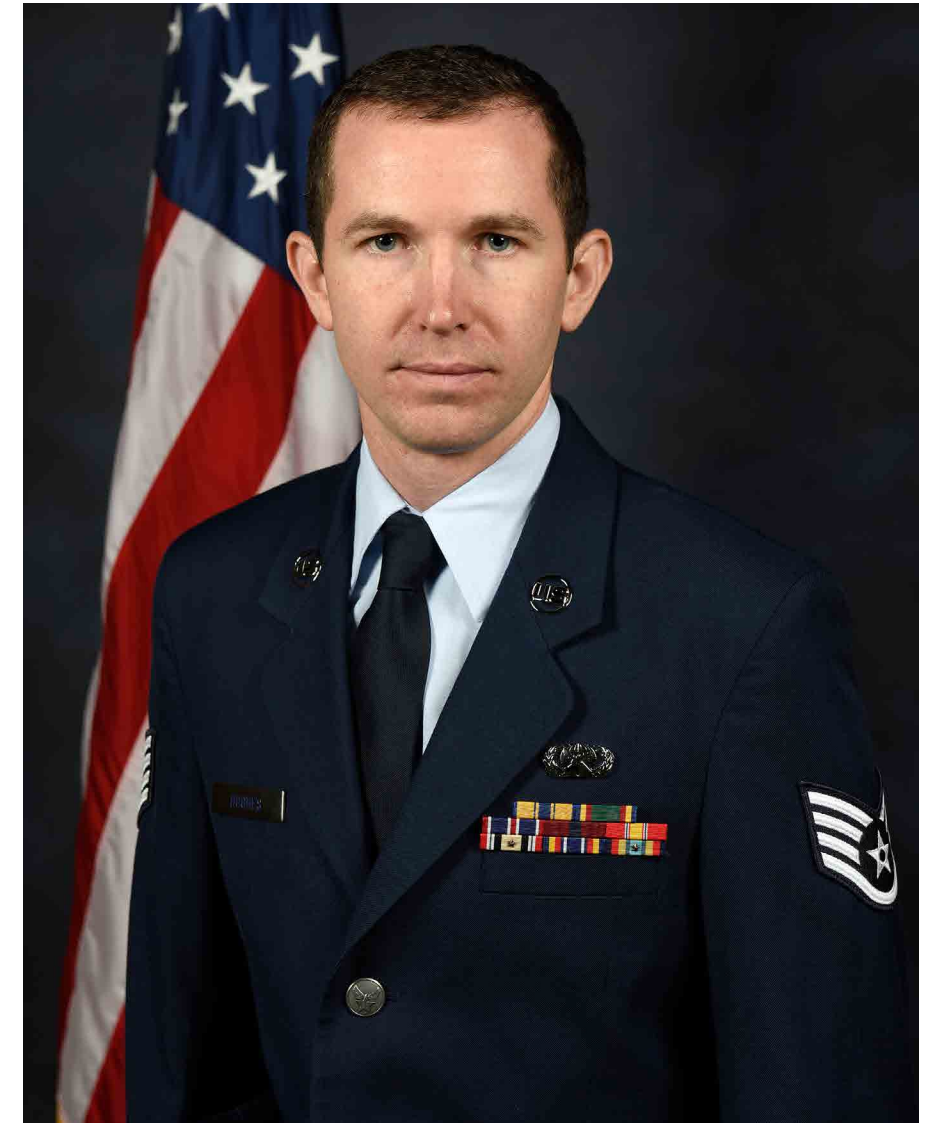
Airman First Class Adam Coe is a Cyber Operations Journeyman assigned to the Communications Squadron. Throughout this award period, Airman 1st Class Coe deployed to Al Dhafra Air Base and excelled in his duties. He was selected as 380th Expeditionary Communications Squadron Outstanding Warrior of the Week. Airman Coe facilitated a multitude of tasks during his deployment, leading the Al Dhafra Air Base Communication Tasking Order tracking, patching over 2,300 classified and unclassified systems, guaranteeing base network integrity.

Coe methodically coordinated maintenance on 200 Tier 2 calls, reducing Network Operation's workload by 20 percent. He rectified over fifty quarantined systems, restoring capability for multiple Air Expeditionary Wing squadrons. Airman Coe drafted a reference guide for server event logs, creating a vital training resource and improving productivity by 50 percent.

Coe is always developing his knowledge, skills and problem solving techniques. While deployed, he earned three Community College of the Air Force credits toward an Information Systems degree. Airman Coe participated in a C5 joint training exercise, promoting a strong sense of teamwork and broadening his Air Force skill set and knowledge.

Coe was involved in multiple base and community activities while deployed to Al Dhafra. He competed in a 25K ruck, eight 5k's and an Air Force half marathon. He volunteered as a soccer referee, supporting a nine squadron team tournament. He also competed in a host nation coalition soccer tournament. At home, he volunteers with the Greater Toledo Challenger Baseball League, a little league team designated for mentally and physically disabled children.

Coe is a valuable Cyber Space Warrior, committed to excellence and exemplifies the whole Airman concept. 🇺🇸



NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER OF THE YEAR STAFF SGT. SHANE HUGHES

Staff Sgt Shane Hughes is a Public Affairs Photojournalist assigned to Fighter Wing Headquarters. Throughout this award period, Staff Sgt. Hughes provided invaluable leadership and support to the Public Affairs office and wing. He managed three social media platforms bolstering community relations, averaging a reach of over 125,000 fans and increased engagement by 68 percent. Staff Sgt. Hughes single-handedly, designed the interactive Stinger Magazine, which earned first place in the Air National Guard and third place in the Air Force Best Digital Publication category, a first for the 180th Fighter Wing.

He overhauled the Public Affairs service guide and streamlined the public affairs work order program, executing over 160 work orders. Hughes has coordinated over 150 community events, with more than 2,400 visitors, cementing public trust and community ties.

He is a trusted agent, wing spokesperson and a proven photojournalist, documenting the Wing Theater Support Package, the first ever Secretary of the Air Force visit and multiple historical wing events. He has accessioned well over 100 images, written seven articles and produced one video, bringing vital public awareness to the 180FW mission and Airmen.

Hughes is committed to self-improvement. He volunteered to attend additional Public Affairs management training. He taught himself how to edit and create video, along with freelance writing for local newspapers.

Hughes is an active member of the Wood County Free Masons and volunteers with US Together, Incorporated, a non-profit assisting and integrating refugee families in Northwest Ohio.

Most recently, Staff Sergeant Hughes was one of 28 public affairs service members across the country selected to document the 58th Presidential Inauguration, representing the 180th Fighter Wing and the Ohio National Guard, in Washington, D.C.

Hughes is a dedicated Airman, who strives to ensure the 180th Fighter Wing and Airman are recognized for their achievement both within the Wing and in the community. 🇺🇸



SENIOR NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER OF THE YEAR MASTER SERGEANT STEVEN WRIGHT

Master Sgt. Steven Wright is an Aircraft Mechanic assigned to the Maintenance Group. Throughout this award period, Wright certified nine guardsmen on critical five-level core tasks, furthering Airmen's career development and knowledge. He improved efficiency for the future, reorganizing the crew chief driving program and updating all personnel. Sergeant Wright aggressively trained personnel on hot pits, bolstering the lagging currency and flourishing operations capabilities.

He led flight line operations in Alpena, Michigan, ensuring 100 percent of scheduled sorties were flown. Wright is recognized as dynamic crew chief leader, securing an 81 percent mission capable rate, facilitating 706 sorties flown, while deployed to Anderson Air Force Base, Guam. He is a flawless inspector, elevating a discrepancy on a Theater Security Package jet and saving an unnecessary mission cancellation, securing sortie success.

Wright is a mentor to younger non-commissioned officers and seeking out opportunities for self-improvement. He assembled fun runs in Guam, improving peer fitness and camaraderie. Wright is an avid reader, focusing on books to improve communications and leadership skills. He has dedicated himself to fitness improvement through training and completing a half marathon in two hours.

Wright has selflessly devoted his time to improving Airmen morale and maintaining community involvement. He strives to boost morale by rewarding performance and providing timely and due recognition to Airmen through the Quarterly Award Program for outstanding efforts while deployed. Wright volunteered to support Guam family day, the Toledo Air Show, decorated a trunk for the 180FW Trunk or Treat and lead drill flag duty.

Master Sgt. Wright is a dedicated aircraft manager, he transcends leadership expectations and goals, while leading by example. 🏆



FIRST SERGEANT OF THE YEAR SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT WALTER CONNOLLY

Senior Master Sgt. Walter Connolly is the First Sergeant assigned to Fighter Wing Headquarters and Operations Group. Throughout this award period, Connolly deployed as the wing First Sgt. to Anderson Air Force Base, Guam in support of the Theater Support Package, Operation Cope North. He was responsible for providing support to over 260 Airmen and ensuring all Airmen returned home safe.

Connolly continuously displays that he is a First Sgt. who takes care of Airman so they can take care of the mission. He expertly organized TSP housing for more than 260 Airmen, getting them assigned rooms within 90 minutes of arriving.

While deployed to Guam, Connolly handled five Red Cross notifications with professionalism and empathy. He made certain all affected members were processed and on the first available flight home, making Airman and their families a priority.

During Cope North, Connolly led the deployed First Sgt. Counsel, volunteering to augment the Anderson Dining Facility by preparing over 1,000 meals for all Cope North participants. This allowed for greater flexibility, while increasing Airmen morale and exercise effectiveness.

Outside of his dedicated military service, Sgt. Connolly completed all coursework and was awarded his Community College of the Air Force degree. He is an avid runner and member of the Sylvania Morning Running Club, frequently volunteering for the organization led events.

Connolly organized and led the Arbor Hill's Veterans assembly honoring 80 veterans and their families. He led the initiative that created the Arbor Hills Junior High School Matthew Drake Courage Award recognizing outstanding courage by an Arbor Hills student.

Senior Master Sgt. Connolly inspires excellence in others by encouraging ownership of additional duties and is committed to excellence; continually setting the example for others to emulate. 🏆



COMPANY GRADE OFFICER OF THE YEAR CAPTAIN JUSTIN GUINTHER

Capt. Justin Guinther is a fighter pilot assigned to the 112th Fighter Squadron. Throughout this award period, Guinther was deployed to multiple locations, to include Anderson Air Force Base, Guam and Key West Naval Air Base, Florida. Guinther was recognized as a superior performer for the joint integration deployment to Key West. He flew 11 missions and was acknowledged as the most valuable wingman and the key expert for all mission planning. Supporting the Theater Support Package at Anderson Air Force Base, Guam, Guinther was recognized as the TSP Superior Performer. He pioneered acquisition of overland airspace with more than 25 air interdiction upgrade sorties, a first for a Guam deployment. He single handily stood up Virtual electronic Combat Training System increasing realistic training by 100 percent.

Guinther completed mission qualification training in minimal time with a 90 percent pass rate, saving critical flying hours for squadron readiness. During his Flight Lead Upgrade Program, his briefs and debriefs were performed at an Instructor Pilot level.

Guinther is a renowned squadron expert in mission planning software, pivotal to all exercise training and has received the endorsement to start the Instructor Pilot program.

Guinther is a volunteer coach for the Sylvania Recreation Baseball League. He is the league coordinator for the elementary grade baseball program with over 300 participants.

Guinther exemplifies the Air Force core values; integrity first, service before self, excellence in all we do. He is an example to follow. 🦅



CHIEF'S AWARD SENIOR AIRMAN ZACHERY YECKLEY

Senior Airman Zachery Yeckley is command support staff for the Maintenance Group. During this award period, Yeckley fulfilled multiple additional duties while exceeding at his primary duties. He served as the Maintenance Group physical training leader, supervising fitness currency and assisting with testing, leading the Maintenance Group to a 99.3 percent pass rate.

Yeckley was appointed the group's organizational defense travel administrator, spearheading the creation of more than 1,560 travel orders for fiscal year 2016. He monitored the Enlisted Performance Appraisal program, managing suspenses, updating the virtual personnel center and reducing the number of overdue Enlisted Performance Reports. Yeckley increased morale by effectively managing the monthly promotions, guaranteeing Airmen were promoted on time.

Airman Yeckley deployed to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, in support of the Weapons and Tactics Conference, ensuring the training facilities were properly configured to provide quality training.

Outside of his dedicated military service, Airman Yeckley earned his Ohio High School Athletic Association baseball officiating license and officiated more than 80 high school games. Utilizing his training, he volunteered to officiate for a Special Olympics baseball tournament.

As a member of the Knights of Columbus, Yeckley volunteers more than 24 hours annually in the local community. He worked with the Fremont Food Pantry and initiated help for families, providing meals during the holidays.

Yeckley is currently attending Bowling Green State University, earning a 3.3 grade point average and making the Dean's list while working fulltime. He is a member of the BGSU Veteran Affairs Club and is responsible for recruiting ten members to join the military. He has competed in the BGSU sales competition briefing and placed seventh out of 156 BGSU students.

Senior Airman Yeckley demonstrates strong leadership and dedication to his organization, the wing and community. 🦅

CREATIVE CHANCES & THE BURDEN OF FREEDOM

*Essay by Lt. Gen. Michelle D. Johnson, U.S. Air Force Academy
Originally published in the Journal of Character & Leadership Integration
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HONOR GUARD MEMBER OF THE YEAR SENIOR AIRMAN JUSTIN SPENCER

Senior Airman Justin Spencer is a Services Sustainment apprentice assigned to the Force Support Squadron. Throughout this period, Spencer excelled at his primary duties within the Services Sustainment Flight and deployed to Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar in support of the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing. He is most recognized for his role as a member of the 180th Fighter Wing Honor Guard. This year, Airman Spencer dedicated more than 16 hours to Honor and Color Guard events, fostering patriotism and honoring our fallen. He performed 30 percent of the Honor Guard details, showcasing the Air Force and wing commitment to our local veterans. Airman Spencer supported a flag folding ceremony at Arbor Hills Junior High School and selflessly assisted with three high-visibility Color Guard community events, proudly representing the 180FW.

Outside of his dedicated military service, Airman Spencer is pursuing a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Toledo and an Associate in Applied Science Hospitality Management Degree from the Community College of the Air Force. He is a dedicated volunteer, aiding in the relocation and set-up of the newly purchased fitness equipment. Airman Spencer also served as a base liaison during the Boy Scout Camporee, spending 48 hours with more than 100 campers.

Senior Airman Spencer is an outstanding Airman and promotes patriotism and honor within the community through his actions and dedication. 🇺🇸

Midway through my third year as Superintendent of the United States Air Force Academy, I feel very fortunate to be in this post at this time – a time when America and societies worldwide are facing many varied challenges, all flying at us at a rapid pace. At the global scale we see the paradoxes – attacks in Paris and San Bernardino in the name of ISIS juxtaposed with over 190 nations brought together, also in Paris, to develop a global solution to climate change. On the national scale our leaders are attempting to balance order and the security of our citizens with the freedoms so fundamental to our Constitution. And even within higher education we see contradictions between educational efforts to prepare our students for lives of meaning and purpose – a goal that often requires provocation – and contrasting, competing calls to provide safe spaces for our students to grow and learn.¹

Each of these lines of thought reminds me of an August 2015 opinion in the New York Times, penned by Roger Cohen, in which he attributes to some ISIS sympathizers a desire to “be released from the burden of freedom.”² This is an extreme case of what we are perhaps seeing on the national scale, and even within our students – a desire for the freedom to make their own decisions, only to become overwhelmed by the need to make so many decisions. Therein lies some of the appeal of operating within our own comfort zones – operating around people basically like us, studying subjects that we’re comfortable with to prepare for jobs that we think we’ve always wanted.

As articulated by Richard Riley, Secretary of Education under President Clinton, “We are currently preparing students for jobs that don’t yet exist using technologies that haven’t been invented in order to solve problems that we don’t even know are problems yet.”³ That is...to do our jobs properly and prepare the next generation, we must challenge ourselves and our students to expand their horizons well beyond their comfort zones and learn to operate where difficult ideas intersect.

will require adoption and mastery of two strategic imperatives: mental agility and inclusiveness.⁵ These imperatives seem to call for a critical mass of “unicorn” officers capable of excelling outside their comfort zones. In any group of successful leaders, it’s likely some will have been unicorns in their own ways, pushing the boundaries of multiple disciplines. In my own experience, I was repeatedly kept out of my comfort zone when I had to blend ops research, political science, economics, leading people, and piloting aircraft around the world -- among other things.

Yet despite many mandates and successful examples, the problem still remains: how does any university prepare good, but “non-unicorn” students for their futures?⁶ It’s something we’re grappling with at the Air Force Academy. How do we design a curriculum that has the elements necessary to prepare graduates to succeed in this complex, networked environment – does our curriculum challenge them and push them outside their comfort zones? Does it force them to practice at the intersection of disciplines, to demonstrate the courage needed to gracefully bear the “burden of freedom?”

Reviewing and updating a curriculum isn’t the easiest endeavor, even at a military service academy – or perhaps especially at a military service academy. Take the time-forged bureaucracy of government service and combine it with the meticulous methodology of faculty – and the outcome is likely to be what a fellow college president termed an “organized anarchy.”⁷ Anyone currently in a faculty or administrative role should instantly connect with that idea.

In this prescribed, structured, demanding environment, no division or discipline can imagine an “Academy Graduate” getting a complete education without exposure to their specific content. This perspective, combined with national calls for more Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math – STEM – emphasis, has caused me, our Dean of Faculty and other Air Force senior leaders to question whether we have the right balance: are we pushing the STEM-oriented students enough to benefit from liberal education, and pushing the humanities-oriented students sufficiently to benefit from understanding the STEM basics?

This is where we might look to C.P. Snow to help define an answer to the question, and in particular to his famous Rede lecture given in 1959 at Cambridge University, in which he gave voice to his concern over the two cultures and

These imperatives seem to call for a critical mass of “unicorn” officers capable of excelling outside their comfort zones.

A popular entrepreneur magazine, Fast Company, echoes this mentality--this need to operate outside our comfort zones--by suggesting the knowledge economy is becoming a creative economy and touting individuals who break molds with spectacular results.⁴ Even the new Air Force Strategy published in 2014 makes it very clear that positioning the Air Force for success in the coming decades

the scientific revolution. He observed that the scientists and the “intellectuals” – a term used at the time, for what today would likely be called humanities or social science scholars – were at cultural poles. Their attitudes, standards, patterns of behavior, assumptions and approaches were at odds.⁸ He asserted that the feelings of one pole became the “anti-feelings” of the other pole with a net practical,

intellectual and creative loss. And yet in the face of that negative dynamic, he persuasively argued that the nexus of the humanities, the basic sciences, and the applied sciences and engineering is where we best produce “creative chances.”

This space of creative chances is where we would like students to practice what Snow termed the “astonishing intellectual courage” needed to integrate disciplines, to recognize the “moral un-neutrality of science,” and in today’s vernacular, to become a reader of something that Nancy Scola of POLITICO labelled as Liberal Arts Majors are from Mars, and Geeks are from Venus.⁹

Unfortunately, this integration doesn’t happen often enough. Steve Jobs famously remarked “it is in Apple’s DNA that technology alone is not enough. It’s technology married with liberal arts, married with the humanities, that yields us the result that makes our heart sing.”¹⁰ Those who can’t go more than a few minutes without checking their mobile phones illustrate what he meant. Similarly, Fareed Zakaria (in his book, *In Defense of a Liberal Education*) rightly suggests Facebook is as much psychology and sociology as it is technology.¹¹

When such integration does happen, we see how powerful it is when preparation meets opportunity. As a wing commander in Kansas, hosting an airshow, we had flown in metal detectors from another Air Force base to support the necessary security screening. A strong Midwest

windstorm the night before the airshow battered the detectors and left them inoperative. But because the First Sergeant of our security forces squadron had served in a medical logistics squadron, he knew that medical logisticians could fix MRI machines—which are based on the same technologies as the metal detectors. That serendipitous connection resulted in the right people repairing the detectors in time to support a successful event. It was a wonderful example of creative chance at the intersection of disciplines!

At another level of this same idea, while assigned on the Joint Staff several years ago as the Deputy Director for Information and Cyberspace Policy in the J5 (Strategic Plans) directorate, I found myself responsible for sorting out how to establish a new military command, US Cyber Command, with responsibility for a domain that didn’t exist in any measurable way when I graduated from the Academy in 1981. Nevertheless, then-Vice Chairman General Cartwright gave me marching orders to take the lead on “everything cyber.” To be sure, I did not learn the intricacies of the computer code or the engineering challenges of the global network. Rather, I found my role playing out at the intersection of many disparate threads – helping convert engineer- and science-speak to political, global and operational concepts so that leaders across operations, intelligence, and IT communities could better understand the cyber domain. It’s akin to C.P. Snow’s example of advocating for a new technology un-proven at the time of World War II (radar); or advocating for GPS long before automobile drivers put away their car maps for good and began to just type addresses into their phones. It was even clearer after that experience that being able to integrate across disciplines is what allows us to capitalize on those “creative chances.”

But today, my focus has shifted from how we develop commands

and processes and policy, to how we can best develop the young men and women who will live, and must learn to lead, in that complex world. Certainly, our graduates must continue to build, maintain, operate, and defend unequaled air and space capabilities for the indefinite future. That is what America’s Air Force does. Yet we must also successfully master appropriate aspects of the cyber domain: both new and modernized air and space systems are so cyber-empowered and cyber-dependent that their value is inseparable from our ability to use that domain; many of our country’s most robust cyber defense capabilities are governmental but not all are DoD; and the majority of networks exist either in civil government or private infrastructure like regional power grids and financial networks. Complex, sometimes contradictory incentives mix with information sharing, compliance, and regulatory standards imposed by a variety of government agencies to make for a very difficult and often reactionary environment. Beyond the technical complexities of the problem, we—and the international community—are in the infancy of developing a comprehensive understanding of cyber security that would clarify the structure & limits of civilian and

military authority and cooperation. Here I can offer only a question rather than an answer: how do we build trust and incentives across both industry and government, in a conflict spectrum that as yet recognizes no clear delineation between peace and war?

As departments, governments and international organizations debate such questions, there’s tremendous value in using the academic arena to explore new paradigms with the freedom afforded by higher education. It is on these pillars--of developing a new generation of innovative thinkers and bridging the public-private partnership to improve both--that the Academy and Air Force are establishing a center of excellence whose purpose is to improve cyber education while providing rapid and creative solutions to dominate the evolving and contested cyber domain.

Our vision for an Air Force Cyber Innovation Center (AFCIC) is a highly virtualized environment anchored at USAFA, fostering collaboration with the other Service academies, other institutions of higher education, industry, and other government agencies to track and influence the development of innovative, state-of-the-art technology and research—a conceptual “cyber-sandbox.” In doing so, the Air Force will be able to educate and train officers to enter the Air Force well-prepared to keep up with the rapidly changing pace of technology evolution as we look holistically to integrate operations in our three mission domains – air, space and cyberspace.

Cyber is too complex, too personal, too intertwined, too global for a single town, service, or government agency to claim primacy or even ownership of cyber. Starting with the strong support of the Air Force’s senior leadership and centered on the Air Force vision of sustaining an asymmetric operational advantage over any potential adversaries, improving our mastery of cyber’s social, operational,

strategic and technical challenges will require us to model the domain, by way of interconnected nodes of excellence that inspire collaboration and creativity across geographic and political boundaries.

It is my conviction that cadets and faculty are uniquely postured to tackle these problems from a truly multidisciplinary perspective, within the context and thoughtful appreciation of the multi-order effects across the military, technology, ethical and policy spectrums. It is also my conviction that we have no choice but to tackle and master them.

The Academy curriculum is a case in point that illustrates the delicate alchemy we must achieve to reach such ambitious goals. The “core” constitutes about two thirds of our entire curriculum – 32 courses total in basic sciences, humanities, social sciences and engineering. We have the balance almost exactly 50-50 across the poles I mentioned above. What we teach is probably about right; how we teach it is where we rise or fall. Why we must succeed—why it’s important—is increasingly clear in our technologically dependent, human-driven missions.

Hence, the Academy’s Dean of Faculty has been working across the faculty and staff, and has successfully revised our desired outcomes. Faculty members are currently progressing through the arduous work of aligning core curriculum with outcomes in a way that maximizes interdisciplinary learning: a core that will better prepare graduates with the mental agility our Air Force Secretary and Chief know they need. Successful focus on outcomes—which are inherently interand trans-disciplinary, and which reflect the capabilities and potentials of student-officers, not the boundaries of any future professional specialty—will inherently lead graduates to be more ready to seize creative chances.

There are formidable challenges to this vision. How do we reconcile the mindsets of those who have spent much of their intellectual lives studying the second law of thermodynamics, with those who have devoted their professional energies to studies of renowned novelist Toni Morrison? Perhaps Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s words are fitting: “a great mind must be androgynous.”¹² Our graduates will need to gain and exploit the technical cognizance necessary to operate today’s sophisticated technologies and weapons, but they will be under increasingly complex and significant pressures to do so with the emotional and social intelligence that typically comes from a deeper understanding of the human condition.

After all, we aim to graduate leaders with the moral character and stamina, as Nobel Laureate Arthur Lewis suggested, “to practice the same thing over and over again, while others are enjoying themselves; to push oneself from the easy part to the hard part; to listen to criticism and use it; to reject one’s own work and try again.”¹³ In effect, we aim to prepare cadets to identify their boundaries, to recognize their strengths and weaknesses, and to embrace the realization that our most effective solutions require a witting and continuous melding of scientific and technical disciplines and the humanities.

One of the most pleasant and rewarding aspects of the Superintendent’s position is meeting with a broad spectrum of people –faculty and staff, cadets, young men and women that want to join our ranks, and leaders in our Air Force, private industry and government. I was recently on Capitol Hill visiting members of Congress about a variety of issues. As you can imagine, ISIS was at the forefront of many discussions. One point that resonated was that “ISIS is an idea that we can’t bomb away.” Of course, this wasn’t an original or glaring insight, and it obscures the fact that no other military tool alone will be effective either; but for me, that concept reinforces the importance of education – particularly at the military

Academies, but really across all higher education – that prepares graduates to employ the full spectrum of human endeavor to solve our world’s problems in creative ways.

If we can rise to the challenge—encouraging the knowledge and attitude that empower leaders young and old to create and take creative chances—our graduates will not find freedom a burden, but rather will find purpose and meaning in exercising, defending, and extending the blessings of freedom. 🇺🇸

Notes

- 1) Andrew Delbanco, *College: What it Was, Is, and Should Be* (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2012), xiv.
- 2) Roger Cohen, “Why ISIS Trumps Freedom” *New York Times*, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/14/opinion/roger-cohen-why-isis-trumpsfreedom.html?_r=0, 13 August 2015, accessed 8 February 2016.
- 3) Richard Riley, quoted in Delbanco, *College*, p. 25.
- 4) Noah Robischon, ed., *Fast Company*, No. 201, Dec 2015/Jan 2016.
- 5) General Mark A. Welsh, III, “A Call to the Future: The New Air Force Strategic Framework,” <http://www.au.af.mil/au/afri/aspi/digital/pdf/articles/2015-May-Jun/SLP-Welsh.pdf>, accessed 8 February 2016.
- 6) The USAF Academy already has programs that target our highest performing students (e.g., the Scholars program). This is true across higher education, as many institutions have honors programs and learned societies with undergraduate members. How do we design experiences that target the ‘average’ student... and bring the very best out in them?
- 7) Delbanco, *College*, p. 162.
- 8) C.P. Snow, *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1961) p. 10.
- 9) C.P. Snow, quoted in Thomas Ricks, “C.P. Snow (I) on radar, chaff, and science in the years leading up to World War II,” <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/12/03/c-p-snow-i-on-radar-chaff-and-science-in-the-years-leading-up-to-world-war-ii/>, 3 December 2013, accessed 8 February 2016; C.P. Snow, “The Moral Un-Neutrality of Science,” speech given to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 27 December 1960, accessed at http://archive.monthlyreview.org/index.php/mr/article/view/MR-012-10-1961-02_2, 7 February 2016; Nancy Scola, “What WWII, Radar, and C.P. Snow Teach About the Intersection of Technology and Politics,” <http://techpresident.com/blog-entry/what-wwii-radar-and-cp-snow-teach-about-intersection-technology-and-politics>, 8 May 2009, accessed 8 February 2016.
- 10) Jonah Lehrer, “Steve Jobs: ‘Technology Alone is Not Enough,’” *The New Yorker*, (7 Oct 2011), <http://www.newyorker.com/news/newsdesk/steve-jobs-technology-alone-is-not-enough>, accessed 7 February 2016.
- 11) Fareed Zakaria, *In Defense of a Liberal Education*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2015), 83.
- 12) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Specimens of the Table Talk of the Late Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 2 Vols. (London: John Murray, 1835), vol. 2, p. 96.
- 13) Delbanco, *College*, p. 42.

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