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403rd Wing, Keesler AFB, Miss.

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Photo by Master Sgt. Jessica Kendziorek

The 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration hosted the 2018 Caribbean Hurricane Awareness Tour, April 23-28. The tour is designed to help communities in Mexico and the Caribbean prepare for the season and the coming storms. Visitors toured a WC-130J Super Hercules hurricane hunter aircraft and the NOAA Gulfstream IV.

# Preparedness key to weathering storms

*By Master Sgt. Jessica Kendziorek  
403rd Wing Public Affairs*

After a busy 2017 hurricane season and the 2018 hurricane season quickly approaching, service members from the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, also known as the “Hurricane Hunters” know the importance of being prepared for a hurricane.

The 53rd WRS and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s National Hurricane Center partnered together for another opportunity to promote hurricane preparedness through the Caribbean Hurricane Awareness Tour April 23-28. This tour, also known as the CHAT, is vital in raising hurricane awareness and preparedness across Latin America and the Caribbean.

“I just want everyone to get the message about the importance of being prepared,” said Lt. Col. Charles Dobson, 403rd Wing Operations Group deputy commander, who served as the 2018 CHAT mission commander. “Because being prepared can save lives and if they leave without understanding how important that message

is, then everything we do is for nothing.”

Locals from La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico; Manzanillo, Mexico (on Mexico’s Pacific Coast); Panama City, Panama; and Ceiba (Roosevelt Roads), Puerto Rico were able to talk to forecasters from the National Hurricane Center; Reserve Citizen Airmen from the 53rd WRS with the 403rd Wing, stationed at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi; and the flight crew of NOAA’s G-IV during the CHAT about being prepared and the importance of the data gathered during storm flights.

The crew from NOAA’s G-IV and members of the NHC also toured Montego Bay, Jamaica bringing the message of preparedness.

During hurricanes, the 53rd WRS flies the WC-130J aircraft directly into the eye of the storms to gather data, which is essential for the National Hurricane Center in forecasting a hurricane’s intensity and landfall. Data is sent in real time via satellite from the aircraft directly to the NHC for analysis and use by hurricane forecasters. To read more, [click here](http://www.403wg.afrc.af.mil).

[www.403wg.afrc.af.mil](http://www.403wg.afrc.af.mil)

# Maintenance officer earns AFRC honors

*Gehl recipient of  
2017 Lieutenant General  
Leo Marquez Award in  
Aircraft Maintenance  
Company Grade  
Manager category*

**By Tech. Sgt. Ryan Labadens**  
403rd Wing Public Affairs

Ensuring the aircraft assigned to the 403rd Wing's flying squadrons are safe and ready to fly is the job of the 403rd Maintenance Group. One particular maintenance officer was recognized recently for his superb managerial and leadership skills, as well as his exceptional maintenance knowledge. Second Lt. Anthony Gehl, 403rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron operations officer, received the 2017 Air Force Reserve Command Lieutenant General Leo Marquez Award in the category of Aircraft Maintenance Company Grade Manager.

Gehl's supervisor, 403rd AMXS commander Maj. Adam Zeithammel, said he felt Gehl was the perfect candidate to submit for this award.

"Tony is not your average second lieutenant," said Zeithammel. "He is a prior enlisted master sergeant crew chief that spent 14 years turning wrenches on our WC-130J aircraft. As the senior ART in the squadron, he now manages maintenance on these same aircraft and provides outstanding leadership for our personnel. He has done a tremendous job and I couldn't be more proud of the way he represents every member of the 403rd AMXS."

According to Air Force instructions, the Leo Marquez Award recognizes base-level military and civil service aircraft, munitions, and missile maintenance personnel



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Ryan Labadens

**Second Lt. Anthony Gehl, 403rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron operations officer, poses for a photo on the flight line at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, April 8. Gehl received the 2017 Air Force Reserve Command Lieutenant General Leo Marquez Award in the category of Aircraft Maintenance Company Grade Manager for his exceptional performance in maintenance operations and management.**

who perform exceptionally well in their duties involving hands-on maintenance or maintenance management.

Gehl served in the 403rd AMXS since his original enlistment in October 2002. He then joined the squadron full-time as an Air Reserve Technician in 2003, working as expeditor assigning personnel to maintain and repair the WC-130J Super Hercules aircraft flown by the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron "Hurricane Hunters" here.

In September 2016, Gehl received his commission as a second lieutenant, and then he became the 403rd AMXS ART operations officer in October 2017.

Throughout 2017, Gehl worked with members of both the 403rd AMXS and 803rd AMXS, which services the C-130J Super Hercules aircraft flown by the 815th Airlift Squadron "Flying Jennies", to gain

experience as an operations officer.

During that time, Gehl was commended for his leadership of the 403rd AMXS, ensuring aircraft was available and ready for 90 Hurricane Hunter missions, which helped the 53rd WRS meet 100% of the storm flight taskings assigned by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration during the 10th busiest hurricane season on record.

On the airlift squadron side, Gehl received accolades for his assistance with Operation Coronet Oak, a U.S. Southern Command operation that normally involves a variety of missions, such as resupplying U.S. embassies, medical evacuation missions and supporting for U.S. troops in the region. Gehl helped coordinate 22 personnel to fly nine sorties, moving a total of 246 passengers and delivering cargo.

While Gehl said he appreciates the recognition, he stressed that the mission performed by maintenance is a team effort and doesn't just rest on the efforts of any one person.

"I enjoy just being here, being a part of the team and of the people I work with. It's great the way everybody works together, all the way down to the new Airman who just comes in," said Gehl. "The family feel we have helps to keep everyone working together and keeps the mission going."

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**2nd. Lt. Anthony Gehl**  
403rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron operations officer



# 403RD HEADLINES

## HURRICANE AWARENESS TOUR 2018

In effort to build a Weather-Ready Nation ahead of this year's Atlantic hurricane season, NOAA's hurricane experts will tour five U.S. Gulf Coast cities from May 7-11 to raise awareness about the importance of preparing for the upcoming hurricane season.

At each stop, the public and media can view the NOAA Gulfstream IV aircraft, which flies ahead of a storm, and take a tour inside a U.S. Air Force Reserve WC-130J hurricane hunter aircraft, which flies directly through the eye of a storm.

Public tour schedule (2 to 5 p.m.):

- Monday: McAllen Miller International Airport, McAllen, Texas
- Tuesday: Jack Brooks Regional Airport, Beaumont, Texas
- Wednesday: Baton Rouge Metro Airport, Ryan Field, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
- Thursday: Montgomery Regional Airport, Montgomery, Alabama
- Friday: Lakeland Linder Regional Airport, Lakeland, Florida



## IG INSPECTIONS, PROCESS MANAGERS ENSURE MISSION READINESS



Just as athletes or sporting teams train and practice different scenarios to hone their skills to win, it's no different for the Air Force. The Air Force has regular inspections and exercises to enhance their war-fighting skills by identifying benchmark practices as well as areas for improvement.

Wing Inspector General Inspections Divisions and process managers are key

to ensuring wings are ready by identifying ways to be more efficient.

"Our mantra in the IG Inspections world is mission readiness is equal to inspection readiness; but, beyond that we want to continuously improve," said Lt. Col. Alan Flolo, Director of Inspections, 302nd Airlift Wing, Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, during a meeting with the 403rd Wing Inspector General inspections team and process manager April 23-24, 2018 at Peterson.

Like the 302nd AW, the 403rd Wing is a tenant Air Force Reserve unit on an active duty installation, but based at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi. The Keesler team met with Flolo and Maj. Pam Potter, 302nd AW process manager, to learn more about how each wing implements their programs. [Click here to read more.](#)

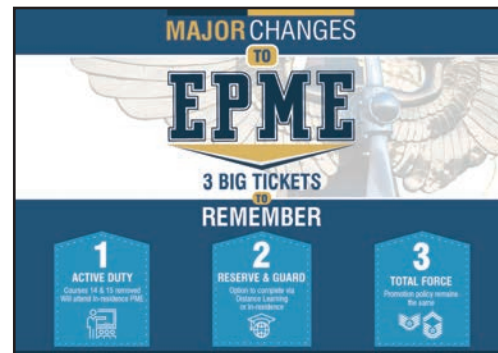
## SFS CHIEF CLOSING 28-YEAR CAREER

Standing straight and tall, Chief Master Sgt. Neal Bethune, the 403rd Security Forces manager, looks out across the firing range. The pride he takes wearing his uniform and his demeanor instill a sense of respect, but it doesn't intimidate.

Bethune said that what he loves the most about his job are the Airmen, who are near and dear to his heart, and motivating those Airmen. [Click here to read more.](#)



## Air Force News



### Air Force announces changes to Courses 14, 15

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- Effective immediately, Air Force officials have removed the requirement to complete Courses 14 and 15 for all Airmen serving in the active component. Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Airmen will have the option to complete their enlisted professional military education through distance learning or in-residence attendance.

Airmen will no longer be required to complete distance learning prior to in-residence attendance at the noncommissioned officer and senior NCO academy. Active component Airmen will complete EPME in-residence, while Guard and Reserve Airmen can complete through DL or in-residence.

All active component Airmen currently enrolled in Courses 14 or 15 may continue the course or disenroll. Guard and Reserve Airmen currently enrolled are encouraged to complete the course unless they are currently scheduled to attend in-residence. [Click here to read more.](#)

### AFRC Recruiting Service rolls out mobile marketing

MARCH AIR RESERVE BASE, Calif. -- Air Force Reserve Command Recruiting Service has a new weapon in its recruiting arsenal with the 2018 launch of interactive Mobile Marketing Platforms or MMPs, to be featured at air shows and other AFRC recruiting events.

The MMP is a marketing tool that will increase awareness and audience engagement, generate leads, and educate influencers about the Air Force Reserve. Recruiting teams are encouraged to use the various attractions of the MMPs to actively engage with potential candidates. The MMP is equipped with large high definition touchscreen that feature interactive quizzes and games, and a photo booth. [Click here to read more.](#)

## FY 2018 UTA DATES

May 4-6      June 2-3  
July 28-29      No August UTA  
Sept. 8-9

## UNIT COMPLIANCE INSPECTION IN JULY

The 403rd Wing's Unit Compliance Inspection Capstone is July 26-30 in conjunction with the July 28-29 Unit Training Assembly. About 50 inspectors and augmentees from the Air Force Reserve Command Inspector General Office will visit the base to evaluate the wing's mission effectiveness, efficiency and readiness. As part of this event, unit members are encouraged to take a survey. This information was emailed to all unit members. This is unit members' opportunity to tell AFRC IG what they think about 403rd Wing issues and what works well here and what doesn't. For more information, contact Maj. Lisa Breal, 403rd Wing director of inspections, 228-377-0767.

## WING NEWS ON BASE APP

The 403rd Wing now has its own section in the Keesler Air Force Base app. This section includes Air Force Reserve-specific news and resources, important dates and events, and even the latest edition of the 403rd Flyer accessible on any mobile device. Also, members would like to receive 403rd-specific push notifications can click on the "i" at the top of the app's home screen, click settings, click subscriptions and then check "Air Reserve info." To download the app search "Keesler" in the app store or visit <https://apps.appmachine.com/keeslerafb2>.



## 403RD FLYER

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## AES CC, COMMAND CHIEF RETIRE THIS UTA

Col. Thomas Hansen, 36th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron commander, retires during a ceremony Sunday at 1 p.m. at the Don. H. Wylie Auditorium, Hospital Auditorium. The colonel's retirement dinner is at the Keesler Air Force Base Indoor Marina, at 6 p.m. Saturday. Also retiring this weekend is Chief Master Sgt. Christopher Barnby, 403d Wing command chief. His retirement is at the Fuel Cell at 9 a.m. Sunday. His Roast is at the Bay Breeze Event Center Ballroom, second floor, at 6 p.m. Saturday.

## 22ND AF COMMANDER VISITS 403D WING

Maj. Gen. Craig La Fave, 22nd Air Force commander, is visiting the 403rd Wing this Unit Training Assembly. He will also accompany the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron on part of the Hurricane Awareness Tour May 7-11.

## WINGMAN DAY, WARRIOR WEEK UPDATE

Wingman Day is Friday from 7:30 a.m. to noon, and the theme is "Breaking Barriers by Capitalizing on Strengths" with an emphasis on the importance of utilizing personal strengths to overcome barriers in a person's life. Units will have a large group assembly and small group discussions with the goal of emphasizing peer-to-peer connections, strengthening relationships, team-building and communication. The 403rd Wing is also hosting Warrior Week May 7-11, which will focus on Air Force Specialty, combat skills, and ability to survive and operate training.

## GREAT IDEA? USE CC SUGGESTION BOX

The 403rd Wing commander, Col. Jennie R. Johnson, has implemented a direct line of communication for all personnel to share their ideas or concerns with wing leadership by placing suggestion boxes throughout the wing buildings.

"These boxes are intended to further ease the communication between all personnel and their leadership," said Col. Robert J. Stanton, 403rd Wing vice commander. "These boxes are a tool created to provide a safe forum for your ideas and concerns to be delivered to the commander in hopes of continuing to make the 403rd, the wing of choice."

The boxes can be found in the Wing headquarters building on the wall next to the inside staircase, the Mission Support Group building, 904, in the hallway near the bathrooms, the 53rd building by the main entrance doors, and the Roberts Consolidated Maintenance Facility building by the break room outside of the auditorium.

To read more, [click here](#).

## REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES

Everyone is a critical weapon in the war against terrorism and everyone is encouraged to be aware, be alert, and report any suspicious activities. It is important that all base patrons be vigilant in regards to physical security, cyber-security, and mail-borne security. All personnel have the obligation, if they see something suspicious, to say something. If individuals observe any suspicious activity, call the Keesler Base Defense Operations Center at 228-377-3040 or the Office of Special Investigation at 228-377-3420.

## UNSOCIAL OPSEC IN SOCIAL MEDIA AGE

One of the areas Reserve Citizen Airmen must be vigilant in when it comes to operational security is social media. In the social media environment, discussions are never private and can become public. Reservists must be aware of what is discussed around individuals without a need to know. [Click here to read more.](#)

## APPLY NOW FOR SWAN 38 SCHOLARSHIP

The Hurricane Hunters Association will award two \$1,600 Swan 38 Scholarship Memorial Scholarships this year for undergraduate or graduate studies. The deadline for submissions is June 1. This scholarship is open to all members of the 403d Wing and their dependents. The scholarship application was emailed to all wing members. For more information or to obtain the scholarship application form, contact Maj. Christopher Dyke, 403rd Operations Group, 228-377-5693.

