

The Buckeye Airlifter

**The Official Newsletter of the 179th Airlift Wing
December 2019**



credits

Content



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SILVER ARROW

Soldiers from the U.S. Army's 173rd Infantry Airborne Brigade prepare for an air drop during Saber Junction 2019 (SJ19) September 18, 2019, at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. SJ19, an exercise involving nearly 5,400 participants from 16 ally and partner nations and the U.S. Army's Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels Training Areas, is designed to assess the readiness of the U.S. Army's 173rd Infantry Airborne Brigade to execute land operations in a joint, combined environment and to promote interoperability with participating allies and partner nations.(U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Alexis Wade)



179th AW Increases Interoperability Through Silver Arrow 2019

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, GERMANY

Story by Airman 1st Class Alexis Wade

Members from the Ohio Air National Guard's 179th Airlift Wing, Mansfield, Ohio, participated in Silver Arrow September 13-28, 2019, at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Members were given the opportunity to complete numerous multinational missions resulting in increased capabilities, readiness, lethality and interoperability for all involved.

Interoperability is the ability for multiple military organizations to quickly come together for an operation and communicate effectively to complete the operation together. This is especially important in a global setting with multinational partners.

"Silver Arrow is designed for Guard and Reserve to participate as a force multiplier in the United States European Command (EUCOM) in regards to exercises, missions and regular training in the international community as well as building relationships with our partners," said Chief Master Sgt. Michael McDonald, Detachment Superintendent for Silver Arrow at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

While participating in Silver Arrow, the 179th joined an Aeromedical



Evacuation Mission with the 86th Air Medical Evacuation Squadron at Ramstein Air Base.

This mission simulated patient transportation to and from the aircraft and in-flight patient care while traveling from Ramstein Air Base to Naval Station Rota, Spain.

"Exercises like these are extremely beneficial for both the 164th and 86th by not only giving each other the opportunity to train on our skills, but to also increase interoperability, globally through this mission." Said Col. Darren Hamilton, 164th Operations Group Commander, assigned to the 179th Airlift Wing.

Members from the 179th flew back to Spain shortly after their first mission there, however this trip had a different goal behind it.

Members traveled to Lleida, Spain, to participate as a static display in Festa al Cel, Spain's longest running air show. While there, the aircrew was welcomed by local leaders and government authorities and stayed busy with thousands of individuals in awe of the C-130's capabilities and size, touring the aircraft and conversing with the aircrew over the course of the two-day air show.

Another air show members participated in while supporting Silver Arrow was in Bosnia.

Members traveled to Bosnia to conduct ground training with the Bosnians, as well as participate in an air show that was opened up to the community with hundreds of school children invited to tour the C-130, forming vital relationships internationally with our counterparts.

While at Ramstein, the 179th had the opportunity to participate in Saber Junction 19 (SJ19), which provided vital opportunities for total forces interoperability training to take place between approximately 5,000 individuals from partner and allied nations' militaries, U.S. Active

components, U.S. Reserves, and National Guard units.

SJ19 is a 7th Army Training Command (7ATC) conducted, U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR) directed exercise designed to assess the readiness of the Army 173rd Airborne Brigade to conduct unified land operations alongside NATO allies and partners.

The 179th provided airlift support with personnel drops, heavy equipment drops and air attack operations.

"This was a great learning exercise for our personnel, as well as a great opportunity to form international relationships and increase our interoperability with all involved through this exercise," said Lt. Col. Pete Tesner, 179th Airlift Wing's Director of Operations for Silver Arrow.

Throughout the course of the two weeks, 179th AW members increased their readiness, capabilities, international relationships and interoperability through the numerous missions they were involved in thanks to Silver Arrow.

The missions we're flying here are directly tied to our Air Force readiness and posture of being able to take the mission forward, and interacting with our active duty counterparts here at Ramstein as well as our joint partners across EUCOM," said Tesner. "We're inter-flying with local Air Forces here, supporting missions out of Aviano, Italy. This truly is a joint endeavor which is the core of the C-130 mission, inter-theater tactical airlift. We're hitting all the high points, checking all the boxing, it is great training for all involved." Just three days after becoming the Command Chief Master Sergeant of the Air National Guard, CMSgt James W. Hotaling made an appearance at the 179th Airlift Wing. Hotaling serves as the senior advisor to Lt. Gen. Sid Clarke, director of the Air National Guard, on matters concerning the readiness, morale, welfare, proper use and progress of more than 90,000 enlisted Airmen.





179 AW Recognizes National Cyber Security Awareness Month

MANSFIELD LAHM AIRPORT

Story by Airman 1st Class Alexis Wade

As cyberspace continues to progress and grow, cyber-crimes, intrusions and scams continue to increase as well. This requires individuals to be more vigilant and on guard to increase our cyber awareness to secure the networks, in hopes to avoid the cyber-crimes that are detrimental to our cyber security. For Senior Master Sgt. Nick Wirwille, Supervisor of the Cyber Systems Operations shop at the 179th Airlift Wing Communications Squadron, Mansfield, Ohio, much of the work he does entails protecting against cyber threats and raising cyber awareness.

It's the job of Cyber Systems Operations specialists to design, install and support our systems to ensure they operate properly and remain secure from outside intrusion.

Wirwille has worked in the communications squadron for the past 18 years, and directly works to ensure the base operates at the highest level of cyber security possible. Wirwille maintains all servers on base, making sure they

are secure and up to date with security patches. These patches are what block security holes that hackers exploit and take over with, said Wirwille.

The Air Force relies heavily on advanced computer and software systems, so it is paramount to keep those systems safe.

"Cyber security is the most important thing right now," said Wirwille. "We hear hit all the time in the news, media, here on base, people getting their identities stolen, if you aren't following proper cyber security they can wreck your life. It is the most important thing in the world right now to be aware of."

Wirwille said that as a member of the military, it is our duty to be proactive about these threats. With October being national Cyber Security Awareness Month, Wirwille offers a few tips regarding cyber security.

"Phishing emails and robot calls are very big issues right now," said Wirwille. "Don't use any links provided in emails that are sent out, and if anything at all seems wrong don't do it. The best thing to do is to contact the business directly and inquire about what you were sent."

Cyber Security



Story by Staff Sgt. Megan Shepherd

In 2018, around six trillion dollars in cybercrime damage was reported. Every individual has an important role in ensuring online safety and protection. "Cyber security is extremely important," said Chief Master Sgt. David Krutsch, the Chief Enlisted Manager of the 179th Communications Flight at the 179th Airlift Wing, Mansfield, Ohio. "People don't realize we're all part of the same Air Force network, so if we have a machine in some back office that isn't patched and correctly maintained, it actually opens a vulnerability to the entire Air Force network."

The 179th Communications Flight spends a great deal of time making sure the systems are secured and that they do their part so that bad actors can't get into the Air Force network through the 179th Airlift Wing or any government system.

Krutsch talked about the big steps they've taken lately to update systems by patching, buying new equipment and setting it up, replacing everything from printers, keyboards and computers, to large enterprise level equipment in the frame rooms.

"We scan the network and ensure that we detect any vulnerabilities and correct them immediately," said Krutsch.

Additionally, they try to provide resiliency and alternate paths to make sure they can at least do basic operations in case something does go down.

"We're driving ourselves towards trying to get to a place where we are more of a player in domestic operations," said Krutsch, "so that in the event that something really does happen nationally or regionally, we have the ability to talk to state, local, and national leaders via alternate methods."

It is also their job to make sure things work and are secure so people can accomplish their mission, said Krutsch. From logistics and services, to operations and maintenance, and everyone in between, COMM is responsible for providing them interconnectivity with all their web based, locally based and server-based systems, so they can do their day to day jobs.

"Ultimately our job is to defend the country," said Krutsch. "We're equal partners with the United States Air Force and we need to be able to do that." Krutsch was in aircraft maintenance for almost 20 years. He said when he came to COMM he realized how challenging it was, but also rewarding.

"COMM is very complex," said Krutsch. "There's multiple avenues you could go down, but they all kind of come together. We work really hard to work as a team and collaborate. It's a great unit to work for. The people are just phenomenal, they're very smart, dedicated, and willing to share."

When it comes to base communications, they support everything from the telephone systems to the network, access to the internet, the giant voice, paging, and more. Some of those are interconnected, some are very separate. Trying to get those older technologies and newer technologies to work together in harmony can be very challenging.

"We've sent people to extensive training and we've worked really hard to try to integrate everything in a seamless, painless, method for the customer," said Krutsch.

With October being National Cyber Security Awareness Month, it is important that everyone has the resources they need to stay safer and more secure online.

According to Krutsch, some basic cyber security tips are: set up a user account that doesn't have administrative privileges on new devices, use complex passwords, keep systems patched and connected so updates can be received on a real time basis, run a good virus scan protection, and just keep on top of things.

"As most users know, we change passwords quite a bit and use long, complex passwords," said Krutsch. "Those are all part of ensuring that the system is secure."

Email can also be an area of vulnerability.

"If you get an email from someone you don't know, definitely don't open the attachment," said Krutsch. "Even if it's from somebody you know and it seems suspicious or odd, don't open those as well."

National Cyber Security Awareness Month emphasizes personal accountability and stresses the importance of taking proactive steps to enhance cybersecurity at home and in the workplace.

"It's a team effort," said Krutsch. "We have a great group of folks who spend a lot of time daily updating systems, patching them to the latest software, and doing their utmost to make sure that we're all secure and in turn the Air Force network."



C-130H2 Upgraded Models

Arrival

Story by TSgt Joe Harwood

The 179th Airlift Wing, Mansfield, Ohio, is welcoming three C-130H2 models to their current C-130H fleet, the first two arrived on July 19 and the third on Aug. 8, 2019. The third aircraft arrived just one day following an announcement from Air Mobility Command regarding a C-130 Rainbow Fitting Cracking issue. This announcement ordered the temporary removal of 123 of 450 Total Force C-130 Hercules from service on Aug. 7, 2019, after atypical cracks were discovered on the lower center wing joint, or "rainbow fitting", during programmed depot maintenance. This affected 5 of 11 of the 179th Airlift Wing's C-130 Aircraft and after inspection, no cracks were discovered.

I want to thank all members across the wing for their

over the top effort this week in taking care of the immediate grounding inspection," said Col. Todd K. Thomas, 179th Airlift Wing Commander. "You continue to put the safety of our Airmen at the highest priority, and still minimized our C-130 fleet downtime."

These planes, which recently received modifications at Dyess AFB, Texas, and are in the process of being altered for Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast Out (ADS-B Out) modification, which should be completed in the coming months. These modifications allow these planes to fly in Class B and above airspace, allowing them to safely share congested airspace with commercial aircraft. The aircraft also arrived equipped with Electronic Propeller Control Systems, which is a huge advance for the 179th AW maintenance team. The EPCS upgrades will replace the hydro mechanical propeller control system, which most of the planes currently assigned to the unit still use.

Col. Ken Kmetz, 179th Maintenance Group Commander and incoming Vice Commander of the 179th Airlift Wing, shared his excitement about these aircraft and what it means to the unit.

"This is a big deal for Mansfield and our future capability as

we transition yet again to H2s," said Kmetz. "We will have had 38 aircraft assigned to us in the last ten years once we receive our last H2 and divest our last H1 – we had 17 aircraft assigned to us over the previous 35 years."

The unit is a highly experienced C-130 organization, first flying the C-130B model in 1976 then having flown a variety of C-130H models including both H1 and H2 in the past. H2 models left in 2010 while the unit transitioned to C-27J Spartan and H1 models returned after that program ended in 2013.

The 179th Maintenance Group has since serviced a multitude of H1's and H2's and continued to maintain successful operations with some of the oldest aircraft in the entire Air Force inventory. However, all of these aircraft must be modernized in order to meet the needs of tomorrow's Air Force as well as the Federal Aviation Administration's ADS-B Out requirements.

"We project these aircraft are here to stay for years to come," said Col. Kmetz. "These aircraft will be much more capable and enduring while giving our operators much better

combat situational awareness."

The EPCS upgrades are just some of the modifications that will be made to the C-130s in the upcoming years. Other enhancements include new modular blade propeller technology, collision avoidance technology, and reinforcing the aircrafts' wing boxes.

Incorporating modular blade technology (NP2000) and the T-56 Series 3.5 engine upgrades will provide increased performance and reliability. The NP 2000 eight-bladed propeller decreases propeller maintenance time, increases performance and fuel efficiency while being transported by taking up less pallet space. The NP 2000 provides improved thrust and readiness, while reducing operations and support costs. Recent testing of the NP 2000 has demonstrated at least a 20% increase in takeoff performance.

With these continued enhancements and modifications, the 179th AW hopes to keep their C-130's modernized, relevant and flying for many years into the future.



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What Does Mansfield Have to Offer NASA?

MANSFIELD LAHM AIRPORT, Ohio

Story by Tech. Sgt. Joseph Harwood

An unusually large crowd was gathered as the C-130H Hercules approached Mansfield-Lahm Airport, Ohio, home of the Ohio Air National Guard's 179th Airlift Wing. This flight was a supporting role to NASA, and the C-130 cargo bay was hauling items for NASA, but not what the crowd was waiting to see. Tailing moments behind this C-130, was the Super Guppy (Ng41NA). Anticipation was high as NASA's Super Guppy landed at Mansfield-Lahm Airport, Ohio, Nov. 24, with precious cargo onboard. The aircraft is a spectacle in itself, some describe it as whale-like and others say it resembles an alien ship from a science fiction movie. All agree it's something highly interesting to see in the air. Hundreds of people lined the fences to see the aviation marvel landing. The Super Guppy's stardom takes a backseat to its cargo on this trip, as it transports the Orion space capsule. The Orion space capsule is considered a major step forward in human space travel, any progress the program makes draws international attention.

The Orion space capsule is currently in route to NASA's Plum Brook Station in Sandusky, Ohio, where it will undergo critical testing for several months. The Super Guppy's successful landing in Mansfield-



Lahm may be just a stepping stone on its journey, but an important one. The logistics of moving cargo of this size are thought out well in advance. So why would NASA choose Mansfield?

Raymond G. Heineman, NASA's Chief of Aircraft Operations Division, explained why Mansfield was chosen and how it was critical to mission success.

"There's no runway up there [Plum Brook Station] so we looked around at some of those fields and even though some of them may have been adequate for the guppy, the road system didn't support moving the vehicle over road, so that's why Mansfield was chosen, not only the airport facilities but the roads that connect to Plum Brook." It's not the closest airport to Plum Brook, but Mansfield-Lahm has a 9000 foot x150 foot runway – just what the whale of an aircraft needs, along with a team of Ohio Air National Guard members willing and ready to assist in the unloading and safe storage of this historical cargo. Furthermore, Mansfield-Lahm Airport is in a location with routes out of it that could be slightly modified to accommodate the oversized cargo on the way to NASA's Plum Brook Station.

In the years of advanced planning for this, any 40 foot utility poles along the way were replaced with 50 foot poles to allow this journey to take place. The area is well known for its trucking routes, mostly rural and low in traffic otherwise, passing Norwalk, Ohio, a community so well known for its trucking industry that its high school mascot is a trucker. This is how and where you want to move cargo like this.

"It was integral to the success of the operation," said Heineman, "Without the 179th support we wouldn't have been able to complete the mission honestly, the vehicle that we were carrying in the guppy maxed out the guppy's performance. So there was no way we could carry anything else, so we needed some sort of airborne support, and the 179th was gracious enough and willing to help us so without them we wouldn't have been able to do it at all."

The journey started with a flight originating out of the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. After landing in Ohio, the Orion capsule was unloaded with assistance of airmen using a 60k loader.

The Orion capsule was then transferred by crane to a 135 foot semi-truck which will spend the night at the 179th Airlift Wing's C-130H Hercules hangar in preparation for what will be a slow and carefully moving six-hour trip up to Sandusky. The trip would take close to an hour by car moving at the speed limit.

The last leg of this journey will take place today, Tuesday, November 26, 2019.

"Team Mansfield and our C-130H aircraft provided direct support to all aspects of NASA's Super Guppy flight operations to Mansfield," said Col. Todd Thomas, 179th Airlift Wing commander, "The Airmen of the Maintenance and Mission Support Groups guaranteed a successful mission for the Orion's ultimate journey to the moon."

The 179th has a history of supporting NASA missions. Lunar Module Pilot Fred Haise, of the famed Apollo 13 mission, was a former member of the 179th Tactical Fighter Group. Almost fifty years later, the 179th is still providing support to lunar missions.

You don't have to be as smart everyone at NASA to see why Mansfield is a good choice. The 179th Airlift Wing has a really good record with cargo transportation and Mansfield Lahm Airport is literally built for this. Should NASA continue to transport large cargo projects to Plum Brook Station, the path has been blazed through Mansfield and the Airmen of the 179th Airlift Wing will always remain ready to assist the other heavy airlifter known as the Super Guppy.

"We would work with the 179th again, without question," Heineman added, "In fact, the vehicle we dropped off, the Orion capsule, will be done with its testing in April and we're hoping the 179th can support us again in moving it back to the Kennedy Space Center."







An Honor Not Reserved for November

179th Airlift Wing
Story by TSgt Joe Harwood

In the month of November, America recognizes the sacrifices made by its Veterans. For Master Sgt. Michael Swick, 179th Airlift Wing Base Honor Guard program manager and Noncommissioned Officer In Charge, it's never just the 11th day of that month; it's a way of life, year round. Integrity, service and excellence are the core values of the United States Air Force, and the embodiment of those values is seen every day in those who choose to serve the Base Honor Guard.

On any given day, members of the Base Honor Guard are tasked to travel within Wright-Patterson Air Force Base's 210,000 square-mile area of responsibility that covers five states spanning Ohio, parts of Michigan, Kentucky,

Indiana, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania, performing military funeral honors for active-duty Airmen, veterans and retirees or the Air Force, Army Air Corps, and Army Air Forces. In 2019, Swick said that ceremonial guardsmen of the 179th Airlift Wing Base Honor Guard have supported 153 funeral services. In addition to funeral services, the base honor guard contributed to 50 color guard events, providing colors details for military ceremonies, marching in parades and appearing at professional sporting events and federal holiday celebrations throughout the year.

"The Base Honor Guard mission is to honor, with dignity," said Swick, "We go into our communities as ambassadors for our base and the United States Air Force, realizing that these civilians may witness us as their first and potentially last encounter with our service so it's imperative that we leave them with a great impression. We must be squared away as far as uniform, military standards and bearing."

Swick stressed that they are always in need of new Base Honor Guard members, "We have a lot of ground to cover, and can't always plan far in advance for our line of work. We need ceremonial minutemen, so to speak, ready to drop everything at a moment's notice and suit up to render honors

at a military funeral."

Just in the month leading up to Veterans Day, Swick said his team has rendered honors at another 25 military funerals.

The efforts to ensure our veterans are honored come from all ranks. Even the current State Command Chief Master Sergeant, Tom Jones, has completed 99 funerals and will soon participate in the 100th of his career.

It's a lot to ask of Airmen who initially committed to one weekend a month and two weeks per year with the Air National Guard. Swick isn't asking anything of anyone he wouldn't do himself, personally performing over two thousand funerals in his time as a Base Honor Guard member, starting in 2006.

To render military funeral honors with the Base Honor Guard, recruits must first complete a weeklong training session. The crash course covers military ceremonies, standing manuals, command voices, flag folding, basic rifle drill and uniform inspections, ensuring each ceremonial guardsman looks his or her best.

Practice doesn't stop there, though. When the Airmen are not performing services, they are constantly perfecting their drills. It takes continual practice to stay sharp, and the skills quickly fade without use.

Each type of ceremony has different requirements. While the most basic flag folding requires only two Airmen, some ceremonies can require up to 20 Airmen, grouped in several moving parts. Every routine is repeated until the Airmen learn to move in unison, to verbal commands and cadence. All of

the flight members know they are serving for something greater than themselves. "Without teamwork, we are not one cohesive unit. Whether it's carrying a casket, presenting colors or folding a flag, we all need to be on the same page at all times," Swick added, "because we believe that it matters, that what we're doing is representative of the great sacrifices these members we're honoring have made."

With these continued enhancements and modifications, the 179th AW hopes to keep their C-130's modernized, relevant and flying for many years into the future.



Interested in becoming a Base Honor Guard member?

The Base Honor Guard currently has openings.

Members of the Base Honor Guard perform military funerals and color guard events in the local area and across the State of Ohio.

Base Honor Guard members are provided:

- Specialized training by WPAFB Honor Guard
- All required Ceremonial uniforms
- Intrinsic rewards, esprit de corps, and camaraderie
- Networking opportunities across the base and state

This duty does require commitment of time outside normal RSD / Annual Training requirements, specialized training, and travel.

Interviews are being conducted soon!

If you are interested in becoming part of the most prestigious and rewarding additional duty in the Air National Guard, please schedule an interview through MSgt Michael Swick at 419-520-6551 / michael.c.swick2.mil@mail.mil.



Contact Emily Bachman at emily.a.bachman.civ@mail.mil with any questions

Congratulations

To all those deserving Airmen that have been recently promoted, appointed or retired

TO BE CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT

ALIBERTI, PHILIP NMI
BLAKLEY, JOSHUA

TO BE SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT

TO BE MASTER SERGEANT

SMITH, BRADLEY L
BROWN, JORDAN C
MILLER, LESLIE A
FOLK, DENNIS V.
CASTO, MICHAEL D.

TO BE TECHNICAL SERGEANT

MAGERS, SPENCER, A
FIX, KYLE, T
NOBLET, DOUGLAS, P
ALMASY, JAN, R
HERNANDEZ, ARSENIO H.
MEGINNESS, DAVID L
HARDING, NATHAN R
MCCARTNEY, COLLIN J

TO BE STAFF SERGEANT

DISCENZO, DOUGLAS, Q
DAY, KRISTEN, P
DIAZ, CHRISTOPHER, R
GARCIA, CODY, J
JACKMAN, DANIEL, S
STUFF, SHELBY, L
TILLMAN, LISA, M
MERGEN, CORY, L
CONWAY, SEAN
SNEERINGER, ABIGAIL E
BAUMANN, BRETT A
HARING, DARBEE J

NEW APPOINTMENTS:

COL TROY CRAMER to MSG Commander
COL NICK FAGO to MXG Commander
CHIEF DAVE KRUTSCH to MSG Superintendent
CHIEF TODD HUNT to 179th Airlift Wing Command Chief
MASTER SGT DANNY BAUER to MSG 1st Sgt.
CAPT ANDREW PEPIN to MDG Medial Administrative Officer
LT. COL BRANDY PIACENTINO to MDG Deputy Commander
COL DR. PETER MICHAELSON to Flight Surgeon
TSGT EMMA KIMBLE to MSG CSS Manager
Maj Corey Thobe to 179th CE Commander and Base Civil Engineer
Capt Amy Baab to 179th LRS Commander
SMSgt Alicia Moore to FSS Superintendent

TO BE SENIOR AIRMAN

FANO, ALEXANDER, J
WISEMAN, LINDSEY, M
DENAS, CONSTANTINE, J
BARBER, MICHAEL, D
TRAXLER, JAKE, M
HAJBA, CODY M
PAULY, VANESSA
BURTON, COOPER D
FILIBECK, CAMERON R
COY, JORDAN T
GONGWER, EVAN

TO BE AIRMAN FIRST CLASS

SMITH, LUKE, A
YOUNG, DAVID M
STANIFORD, SAMANTHA S

TO BE AIRMAN

MARLOWE, CHARLES, H
BOSTON, AYANA, A

ANDERSON, NATHANN, C
KAILHOLZ, STEVEN G

RETIREMENTS

CMSgt Joseph O'Neil
MSgt Brenden Leightey
Lt Col Jeffrey Capretto
MSgt Cameron Wagoner
SSgt Joseph Thomas
Major Ryan McMaster
MSgt Vega, Jose
MSgt McNary, Amy
MSgt Meyer, Michael
Major Noblet, Douglas
LtCol Tesner, Pete
Major Cyders, Erick

I am an American Airman.

I am a warrior.

I have answered my nations call.

I am an American Airman.

My mission is to fly, fight, and win.

I am faithful to a proud heritage,

A tradition of honor, And a legacy of valor.

I am an American Airman, Guardian of freedom and justice,

My nations sword and shield,

Its sentry and avenger.

I defend my country with my life.

I am an American Airman:

Wingman, Leader, Warrior.

I will never leave an airman behind,

I will never falter, And I will not fail

There are different positions of leadership in the Air Force. With dedication to service, the enlisted makes his or her way up the chain and through the ranks. Leadership skills aren't something that everyone is born with; it's something an Airman has to commit to learn. Learning leadership skills in the United States Air Force ensures that a deserving airman gets promoted. Every airman is obligated to share, train and mentor

other members to ensure success for all.

Most of us spend the first few promotions just learning how to be part of the team; promotion to the rank of Staff Sergeant moves a successful team member into the new role of "front line supervisor". By this time, we have the technical knowhow to complete the job while supporting subordinates in regards to training and physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Not every airman is technically inclined to the AFSC that they hold. Some of us only do our jobs two days a month. Technical skills are something that can be learned, behaviors changed and with that comes the knowledge needed to lead.

Before promotion to Staff Sergeant, an airman must first complete Airman Leadership School (ALS). ALS teaches a new supervisor how to write evaluations, promote discipline, and sharpens interpersonal skills. The interpersonal skill is learning how to read others' emotions and work well with the group. ALS teaches every airman how to sharpen those skills and enhance interpersonal communication. The ability to work with peers, subordinates, and management is an asset to any SSgt.

About 7 years into an Air Force career, airmen are promoted to the rank of Technical Sergeant (TSgt). A TSgt needs to not only be technically proficient, but needs to start acting in a middle management role. Again, not something that everyone is accustomed to doing but by now you have the confidence and tools to learn these skills. It's all about balance and conceptual skills begin to emerge. TSgt begins to create a plan and carry it through; start outside-the-box thinking and work with ideas and concepts. Next in your career comes the Non-Commissioned Officer Academy (NCOA). The NCO Academy is designed teach airmen the skills and knowledge to make sound decisions in progressively more demanding leadership positions. It's meant to develop tomorrow's senior leadership through professional education and create strategic thinkers and credible leaders. This academy is the gateway to the Top 3 enlisted ranks.

Senior Noncommissioned Officer has become an effective leader and is still learning leadership skills. By this stage, SNCO corp are actually leading people in accomplishing the mission. As a MSgt, an airman begins to take the knowledge and skills learned as a technical expert and supervisor to another level. MSgt's are responsible for leading subordinates and molding a team that can accomplish the mission. The responsibility level has increased tremendously, as they have already earned the trust of their peers. MSgt's enroll in the Air Force Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy (AFSNCOA). The AFSNCOA provides training in advanced leadership and management techniques.

After completing the AFSNCOA, an airman is ready for promotion to Senior Master Sergeant. An airmen's experience is now turned to the operational level of leadership. A SMSgt looks at the bigger picture and ensures that their team is able to merge with other teams to ensure mission accomplishment. Very soon, it will be imperative for a MSgt to have their CCAF degree to attain this rank.

CMSgt is the highest rank in the Air Force enlisted structure. An airman in this position is a key leader and should display the highest qualities of leadership. A CMSgt must be a mentor and be fully engaged with all airmen in their organization. An airman never quits learning how to lead, and a CMSgt should learn something new every day in order to become more effective. A CMSgt should be making sure that the airmen that they are in charge of have the tools and knowledge necessary to get the most out of their careers in the Air National Guard.

The Air Force teaches each airman the tools needed to learn to be an effective leader in any situation. Make it a goal to learn the knowledge, human, and conceptual skills needed to be effective as an Air Force enlisted leader.

