

## OSS tests new protective mask suited for C-17 aircrew

By Stacy Vaughn  
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio – Airmen from the 445th Operations Support Squadron's aircrew flight equipment (AFE) shop and 89th Airlift Squadron participated in a field testing and training event for the M69 Joint Service Aircrew Mask for Strategic Aircraft (JSAM SA) assembly, the new aircrew flying chem gear June 5-9.

The M69 JSAM SA assembly will replace the Mask Breath Unit-19P Aircrew Eye and Respiratory Protection (AERP) equipment. It is currently approved for all fixed-wing, non-ejection seat, non-pressure breathing large frame aircraft, such as the C-17 Globemaster III.

When the new masks arrived, they were unpacked with each one carefully inspected for defects or damage before being added to the inventory list.

Members with Headquarters Aircrew Flight Equipment and Air Force Life Cycle Management CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear) Defense Systems from Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland participated with the 445th AFE for the equipment inspection and provided the training.

The deputy program executive officer for the AFLC-MC Agile Combat Support Directorate, Col. Carlos Qui-

nones, was on hand to see how the inspection process works and understand the new assembly in comparison to the current MBU-19P AERP, as the six divisions under his directorate provide materiel solutions, acquisition life cycle management and support equipment, among many other functions, to meet Air Force operational needs.

Master Sgt. Diego Cancino, 445th Operations Support Squadron AFE flight chief, gave high remarks about the new equipment compared to the current equipment being used.

"The new mask system is a breath of fresh air for both AFE as the equipment maintainers and aircrew as the end user," Cancino said. "Our old legacy system, while proven effective, was beginning to show some age, and we felt that we were overdue an update."

Bryan McCoy, a U.S. Air Force Aircrew CBRN fielding coordinator from Aberdeen provided training to 445th AFE Airmen and gave a presentation and demonstration to 89th AS aircrew members (pilot and loadmaster). The purpose was to share information and answer questions that aircrew members might have about M69 JSAM-SA.

The AFE shop will be individually fitting each aircrew member with the M69 mask and providing training on use and wear.

"We are all really excited to implement this new mask to the field here," Cancino said. "The support and guidance we have received from our higher headquarters leadership on implementation and fielding has also been some of the best I have ever experienced in my career."



Photos by Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly

**Master Sgt. Diego Cancino, 445th Operations Support Squadron aircrew flight equipment flight chief, inspects a new M69 mask for any tears, defects or other damage, June 7, 2023.**



**Tech. Sgt. Brett Schindler, 445th Operations Support Squadron aircrew flight equipment lead trainer, demonstrates how to don the new M69 Joint Service Aircrew Mask Strategic Aircraft (JSAM SA) with guidance from Bryan McCoy, a U.S. Air Force Aircrew Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (ACBRN) fielding coordinator, during a briefing and demonstration given to 89th Airlift Squadron aircrew members, June 7, 2023.**

# Reserve Airman connects with aircraft enthusiast over shared love of aviation

By Amanda Dick  
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

The aircraft rattles as it zooms down the runway gaining speed, and passengers feel like they're on a roller coaster as it takes off.

Once in the air, the engines whir as pilots fly the aircraft to its destination, sometimes flying through turbulence, sometimes through skies so clear one can see the ground or water below.

Imagine being deaf and blind in an environment of sight and sound, and you'll understand the unique relationship Ryan Vlazny has with aircraft, specifically the McDonnell Douglas DC-9.

"I am a very rare breed of aviation enthusiasts because I am deaf and visually impaired," Ryan said in a story he wrote that was provided by his father, David Vlazny.

Ryan's introduction to DC-9s happened in 1992 on a flight to Cincinnati when he was 5. He wrote his "love affair" with the air frame started on a flight to Detroit in 1997. The difference, he received a cochlear implant a couple years before at 8-years-old that allowed him to be able to hear on his 1997 flight. He explained he was also diagnosed at 8 with Usher's syndrome that causes deafness, gradual vision loss and vestibular dysfunction (issues with the body's balance system), eventually losing his vision in 2018.

"Despite my disability, it allows me to have a unique perspective and experience of flying on planes and observing the flying characteristics of the aircraft in terms of sound, vibrations, and the way the aircraft flies," Ryan wrote.

Part of the love for aviation includes pilots, and that is what led Ryan and David to Lt. Col. Michael Bennett, a Delta pilot and the 445th Mission Support Group deputy commander.

"Ryan reveres pilots," David said. "He likes to meet pilots when we are at the gate to let them know that we are on their plane just for a fun ride. ... They are always amazed that we are flying for fun."

So, David introduced Bennett to Ryan, who is now in his 30s.

"I had an instant connection to Ryan's dad because I know what it's like to want what's best for your child," Bennett said. "It was encouraging to see a father work



Courtesy Photo

**Michael Bennett, center, a Delta pilot and the 445th Mission Support Group deputy commander, helps Ryan Vlazny, right, an aviation enthusiast, feel the now retired DC-9 aircraft in Atlanta recently.**

so hard to make his son happy, and it reminded me that we all have these connections to each other that unite us through experience. Parenting a child with disabilities is tough, no matter the circumstance.

"We as parents want what is best for them. When you meet Ryan, he doesn't want to talk about the challenges he faces; he wants to talk about what he loves," Bennett continued. "His father puts in a lot of effort to be there and experience those things with him."

Bennett's military service spans 27 years. He enlisted in the Army National Guard in 1996 and commissioned

in 2000. He cross commissioned to the Air Force Reserve in 2002 where he was assigned to the 445th and flew C-141 Starlifter, C-5A Galaxy and C-17 Globemaster III aircraft. Bennett served in other units from 2012 until his return to the 445th in 2020, and he has been a Delta pilot since 2016.

After the first encounter with Ryan, Bennett started working with Delta to set up a simulator experience and tour of a DC-9 in Atlanta, Delta's headquarters. The air frame had been retired around 2014 and almost exclusively flown by Delta.

"This ended up being a profoundly unique encounter," Bennett explained. "Ryan was so passionate about flight and experiencing everything he could about the aircraft. It was a different way of understanding the process, and it really made me reflect on how hard it is to appreciate genuine experiences when they become routine. Everything we do as pilots we do on a regular basis, but Ryan has an appreciation for different things than we do because he experiences everything

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# Retirement plan matching available for activated Reservists

By Maj. Kevin Normile  
445th Airlift Wing Deputy Staff Judge Advocate

Did you know many employers, not just the federal government, will retroactively give you the opportunity to receive a match to your elective deferral account when you resume working for a civilian employer after you return from Reserve duty?

This normally would take the form of "matching" dollar amounts for your retirement account, such as a 401k, 403b, 457, or the Thrift Savings Plan for Department of Defense civilians.

The Uniformed Servicemembers Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, or "USERRA," and a matching statute governing the TSP provide these rights.

For reservists employed in the civilian sector, most employers are required under law to give you the opportunity to make contributions to your account when you return, and then they must provide you the match you would have earned.

For those employed as federal civil servants, you are entitled to have your TSP matching percentage applied upon return to your federal civilian position. However, TSP has a special rule where your military contributions to your TSP account can satisfy the requirement for a TSP match.

To make the math simple, here is an example with TSP: A civil servant who makes \$100,000 per year

activates as a reservist for a year. The civil servant would normally have to contribute 5% of their pay to get the full TSP match of 5% (1% automatic, 3% dollar-for dollar contribution match, and 1% at a \$.50 per dollar contribution match for two dollars).

This means that the civilian employee would have to contribute \$5,000 dollars (5% of their pay) to get the full TSP match of \$5,000 total. However, if they contributed \$5,000 to their Reserve military TSP account for the year, they could report those contributions to the TSP for them to put the full match right into the member's civilian TSP account.

This special rule makes it much easier for reservists to plan for their financial future and get their entire TSP match.

The TSP has created a wonderful fact sheet on this issue. It can be found at: <https://www.tsp.gov/publications/tspfs08.pdf>

If you have any questions about your rights under USERRA, or for assistance with any other legal assistance matters, please feel free to visit your legal team during walk-in legal assistance hours (1 to 3 p.m. Saturday and 9 to 11 a.m. Sunday) during Scarlet unit training assemblies.



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differently."

David couldn't have been more elated.

"I was thrilled," he said. "When I told Ryan I received an email from Captain Bennett after our Chicago trip, he was amazed and happy. Our excitement started building over the weeks when the Atlanta trip was being organized. It was spectacular for me to see Ryan so happy. It was so well organized. Everyone was so sensitive and patient. I was witnessing a dream come true."

Ryan wrote he tried to fly as many DC-9s as he could before they were retired. He now continues the tradition on the current evolution of the frame, the Boeing 717 aircraft.

One such trip to California yielded more than a 717 flight, but also an interaction with the Air Force in the form of an open house and air show at Travis Air Force Base. According to David, that particular trip allowed Ryan to fly in a 757, 767, 717 and 1940 Stearman aircraft, as well as see a C-5, KC-10 and more aircraft at Travis.

As for Bennett, meeting Ryan ignited a friendship.

"It started with getting him into a simulator and has blown up to something where people have been able to feel his energy," Bennett said. "He's an incredible guy who wakes up and grinds it out. He's living independently with these challenges and that's what makes him special. On top of that, his love for aviation really made me his friend."

"There are so many takeaways from this experience," he continued. "We interact with so many people and most of those interactions never pass the stranger barrier. If I hadn't paused and acknowledged David and Ryan, I would have missed out on something incredible. There are so many barriers that we have to break through to really hear people, but it's worth it. Sometimes, the things they have to tell us are genuinely profound."

(Staff Sgt. Ethan Spickler contributed to this article.)  
This article does not constitute endorsement of any airline or organization mentioned.



# 445th SFS achieved highest AFRC utilization rate in FY 2022

By Capt. Rachel Ingram  
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

The 445th Security Forces Squadron served a staggering 6,420 man-days on deployments in fiscal year 2022, the highest usage rate of all security forces squadrons in the Air Force Reserve Command.

“The squadron has 57 deployable positions and we deployed 41 individuals in fiscal year 2022,” said Tech. Sgt. Jon Prather, 445th SFS unit deployment manager.

At 72%, it was the highest utilization rate among all AFRC security forces squadrons that year.

Typically, the utilization standard is 30%, dropping in 2018 from the previous standard of 50%, he said. For example, a security forces squadron with 100 Airmen in deployable positions would be expected to deploy 30 of those individuals when called upon.

Based on the number of Airmen assigned to the 445th SFS in deployable positions, they were expected to deploy 20 individuals during 2022. Instead, they more than doubled that output.

Most of the defenders were sent to one of three primary locations: Al Dhafra Air Base in United Arab Emirates, Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia, and Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey to support Operation Allies Welcome.

Staff Sgt. Tommy Pham, 445th SFS fire team member, returned from a McGuire deployment in March 2022, and then a short-notice tasking came up to backfill a vacancy. The deployment date was less than 30 days out, so it could only be filled by a volunteer.

Squadron leadership started making phone calls. Pham said that when he picked up the phone, his response was ‘Let’s do this.’

“When you view everything as an opportunity, it’s easy to say yes,” Pham said.

A recent addition to the unit from active duty, Pham was home from his first 445th SFS deployment for less than 60 days before he left again, this time to complete a tour at Prince Sultan AB.

“The fact that someone voluntarily stepped up to fill that spot prevented us from having to go back to Headquarters Air Force and say, ‘We can’t support this,’” Prather said.

While at Prince Sultan AB, Pham worked 12-hour night shifts, a common occurrence in the career field.

Master Sgt. Josh McConnell was the squad leader over at Al Dhafra AB, where the shifts ranged from 12-14 hours long, with three days on and one day off.

“In my 17 years with the 445th SFS, I’ve never seen us spread so thin,” McConnell said.

Squadron leadership had already been tracking both overseas deployments well in advance, but Oper-

ation Allies Welcome came up unexpectedly, explained Senior Master Sgt. Justin Williams, superintendent of programs and readiness for the squadron.

“We had to come up with another 13 healthy bodies,” Williams said, noting that it was necessary for unit leadership to shuffle around dates and locations for many of the previously tasked defenders, resulting in some departure dates shifting to several months sooner than originally planned.

“Those folks really stepped up,” he added.

Both McConnell and Pham referenced camaraderie as the main catalyst for the squadron’s ability to deploy so many defenders in such a short amount of time.

“They were volunteering left and right to be part of the team and fill those voids,” McConnell said.

Because the squadron deploys in multi-member squads, comprised of smaller teams, strong relationships are key to mission success, he explained. Both at home station and while deployed, the 445th SFS routinely organizes team-building activities to strengthen their working relationships and unit efficacy.

“Deploying is tough,” Pham said, “but knowing your wingman on a personal level makes it easier to cope with all the transitions.”



Courtesy Photo

**Staff Sgt. Brandon Walker, second from left, 445th Security Forces Squadron, poses for a photo with fellow defenders at Prince Sultan AB Saudi Arabia last year. SFS Airmen are responsible for defending air bases around the globe, law enforcement on those bases, missile security, combat arms and handling military working dogs.**

# Around the wing ...



Senior Airman Angela Jackson



Senior Airman Angela Jackson



Staff Sgt. Ethan Spickler



Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly

**1. Master Sgt. Caroline Sussman, 89th Airlift Squadron loadmaster, explains the C-17 Globemaster III mission to 70 Development and Training Flight members from the 445th Airlift Wing; Grissom Air Reserve Base, Indiana; and Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio, during an aircraft tour, June 3, 2023.**

**2. Staff Sgt. Weston Emanuelson, 445th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, and Carlos Candelaria, Development and Training Flight trainee from Youngstown Air Reserve Station, discuss C-17 capabilities during an aircraft tour, June 3, 2023.**

**3. Senior Airman Jorden Terry, 445th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron maintenance technician, dons an M50 gas mask during Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive (CBRNE) training, June 3, 2023. During the training, participants were presented information on symptoms of exposure in chemical warfare and defending against different CBRNE threats. The class also focused on force protection condition levels and the corresponding mission oriented protective posture (MOPP) gear levels and procedures appropriate to each of the scenarios.**

**4. Senior Airman Zechariah Gerardi, right, 445th Airlift Wing Command Post, and Airman 1st Class Ethan Pottorf, 88th Healthcare Operations Squadron train on lowering and raising the flag, June 4, 2023.**



## SPOTLIGHT



Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly

**Rank/Name:** Airman 1st Class Nicole Miller

**Unit:** 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron

**Duty Title:** Aeromedical Evacuation Technician

**Hometown:** Dover, Ohio

**Civilian Job:** Medical technician at Akron Children's Hospital

**Education:** High school diploma

**Hobbies:** Fitness/weightlifting and volunteering at church

**Career Goal:** To become a flight nurse at the 445th AES; to obtain Bachelor of Science in nursing followed by Master of Science in nursing and become a nurse practitioner.

ing followed by Master of Science in nursing and become a nurse practitioner.

**What do you like about working at the 445th?** I like that we have good people. It's a great working environment when you enjoy working with the people around you. I feel, if I ever had any issues, I feel comfortable talking with anyone at the squadron.

**Why did you join the Air Force?** I am very grateful for our country and those who came before me and made the sacrifices that they did. I felt that it was my turn to do the same for the people behind me, and to be a part of something bigger than myself.

## Wing safety office offers barbecue, grilling safety tips

By Master Sgt. Joe Klimaski  
445th Airlift Wing Occupational Safety & Health

Summer is well underway and barbecue pits across the Miami Valley have filled the air with the sweet smell of hickory, mesquite and cherry wood smoke.

Is there anything better than running a barbecue pit or grill on a sunny summer weekend? While barbecue makes the world turn in the summer, keep in mind, there are safety precautions you should take into account before firing up your home pit.

If you're using a propane grill, ensure you conduct an inspection at the beginning of the season to verify there are no gas line leaks. When selecting a location to run your pit, choose an outdoor area that's well-ventilated and away from shrubbery and combustible materials. Same goes for



pellet or electric smokers – they should be operated outside in a well-ventilated area or under a covered patio.

As for lighting your pit, make sure that you're using lighter fluid that's designed for your grill, and under no circumstance should you use flammables such as gasoline or kerosene to light. Also, lighter fluid should be saturated on coals before ignition; never spray lighter fluid on lit or hot coals.

Last but not least, while running your pit, never leave it unattended and always have a fire extinguisher readily

available. Now that you've got a few barbecue safety tips in hand, it's time to fire up your pit and refine your craft. For more safety tips contact 445th Airlift Wing Safety Office (937)-257-5767.

## News Briefs

### Newcomers

Maj Jonathan Loyd, 89 AS  
SSgt Megan Hinds-Wade, MSG  
SSgt Jacob Peterson, 89 AS  
SrA Adrian Dela Cruz, SFS  
SrA Eric Appiah, LRS  
SrA Pooja Patel, ASTS  
A1C Athanasie Mukantabana, AMDS

### Retirements

Maj Bobby Dempsey, 89 AS  
CMSgt Christopher Williams, AW  
MSgt Mark Graber, CES  
MSgt Anthony Katros, MXG  
MSgt Phillip Padgett, AW  
TSgt Shelton Beasley,

ASTS  
TSgt James Pugh, LRS

### Promotions

**Chief Master Sergeant**  
Karl Morgan, MXG

**Senior Master Sergeant**  
Mark Gehri, AMXS  
Jimmy Montalvo, ASTS  
Kerry Penner, MXG

**Master Sergeant**  
Christopher Clark, LRS  
Julio Medina, LRS

**Technical Sergeant**  
Joshua Compston, AES  
Kelly Dean, AMXS  
Connor Karman, AMXS  
Isaac Pacheco, 89 AS

**Staff Sergeant**  
Philip Aliberti, ASTS  
Aaron Greer, CES

Fred May, SFS  
David Powell, AMXS  
Morgan Reese, OSS

### Senior Airman

Makayla Burchfield, ASTS  
Dustin Collinsworth, MXS  
Anne Kippe MBang, 87 APS  
Kevin Kruger, CES  
Kathrine Pietras, ASTS  
Madilynn Potts, AES  
Isaiah Slonkosky, AES

**Airman First Class**  
Chibuzor Odife, CES  
Joanny Shivers, 87 APS

**Airman**  
Aaron Anderson, 87 APS  
Cardae Lane

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## The art of doodling can benefit your health

By Vera Ensalaco  
445th Airlift Wing Director of Psychological Health

Have you ever doodled during a meeting? While doodling is typically associated with distraction or boredom, it is suggested that this form of art can be quite the opposite.

According to a 2016 Harvard Medical School study, doodling can relieve psychological distress thus making those moments easier to manage. It can release dopamine which makes you feel better, helps de-stress and can improve focus and motivation.

Did you know that 26 of 46 American presidents doodled? Don't ask me how they arrived at that finding. Still as the story goes, Teddy Roosevelt doodled animals and children; Ronald Reagan doodled cowboys and football players; and John F. Kennedy doodled dominoes. Interesting, you think?

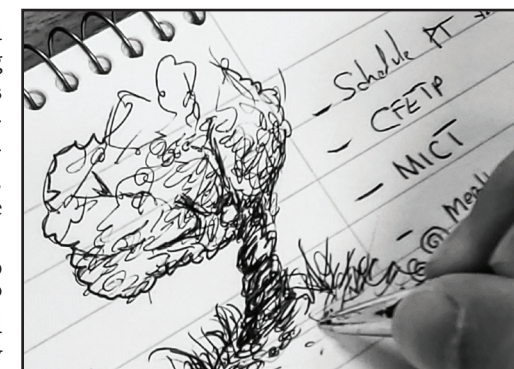
In a 2009 study, British psychologist Jacqueline Andrade assembled a group of 40 individuals to moni-

tor a 2.5 minute monotonous and rambling voice mail message. Half of the group doodled while they did this (given the task to shade in a shape) and the other half

did not. Unbeknownst to them, their memories would be tested. Those that doodled were able to recite back 29% more information when asked to recall details from that call.

Doodling can also give your brain the needed break without losing focus, somewhat akin to taking a walk for a few minutes every hour you are sitting at your desk. A simple, shortly crafted (under 30 minutes) doodle can help you to remember information, help manage large amounts of incoming information, give your mind some relief and assist in problem-solving.

Keep at it and fine-tune your scribbles. You're in good company!



# 445th ops, maintenance, aerial port train on C-17

By Tech. Sgt. Joel McCullough  
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

The buzz of a generator and idle of a diesel engine accompanied the cool summer morning as Reserve Citizen Airmen from the 445th Airlift Wing trained on two C-17 Globemaster III aircraft.

During the June 4 unit training assembly, Airmen with the 445th Operations Support Squadron, 445th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron and 87th Aerial Port Squadron trained together on the flightline using two statics as their training site.

The 87th APS, or “Port Dawgs,” rotated through generator training, vehicle tie-down and pallet loading on the first C-17. They worked together to load and unload pallets that were three pallet lengths in size, also called T3 pallets.

The AMXS and OSS cycled through fueling, generators and engine oil on the second C-17. The crews received hands-on training with attaching and detaching the fuel hose and how to open panels on the aircraft to visually monitor and service oil for each of the four engines on the aircraft.

“Completing CBTs is one thing,” Master Sgt. Todd Gnat, 445th OSS current operations training event planner, said about computer-based training. “Actually getting out here and doing it, and getting your hands on the aircraft, that is another.”

Gnat added that the realistic training was designed to enhance their job proficiency.

“I think the addition of the APS into our training was a no-brainer,” said Gnat, who is a loadmaster by trade. “Our jobs and mission go hand-in-hand.”

He also explained that the 445th AW regularly conducts training flights with units from other bases, giving 445th Airmen the opportunity to collaborate with others while providing outside units with hands-on training when their home station can’t.

For some Airmen, this was continued training to



Tech. Sgt. Joel McCullough

**Airmen from the 87th Aerial Port Squadron position a Tunner 60K loader to the rear of a C-17 Globemaster III aircraft to load cargo during training on the flightline at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, June 4, 2023. Airmen from the 445th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, 89th Airlift Squadron and 87th APS train together.**

brush up on their skillsets; for others, it was the first time working with their unit on an aircraft.

“This has been a good refresher,” said Senior Airman William Cornett, 89th AS loadmaster. “It is always a good day when you come outside around the jet and get to use your hands.”

Trainers, such as crew chiefs, loadmasters, and other aircrew and maintenance members, were available on both statics to assist and instruct Airmen as they conducted through the training.



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