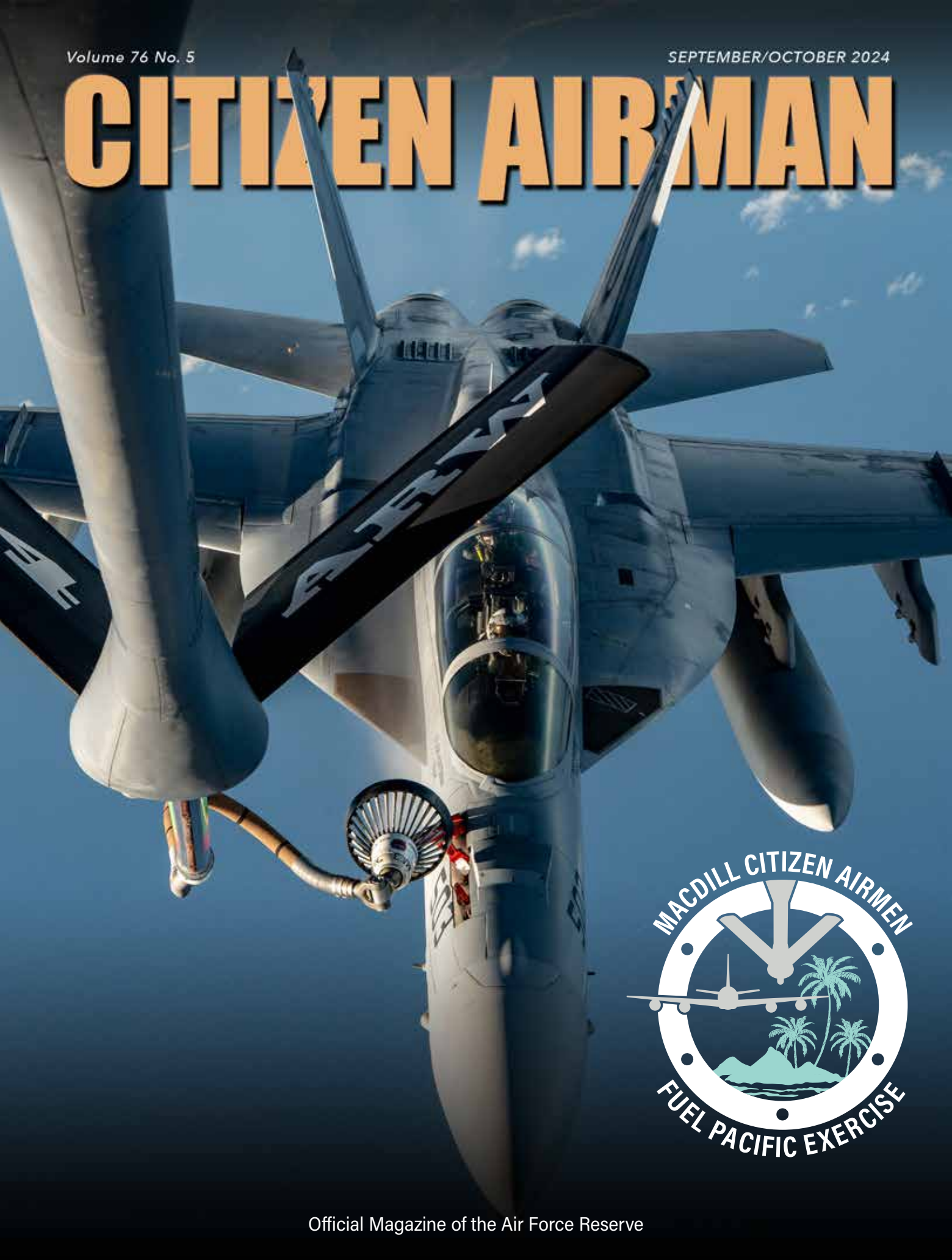


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# CITIZEN AIRMAN



Official Magazine of the Air Force Reserve



  
**JOHN P. HEALY**  
Lieutenant General, USAF  
Chief of Air Force Reserve  
Commander, Air Force Reserve Command



## FROM THE TOP

# YEAR TWO IN REVIEW

*August marks Lt. Gen. John P. Healy's two-year anniversary as the dual-hatted commander of Air Force Reserve Command and chief of the Air Force Reserve. Since assuming command, he has released two TASKORDs that detail his expectations for every Airman to own his or her individual and family readiness with an eye to future mission requirements. In this commentary, Healy and his senior enlisted advisor, Chief Master Sgt. Israel Nuñez, take a look back at the commander's second year.*

### AFR READINESS

We are readying Airmen through realistic training, including Agile Combat Support and Agile Combat Employment events to mobilize and deploy with less than 72 hours' notice. We are building organic training centers to simulate realistic combat scenarios to train Reservists, multinational allies and partners, sister services and civil authorities. Since last year, Reserve Airmen have supported 58 exercises around the globe, a significant number considering most of our force is part-time.

The Department of Defense Rim of the Pacific exercise this summer saw 563 Reservists from 25 units participate alongside 25,000 troops from the United States and 29 partner nations. They evaluated disaster relief, maritime security, sea control and complex warfighting around the Hawaiian Islands. During one of the RIMPAC events, Reserve A-10s successfully targeted and struck a floating ship using manually calculated impact distance, angle and delay.

In July, 90 Reserve Airmen of the 477th Fighter Group took part in Exercise Air Defender Alaska, a first-of-its-kind NATO-led exercise with German, French and Spanish allies. This exercise in the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex increased allied familiarization with fifth-generation aircraft capabilities and serves as part of our ongoing preparation for conflict should deterrence fail.

We routinely participate in humanitarian aid as well as rescue and support to civil authorities. In May, the 920th Rescue Wing airlifted a critical patient from a cruise ship with exceptional speed, delivering life-saving assistance

six hours ahead of other response teams. In October 2023, 779 Reserve Airmen accomplished 68,000 man-days in response to a humanitarian emergency in the Levant in under 24 hours and provided urgent relief to many civilians.

This past year, Reserve Airmen provided more than 500,000 man-days in support of Regular Air Force missions and many continue to provide short-notice intelligence analysis, cyber security, airlift, air superiority, aircraft maintenance and force protection support to Ukraine and our NATO allies.

More than 3,300 Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Reserve Airmen support every Air Force major command as well as all our nation's functional and geographic combatant commands, providing commanders with decision advantage against pacing threats.

Readiness extends beyond exercises ... the Air Force Reserve recruits Airmen, but we retain families. The AFR continues to mitigate barriers to service with programs like ARC Athena, which has helped leadership address specific burdens affecting families.







**ISRAEL NUÑEZ**  
 Chief Master Sergeant, USAF  
 Senior Enlisted Advisor to the  
 Chief of Air Force Reserve  
 Command Chief Master Sergeant,  
 Air Force Reserve Command

## CHIEF'S VIEW

Thanks to input from ARC Athena participants, affordable childcare during Unit Training Assemblies is an ongoing priority. The Air Force Home Community Care Program has provided 97,501 hours of childcare to 882 families at a cost to the Air Force of just under \$1 million.

Beyond the HCC, we have leveraged additional childcare resources for Reservists through Military OneSource, the Air Force Child Care Fee Assistance Program and the Department of the Air Force Child and Youth Programs. The Reserve is also building childcare partnerships with the YMCA and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America.

### TRANSFORMING FOR THE FUTURE

We must transform for Great Power Competition by building combat wings as the leading edge of conflict for our Air Force. We will establish combat wings for every Air Force Force Generation cycle beginning with 27.1 in October 2026. Each wing will include a leadership staff intimately familiar with its unique mission and capabilities, allowing Reserve Airmen to be the Air Force's definitive combat wing experts.

Modernization requires us to close technological gaps between Reserve and RegAF capabilities. One initiative is to integrate our data transformation and decision superiority efforts with the Department of the Air Force. These data analytic tools allow leaders to understand

the wider impact of operational choices.

At the same time, we are fielding data tools through the AFRC App Store which are tailored to the specific needs of Reserve units, such as orders funding and readiness challenges. This kind of data dominance is a crucial element of our transformation for the future of Great Power Competition.

### ENLISTED FORCE DEVELOPMENT

As part of our transformation, we are also restructuring how we develop enlisted leaders. We are aware of the challenges associated with attending important enlisted development opportunities while balancing civilian and military obligations.

For this reason, we are partnering with civilian academia to create on-demand enlisted development courses led by retired Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force Kaleth Wright and JoAnne Bass. Also, we have programmed \$10 million to build in-residence Airmanship Foundations Courses hosted at individual bases. And, together with the Air National Guard, the AFR is rebuilding Airman Leadership School, the Non-Commissioned Officer Academy and Senior NCO Academy to mirror officer distance learning courses.

Our focus on Great Power Competition requires our enlisted force development to include international allies. One initiative to

address this is the International Leadership Senior NCO Course. Through this, senior NCOs from five nations – Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Germany and Canada – have joined American senior NCOs at Lackland AFB, Texas, to facilitate strategic leadership growth, education and information sharing that benefits our partnerships.

In addition to education, the Reserve is improving talent management for the next generation of enlisted leaders. The Stripes for Exceptional Performers II program now accounts for career field vacancies and member readiness. We are also broadening opportunities with the Enlisted Developmental Education Board to prioritize Airmen who have not attended a developmental course in the past 24 months.

We are in the middle of generational change in our force structure to address the challenges of Great Power Competition. Amidst all this change, the one challenge I offer to all Airmen – stay focused and do your job! Here is to another great year.



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**On the cover:** An aircrew from the 927th Air Refueling Wing, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, operate a KC-135 Stratotanker from the 434th ARW, Grissom Air Reserve Base, Indiana, to refuel an FA-18 Super Hornet during the Rim of the Pacific exercise in July. For more on the Reserve wing's participation in RIMPAC, see the story on page 6. (Staff Sgt. Tiffany A. Emery)



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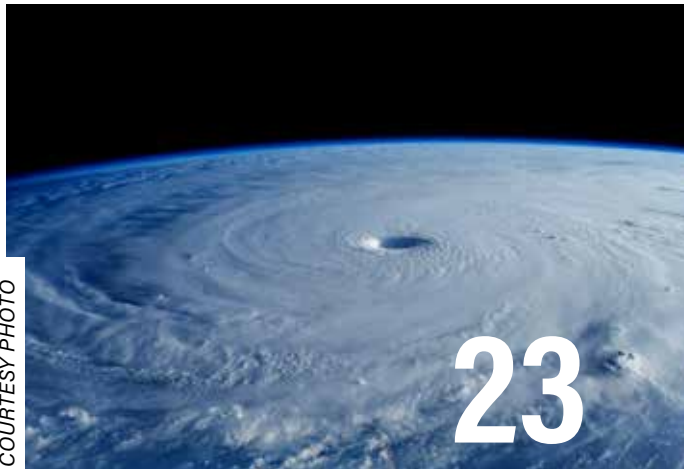
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Citizen Airmen from the 927th Air Refueling Wing, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, conducted about a month of air refueling operations in support of 29 participating nations during the 2024 Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise in July.

The world's largest international maritime exercise, RIMPAC 2024 promotes a free and open Indo-Pacific by fostering multinational cooperation and trust. The exercise allowed the Florida Reservists to practice Agile Combat Employment and showcase their mission-ready capabilities.


Taking place far away from the 927th ARW's usual stomping grounds over the southeastern United States and Gulf of Mexico, RIMPAC challenged the wing to set up operations on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, and begin rapidly carrying out aerial refueling missions over the world's largest ocean.

Operating five aircraft, just over 100 Citizen Airmen – ranging from operations and maintenance to logistics and personnel – put their collective skills and minds together for this display of Agile Combat Employment, leveraging Mission Capable Airmen to deliver the necessary fuel for the U.S. and partner nations to train longer and travel farther.

“We started the planning process more than a year ago and treated it as if it were a full deployment,” said Maj. Jeff Grove, 927th ARW RIMPAC 2024 detachment commander. “We came with everything we needed, including personnel, parts and equipment and set up our shop, treating it as if we were isolated to prove the Agile Combat Employment concept. If we were to go to a location with no military presence, we could do the same thing.”

Global reach is a vital capability that the 927th ARW trains to provide to combatant commanders, remaining ready for any future near-peer fight. Capable of off-loading 200,000 pounds of jet fuel to thirsty fighters, bombers and mobility aircraft, the KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft and its highly trained crews meet aircraft such as the U.S. Navy's FA-18 Super Hornet, F-35C Lightning II, or the U.S. Air Force's B-1 and B-2 stealth bombers mid-air, allowing them to prolong training over the open ocean. RIMPAC provided the perfect opportunity to work in a combined, joint atmosphere, bolstering the interoperability, agility and flexibility required of tomorrow's Citizen Airmen.

— *Continued on Next Page*



Citizen Airmen assigned to the 927th Maintenance Group, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, open a KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft engine for maintenance during Exercise Rim of the Pacific 2024. (Tech. Sgt. Bradley Tipton)

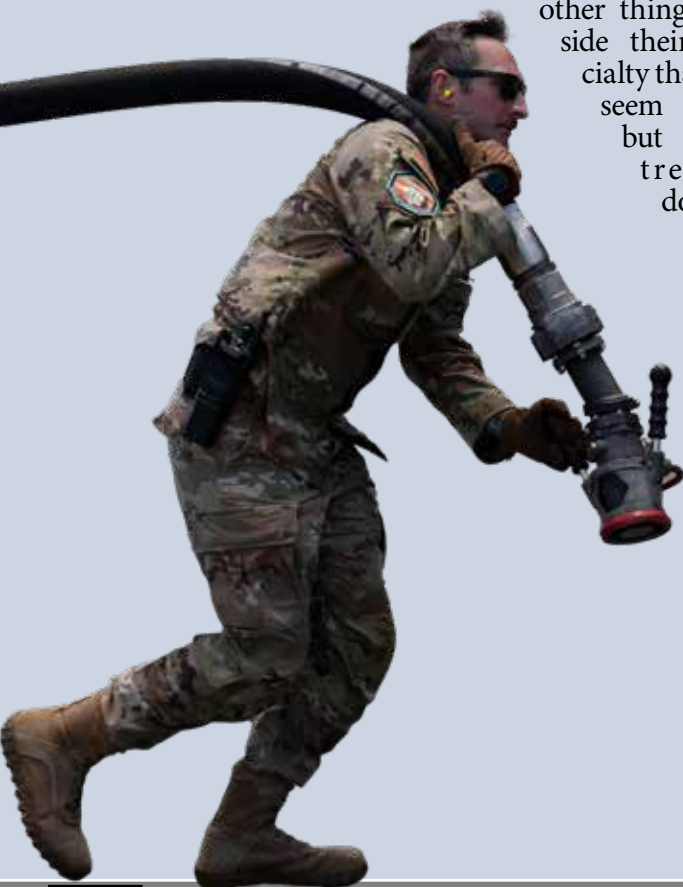


“One of our biggest objectives from the aircrew side is to get the training that we can’t get at home station,” said Grove. “We’re far from just administrative gas, we’re doing so much more than that so we can meet the training objectives that require us to be part of a large-scale exercise.”

Back on the ground on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, maintenance crews worked around the clock to keep the 60-plus-year-old KC-135s from MacDill AFB, Grissom Air Reserve Base, Indiana and March ARB, California mission ready. Flexing their critical thinking, they operated in small, flexible teams to conduct both scheduled and unscheduled maintenance, including exercising their ability to conduct hot-pit refueling, allowing a KC-135 aircraft fresh back from a mission to refill its fuel stores and return to the sky for another without fully powering down. Being mission ready for these Airmen means expanding their skill sets outside of their foundational training, broadening their ability to do what needs to be done to accomplish the mission.

“I don’t think we would have been able to do what we’ve done out here without the Airmen we have who are multi-capable,” said Tech. Sgt. Rene Gonzalez, 927th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron dedicated crew chief. “We wouldn’t be able to do it without the maintainers taking

the time to do these other things outside their specialty that may seem small but help tremendously.”



The challenges that come from operating so far from home station provide a realistic training scenario for Citizen Airmen working out of a far-flung corner of the flight line and doing so within the framework of a multinational Combined Air Operations Center required the 927th ARW to maintain constant connectivity and access to cyber systems.

Staff Sgt. Ryan Covert, 927th Force Support Squadron client systems technician, found himself thinking on his feet right from the get-go to guarantee this capability for the detachment.

“One of the big challenges in coming out here was making sure we had what was necessary for each department to cooperate and accomplish the mission together,” said Covert. “It’s always a dynamic situation so I try to bring anything and everything I can so that when something isn’t working, we have several options.”

Throughout the exercise, logistics and force support experts worked in the background ensuring the entire agile operation was staffed and well-suited for the demanding operations tempo of RIMPAC.

Out on the flightline, Petroleum, Oil and Lubricants Airmen delivered clean, reliable jet fuel to the KC-135s after each mission, completing the first major step in the process to smoothly continue operations. Going even further, the team, including maintenance and air crews, established a forward area refueling point on the ground, safely transferring fuel from one aircraft to another. Planning, scheduling and ultimately carrying out these missions depended on a wide variety of Citizen Airmen capable of solutions-based, quick thinking and who answer the call outside of their day-to-day job.

“We’re all Citizen Airmen and have civilian jobs outside of what we do in the military,” said Grove. “For instance, I fly for FedEx and come in to do the Reserve job on the weekends and when I have a day off to come fly the KC-135. It saves the taxpayers money because they don’t have to pay me 365 days out of the year, yet I maintain the same qualifications as an active-duty evaluator pilot.”

For the 927th ARW at RIMPAC, a small, diverse team of Citizen Airmen came together and made a large impact, accomplishing many of the training requirements necessary to keep them ready for world-wide taskings and deployments.



*(Tipton is assigned to the 927th Air Refueling Wing’s public affairs office.)*







Opposite page, Master Sgt. Taj Copeland carries a fuel delivery hose to a KC-135. (Tech. Sgt. Bradley Tipton) Clockwise from top left: Staff Sgt. Daniel Malivert inspects a KC-135 engine. (Tech. Sgt. Bradley Tipton); Tech. Sgt. Megan Hatch refuels an FA-18 Super Hornet. (Tech. Sgt. Bradley Tipton); and a Reserve KC-135 refuels an FA-18 during RIMPAC 2024. (Staff Sgt. Tiffany A. Emery)





# LOCAL RESERVE UNIT USES RELATIONSHIPS TO ACHIEVE HISTORIC RIMPAC DEBUT

— By Senior Airman Victoriya Tarakanova

Reservists from the 624th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, participate in the Rim of the Pacific exercise in July.

Every two years, the residents of Oahu, Hawaii, witness a spectacular sight: more than 40 military ships, 14 national land forces and 150 aircraft converging towards the small, 596-square-mile tropical island.

This year was no exception: personnel from 29 nations gathered this July for the world's largest international maritime warfare exercise, Rim of the Pacific. Among these seasoned participants — including some with over two decades of RIMPAC experience — a small yet formidable local force made its debut in the lineup.

The 624th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, an Air Force Reserve unit operating under the 624th Regional Support Group and based at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, marked

its inaugural appearance at RIMPAC this year.

“This is the first time that they’ve requested any sort of Air Force medical involvement,” said Senior Master Sgt. Erin Esquer, 624th ASTS senior enlisted leader. “It’s usually just the Navy, so this is a big deal.”

This achievement was particularly remarkable as the 624th ASTS has only one asset — well-trained Airmen.

“Our unit has manpower, but we don’t have aircraft,” said Lt. Col. Janet Baxa, 624th ASTS chief nurse. “A lot of Reserve units outside of Hickam have those assets. We rely on the connections we have outside of our unit. When you have key people in the readiness section, making those con-

nections, it allows us to practice what we are supposed to do.”

It is through intentional relationship-building that the 624th ASTS was able to get access to the right aircraft, equipment and environments for high-level training.

“Relationships are huge,” said Esquer. “Whether you are a unit-equipped Reserve unit with your own resources, or if you are the type that is co-located with active duty, relationships matter. You can’t do stuff in a silo by yourself, so we were very intentional to build relationships with others on base immediately.”

It is these relationships that have allowed the 624th ASTS to make unprecedented improvements in their





training and readiness in less than a year to reach mission readiness and participate in such a large-scale training exercise.

“When I got here in June of 2023, I was told we didn’t know how to build tents, and we hadn’t had an En Route Patient Staging System training in years,” said Esquer. “None of my people had ever even experienced training with Aeromedical Evacuation.”

The En Route Patient Staging System is a central mission for the 624th ASTS and involves constructing and equipping tents to care for patients brought in from combat areas.

“ERPSS is really, really important,” said 1st Lt. Jennifer Andrade, 624th ASTS medical readiness officer. “It’s our main mission. If we have a near-peer conflict, we are the closest, so it’s super important for us to be ready for when or if that happens.”

Dedicating enough time to quality training can be a challenge for some Reserve units, which often meet for only two days a month. However, Esquer, Andrade and 624th ASTS leadership were committed to creating a plan to achieve mission readiness.

“I told them, we’re going to make it happen, and we’re going to make it happen during our Unit Training Assemblies,” said Esquer. “I’ve got to keep their hands busy. So, in November of 2023, we did our first tent build, our first major event. That amped them up, like ‘we got this, we can do it.’”

624th ASTS leadership also put a strong emphasis on as much mission education and hands-on training as possible during UTA days.

“You have to reinforce why we’re doing what we’re doing,” Esquer said. “People want to do stuff when they know it matters. They want to be seen, they want to be

heard, they want to know why it’s important and relevant, and you’ve got to get them excited. And the way you do that is by putting them in those positions to do stuff. Talking about it during a UTA and doing a PowerPoint presentation is great, but then you’ve got to go out and do it.”

As the 624th ASTS Airmen improved, Esquer and her team continued to push them with engaging and innovative training methods.

“We had a rodeo in May UTA where we did an Olympics-style patient litter carry,” Esquer said. “We had teams carry a dummy on a litter with a cup taped to its chest with juice in it, and whoever ended with the most juice in the cup won. That’s the stuff that keeps them engaged. Innovative training matters, they were all bought in.”

624th ASTS leadership also built connections with units from other bases to provide increasingly realistic and complex training scenarios for their Airmen.

“When I was deployed with the 624th, I noticed a lot of ERPSS personnel didn’t have a lot of training,” said Andrade. “So, when I got here, I called my contacts at the March Air Reserve Base unit, and they brought over an aircraft.”

Training with aircraft is critical for ASTS Airmen, who are responsible for transporting patients between aircrafts and staging tents.

“We were able to do ERPSS training with the Aeromedical Evacuation group,” said Esquer, “and that was huge for our people, especially our younger Airmen who had never been on the flight line or an aircraft before.”

The 624th ASTS continued to train intensively during every UTA, going on to participate in Exercise Pineap-


ple Thunder the following month with the 15th Medical Group, the primary active-duty Air Force medical component at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

“We set up eight tents that time — from one tent to eight,” said Esquer. “And now here we are at RIMPAC, with 16 tents. We have been growing from doing all these training events this past year.”

624th ASTS leadership was also careful to establish the right mindset and environment for learning and growth.

“If mistakes are made, it isn’t a big deal,” said Esquer. “We will evaluate it, highlight it and make a good training plan out of it. We’re gauging where we are at today, so that way when we are in our deployment cycle, we will be absolutely ready to go. If you’re in my squadron, you’re going to be growing. If you don’t like that, you are going to have to find somewhere else to go.”

The 624th ASTS plans to continue to improve and train, with a focus on optimizing for the most mission-critical skills and real-world scenarios, all while helping Airmen understand how they contribute to the overall mission.

“I would highly encourage units to find out what your strengths and weaknesses are, and capitalize on those things,” Esquer said. “Make meaningful training plans. Don’t do things repetitively when not necessary, make it make sense and do things that really matter and keep your Airmen engaged. Make them want to be there versus feeling forced to be there, and make sure everybody within your organization understands their role within the organization.” 

*(Tarakanova is assigned to the 624th Regional Support Group public affairs office.)*

# MISSION CHANGE

— By Bradley J. Clark

## ALABAMA AIRLIFT WING REDESIGNATED AS FLYING TRAINING WING



The 908th Flying Training Wing's first MH139A Grey Wolf helicopter sits on the flight line at Maxwell Air Force, Alabama. (Bradley A. Clark). Opposite page: Guests get a close-up look at the Grey Wolf during the Beyond the Horizon Air and Space Show in April. The 908th Airlift Wing was officially redesignated as the 908th Flying Training Wing in late July. (Senior Airman Juliana Todd)







On a steamy Saturday in late July, the 908th Airlift Wing, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, was officially redesignated as the 908th Flying Training Wing, while its 357th Airlift Squadron inactivated and then reactivated as the 703rd Helicopter Squadron.

The redesignation is another milestone as the 908th switches from a tactical airlift mission flying the C-130 Hercules aircraft to a formal training unit for the MH-139A Grey Wolf helicopter.

The 908th last converted airframes when it began changing from the C-7A Caribou to the C-130 in February 1982. On Oct. 18, 1983, an aircrew flew the wing's first tactical training mission, which was also the first formation flight for the 357th Tactical Airlift Squadron in more than a decade before the unit began flying the C-7A.

The wing has been incredibly busy since then-Secretary of the Air Force Barbara Barrett announced that the 908th was the preferred location to host the Grey Wolf formal training unit on Nov. 20, 2020. The 908th conducted its final flights with its last remaining C-130s on April 2, 2022.

Over the last few years, members throughout the wing have been gearing up for the mission change. Aircrew members, maintainers and others had to decide if they were going to stay in the C-130 tactical airlift world and leave the unit, or transition to the rotary wing world and stay at the 908th. For those who decided to stay, there would be months of intense training for the MH-139A, which has a mission of providing security and support for the nation's intercontinental ballistic missile fields and transporting U.S. government officials and security forces. Other mission capabilities include civil search and rescue, as well as survival school and test support.

In the middle of the wing's conversion to a new mission, it welcomed a new commander when Col. Christopher Lacouture assumed command of the 908th from Col. Craig Drescher in September of 2023.

Since Lacouture has taken command, the wing had its first MH-139A Grey Wolf arrive on station April 3 of this year and had its first flight take place exactly three weeks later on April 24.

In between those two major events, Lacouture convened a strategic alignment event with wing leaders at Maxwell to establish the 908th Flying Training Wing's mission, vision and priorities. The new mission statement is to "Deliver lethal combat Airmen to defeat America's enemies." The new vision statement is to "Be the dominant wing integrating lethality and readiness to consistently deliver bold, agile and dedicated Airmen supplying superior combat capabilities." The new priorities are to "Generate lethal readiness, develop Airman warrior ethos, launch the MH-139 Flight Training Unit and streamline/modernize local processes."

The wing celebrated the MH-139A Grey Wolf and the unit's efforts for the past three and a half years preparing for the transition during a ceremony May 31 at Maxwell. The event gave wing members, congressional staffers, local civic leaders and senior military members representing three major commands a chance to see the new aircraft and learn about its importance to U.S. national defense.

"To the Airmen of the 908th, sincerely thank you for the jobs well done and thanks in advance for the work you will do in the coming years," Lacouture said at the ceremony. "With our partners in Air Education and Training Command, Air Force Global Strike Command, civilian manufacturers and contractors, by working together to do what is best for the mission, you are building a new capability on the foundation of 40 years of proud and effective service flying combat airlift. We honor the past as we accelerate into the future. We have much to do. Enjoy today, then let's get back to work building the MH-139A schoolhouse the nation needs."

CA

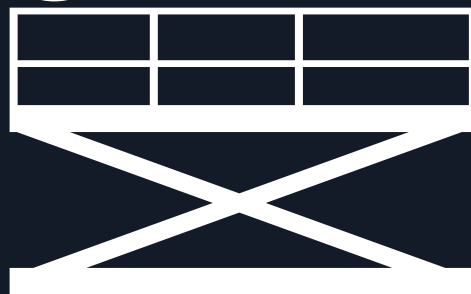
*(Clark is assigned to the 908th Flying Training Wing public affairs office.)*





# MAKING A STAND

## 307TH BOMB WING MAINTAINER DESIGNS SOLUTION FOR 30-YEAR-OLD PROBLEM



— By Senior Master Sgt. Ted Daigle and Staff Sgt. Kate Bragg

When Tech. Sgt. Jermey Vickers sees a problem, it's hard to stop him from fixing it.

This combination of perseverance and innovation led the 307th Maintenance Squadron B-52 mechanic to design the Engine Pod Stand, used for the first time during a B-52 Stratofortress Phase maintenance inspection at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, in July.

"The maintenance stands we were using had been purchased in 1994, and you couldn't get parts to fix them anymore," said Vickers. "They also were purchased used, so it's difficult to know how old they are."

Maintaining stands was far from the only concern. There were issues of efficiency and safety, as well.

A B-52 Phase is a weeks-long inspection requiring dozens of maintainers to work on the jet simultaneously. Conventional maintenance stands only hold two people safely,

so maintainers must constantly move them around to different parts of the huge airframe.

"Those stands were heavy and required a couple of people to move them, so there was a lot of potential for safety risks," said Vickers.

The Engine Pod Stand is one large contiguous platform allowing maintainers to easily access the jet's engines and wings, eliminating the need to move smaller stands.

It also provides enough room for several maintainers to use it at once without compromising safety for efficiency.

"With the old stands, it took over an hour to get ready just to work on an engine," said Vickers. "With the Engine Pod Stand, we are ready to go in five minutes."

Gaining that degree of safety and innovation did not come easily. Vickers had to couple his problem-solving







Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Vickers stands by his brainchild, the Engine Pod Maintenance Stand at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana. Opposite page: An engine pod stand runs the length of a B-52 Stratofortress wing and Senior Airman Alexander Orta and Tech. Sgt. Michael Starkey use an engine pod stand to perform a phase inspection on a B-52. (Photos by Senior Master Sgt. Ted Daigle)

mindset with some can-do grit to make the Engine Pod Stand a reality.

“I drew up the first blueprints six years ago and researched several companies that could make them,” said Vickers.

He began preliminary talks with one company but when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, this stopped the company’s production.

Vickers persisted through the pandemic and got the company to commit to the plans, but a lack of funding put the project on pause once again.

He tried several avenues before finally working with the 307th Bomb Wing Safety Office and Air Force Reserve Command to get National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriations (NGREA) funding.

“He (Vickers) pushed for three years to get the funding, and he was extremely persistent and stayed the course,” said David Griffore, 307th Bomb Wing Occupational Safety supervisor. “When the stands arrived, he soloed on getting them assembled and operational.”

That persistence has paid off, but Vickers isn’t done yet.

He said he is still looking for ways to improve the existing design in case other Air Force units decide to use it. But for now, the current design is paying dividends just a few days into its first run.

“We’ve already halved the engine-top inspection time,” said Vickers. “So, our maintainers are loving it.”



*(Daigle and Bragg are assigned to the 307th Bomb Wing public affairs office.)*





# ALASKA RESERVISTS SHARPEN AIR WARFIGHTING SKILLS

— By Capt. Kaitlyn Lawton

Citizen Airmen from the 477th Fighter Group, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, joined forces with the Alaska Air National Guard and the active-duty Air Force for Hungry Hungry Halibut, a high-end integration air war exercise in early August.

The exercise provided the participants with unique opportunities to integrate and train from simulated forward operating bases throughout Alaska. It also allowed Airmen to practice Agile Combat Employment forward area refueling point (FARP) procedures, rapid beyond-line-of-sight communication methods and downed-pilot drills in the Gulf of Alaska.

“This was a joint effort,” said Master Sgt. Kyle Grolemond, 477th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron avionics flight chief. “Working and planning with our active-duty and Alaska Guard counterparts allowed members to branch out from their normal day-to-day functions and broaden their knowledge for a future confrontation.”

Hungry Hungry Halibut tested new integrated capabilities to support operations and identify deficiencies in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility. Participants practiced loading weapons, swapping aircrews, gaining updated situational awareness and intelligence while receiving orders from command and control, protecting forces while on the ground in high-threat areas, and refueling.

“Many members performed Multi-Capable Airman functions

while assisting other career fields, such as launching, recovering and debriefing aircraft,” Grolemond said. “This will not be simply needed, but required in a high-end, minimally-manned fight.”

Agile Combat Employment is a key operating concept for how the Air Force will fight in a modern, contested environment. When applied correctly, ACE complicates the enemy’s targeting process, creates political and operational dilemmas for the enemy, and creates flexibility for friendly forces.

Realistic combat training is essential to the success of air and space operations.


“The significance of practicing exercises like HHH and events like FARP or downed-pilot drills puts operators out of their comfort zone and into a different mindset,” explained a 302nd Fighter Squadron F-22 Raptor pilot. “During these training events, the F-22 pilots are now the supporting asset instead of the supported asset, which, in the long term, will pay huge dividends to our community.”

Agile Combat Employment shifts the generation of airpower from large, centralized bases to networks of smaller, dispersed locations or cluster bases to increase survivability and complicate adversary planning.

“HHH prepares us for Agile Combat Employment operations in a wartime scenario,” Grolemond said. “Continuously practicing and streamlining our FARP operations will better prepare Airmen to be able to ma-

neuver in and out of austere locations quickly and efficiently, with aircraft on the ground and out of the conflict for as minimal time as possible.”

A FARP provides refueling and re-arming to rotary or fixed-wing assets in austere environments, extending the reach and capacity of forward air operations. During HHH, C-17 Globemaster III and HC-130 Hercules aircraft provided fuel, munitions and support equipment for the F-22 Raptors as they landed in remote locations throughout Alaska.

“We provide combat air power and are the unrivaled leaders in air superiority by request now and in the future,” said Master Sgt. Christopher Graham, 477th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron dedicated crew chief. “This exercise of HHH truly executed our mission and vision – exactly how the 477th Fighter Group operates and succeeds.” 

*(Lawton is assigned to the 477th Fighter Group public affairs office.)*







An HH-60 helicopter hoists a downed F-22 Raptor pilot during exercise Hungry, Hungry Halibut in Alaska in August. (Capt. Kaitlyn Lawton)



# FIRST OF NEW FLEET PREMIERE TACTICAL AIRLIFTER TO

— By Tech. Sgt. Noah J. Tancer

The 910th Airlift Wing's first C-130J-30 Super Hercules aircraft arrived at Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio, on July 16, as the unit begins its transition from its fleet of eight legacy C-130H Hercules aircraft.

"The 910th Airlift Wing's tactical airlift and aerial spray missions require a capable, reliable and adaptable airframe," said Col. Mike Maloney, 910th Airlift Wing commander. "Our C-130H Hercules aircraft have provided that for decades, and as we retire them from service at Youngstown Air Reserve Station we look forward to continuing their track record of success with a fleet of new C-130J-30 Super Hercules aircraft."

Conducting its maiden voyage from its place of composition at the Lock-

heed Martin production facility in Marietta, Georgia, Maj. Gen. Melissa Coburn, 22nd Air Force commander, piloted the new aircraft's first journey to Youngstown ARS.

"The C-130J-30 Super Hercules is not just an aircraft," said Coburn. "It is a symbol of our shared dedication to excellence, resilience and service. It embodies the spirit of the 910th Airlift Wing, and of the 22nd Air Force. A spirit that is rooted in courage, determination and our relentless pursuit of excellence."

From within the aircraft, the crew had front-row seats to the dynamic sound of the engines, capable of climbing faster and higher, flying farther at a higher cruise speed and taking off and landing in a shorter

distance. Culminating its first tour with a flyover of its new home, the C-130J-30 landed at Youngstown ARS before a crowd of news media representatives, distinguished visitors and Citizen Airmen.

Bill "Shaggy" Andrews, Lockheed Martin vice president of air mobility and maritime missions domestic programs, spoke during the ceremony, welcoming the C-130J-30 Super Hercules aircraft.

"This aircraft was constructed by a workforce who invested over 78,000 hours of committed labor to provide you, the warfighters, with a capable, versatile and combat-ready platform, specifically designed for your mission ... to provide agile combat support and employment,



Citizen Airmen and invited guests tour the 910th Airlift Wing's first C-130J-30 Super Hercules aircraft at an arrival ceremony at Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio, in July. (Staff Sgt. Dylan Bigelow). Opposite page top: The first C-130J-30 flies above Youngstown. (Tech. Sgt. Noah J. Tancer). Opposite page below: The aircraft is marshalled to its arrival ceremony. (Staff Sgt. Dylan Bigelow)





# ET BRINGS 910TH AIRLIFT WING



tactical airlift and aerial spray,” said Andrews.

Sporting a rich history of C-130 aircraft, the 910th Airlift Wing first premiered C-130B aircraft in 1981 and has operated different variants for more than 40 years, including its tactical airlift and aerial spray missions. The wing's current fleet of C-130H Hercules aircraft are models from 1989 to 1992. They were assigned to the unit when the 910th received its Airlift Wing designation in 1994. They've carried the unit through 30 years of mission effectiveness in the tactical airlift genre.

Representing one of Youngstown Air Reserve Station's community partners, Josh Prest, the executive director of the Eastern Ohio Military Affairs

Commission, took the stage to inform the local community of what the new planes mean to them.

“For those of you who don't know this (the transition to C-130J-30 Super Hercules aircraft) will represent a nearly one billion dollar influx into our local economy adding on to the fact that this air base remains the second largest employer in the area and one of the pillars of our community,” said Prest.

The new C-130J-30 Super Hercules aircraft are valued at approximately \$109.75 million per aircraft for a total investment of roughly \$878 million for Youngstown ARS and the Mahoning Valley. At the same time, according to the Air Force's C-130J-30 fact sheet, the

Super Hercules will save the 910th Airlift Wing long-term costs as the aircraft reduces manpower requirements, lowers operating and support costs and provides life-cycle cost savings over earlier C-130 models.

Closing with the Air Force Song, guests attending the event then walked through the C-130J-30 Super Hercules' cargo bay and into the flight deck to witness where the newest music over the Mahoning Valley will be made.



*(Tancer is assigned to the 910th Airlift Wing public affairs office.)*





Members of the Air Reserve Forces Policy Committee meet during the ARFPC 2024 Full Conference Forum. Opposite page: Members of the ARFPC executive council and those who took part in the closed executive sessions gather for a photo on the steps of the Utah State Capitol building. (Photos by Master Sgt. Colton Elliot)

# RESERVE POLICY COMMITTEE MEETS, FOCUSES ON GREAT POWER COMPETITION

— By Maj. Sarah E. Bergstein

How Great Power Competition (GPC) is impacting the Reserve Component was at the forefront of the discussion when the Air Reserve Forces Policy Committee (ARFPC) met for its mid-year Full Conference Forum in Salt Lake City in June.

“This is your opportunity to speak up, make your voices heard and determine what we can do collaboratively as a team to find solutions to some of the problems we’re considering in this forum,” said Troy McIntosh, deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force for Reserve Affairs and Airman and Guardian Readiness and the secretary of the Air Force representative to the ARFPC, to the attendees. “Remember that what we’re working with today are policies and instructions that were written for a different time. Today, we need to be thinking about what the Air Force of the future needs.”

The committee is chartered to provide the secretary of the Air Force and the chief of staff of the Air Force unfettered, objective and independent advice regarding major

policy matters directly affecting the Air Reserve Components and the mobilization preparedness of the Department of the Air Force.

“Prior to this forum, we sent a call out to the field for our Airmen to identify the challenges they’re seeing in the field with regard to Great Power Competition,” said Maj. Gen. Vanessa Dornhoefer, mobilization assistant to the deputy chief of staff for Logistics, Engineering and Force Protection and ARFPC chair. “We need to ensure we’re seeing the full picture of these challenges so we can address the impacts of GPC on our Guard and Reserve components.”

During its second of two forums for the calendar year, Maj. Gen. C. McCauley von Hoffman, deputy to the chief of the Air Force Reserve, spoke to the council on Air Force Reserve leadership priorities.

The general referenced the 24 key decisions announced earlier this year by the secretary of the Air Force to reoptimize forces to meet strategic challenges as it relates to





GPC. Von Hoffman's talk centered on a subset of those 24 decisions that have the greatest Air Force Reserve equity.

"I'll echo Lt. Gen. Healy's sentiment that where the Air Force goes is where the Air Force Reserve is going to go," she said, referring to Lt. Gen. John P. Healy, chief of the Air Force Reserve and commander of Air Force Reserve Command.

The council used the mid-year forum to discuss expansion of the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act, the Global Force Management Allocation Plan, updates to Defense Department Form 214-1 (the Reserve Component Addendum to the Certificate of Uniformed Service), digital automation and Air Reserve Component utilization.

Some of the committee's recent achievements include policy changes that enhance Basic Allowance for Housing for Airmen attending long technical schools and making several key improvements to health care services.

"This body is made up of changemakers and problem solvers," said Maj. Gen. Ginger Gaglio, Air National Guard assistant to the commander of Air Force Materiel Command and ARFPC vice chair. "We need to remind ourselves every time we meet that our charter is to look at where the disconnects are in Air Force policy that we can change for the better to improve the Total Force. Sometimes we find a problem that is part of a bigger issue, but that smaller problem can be fixed with a change in policy. Let's focus on how we can keep getting after fixing those smaller problems in order to keep getting those wins for our Airmen."

The ARFPC is comprised of five primary and three alternate officers each from the regular Air Force, the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve in the grade of brigadier general and above and includes representatives from the Space Force and the Civil Air Patrol. Members are appointed to serve a three-year term by the secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs as delegated by the secretary of the Air Force.

The committee is then broken down into two subcommittees on both Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve policy. The ARFPC receives its topics via submission from the field. The body votes on which submissions to address based on mission need and assigns a general officer champion to work that issue to completion. Issues that are voted not to be taken on by the committee receive follow-on guidance and connections from the ARFPC staff for how to address that issue.

"We've looked back through the committee's history books and in ARFPC's 68 years of existence, the Air Force has seemingly dealt with similar issues, but today's challenges are different, and the risks are different," Dornhoefer said. "I encourage us to keep at the front of our minds, 'If not us, then who, and if not now, then when?'"

Citizen Airmen and Air Guardsmen are encouraged to contact the committee directly at [SAF.MRR.Workflow@us.af.mil](mailto:SAF.MRR.Workflow@us.af.mil) with recommendations for policy or legislative issues that will help improve the Total Force.



*(Bergstein is assigned to HAF/REI.)*





# MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY HOLDS INAUGURAL RESERVE COMMISSIONING CEREMONY

— By Bo Joyner

In these modern times of reboots and resets, a new modern innovation for the Air Force Reserve has been realized at the United States Merchant Marine Academy, led by an individual mobilization augmentee, Lt. Col. Nicholas Passarella.

June 21 was a historic day at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy as two second lieutenants were welcomed into the Air Force Reserve at the academy's inaugural Reserve commissioning ceremony. Second Lieutenants Kennedy Maddock and Christian Mou were administered the oath of office by Col. Edward Segura, Air Force Reserve Command's chief of Manpower, Personnel and Services. Both of the new Reservists have accepted positions as intelligence officers with the 38th Intelligence Squadron at Beale Air Force Base, California.

The USMMA, located at Kings Point, New York, is a U.S. service academy that trains and educates future leaders of the global maritime industry, which serves vital U.S. national security interests during both peace and war. The USMMA is a unique service acad-

emy in that the midshipmen cadets can choose their respective military service branch while enrolled at the academy. Even more exclusive to the USMMA, midshipmen have the privilege to commission directly into the Air Force Reserve or Air National Guard.

While Passarella was serving at the USMMA, he recognized a unique opportunity for the Air Force Reserve. He identified the potential to help alleviate the Air Force Reserve recruiting shortfalls and seized on the opportunity. Using various command relationships, he was able to establish the exclusive Air Force Reserve commissioning program from the USMMA.

Under the program, midshipmen are interviewed by Air Force Reserve units, and once they receive a commander-approved authorization for hiring, they are commissioned as second lieutenants into the Reserve upon graduation from the USMMA.

"We have a multi-phase process here at USMMA," Passarella said. "The initial phase is identifying and determining the eligibility of midshipmen who want the Air Force Reserve life. Then,

in cooperation with the officer accession recruiters and the Air Reserve Personnel Center, we start the administrative process for commissioning, in conjunction with identifying vacancies and geographical locations that will fit into the midshipmen's lives after graduation from USMMA. After identification of a vacancy, the midshipman completes an interview with the ultimate goal of receiving a hiring offer from an Air Force Reserve unit."

Lt. Col. Jason McMunn, also an IMA, augments operations for the Air Reserve Commissioning program at the academy. "Nick and I have a monumental task here," he said. "We have the midshipmen and their rigorous academic requirements on one side and the Air Force Reserve and their requirements on the other, and we have to forge it all together into a synergistic endeavor for the final product of a new commissioned officer."

During the commissioning ceremony, Vice Admiral Joanna Nunan, the USMMA superintendent, expressed how proud she is of the new lieutenants and how much of an asset they will be to the Air Force Reserve. She said she is very pleased that the Air Force Reserve is now a viable option for the midshipmen at the academy, and that the Air Force Reserve commissioning program has her full support.

Maddock and Moua are both from California, so serving at Beale will afford them the opportunity serve near their hometowns while pursuing their respective civilian careers.

"We have a real unique opportunity here for the Air Force Reserve-specific commission pipeline out of the



Second Lieutenants Kennedy Maddock and Christian Mou pose with Vice Admiral Joanna Nunan, Lt. Col. Nicholas Passarella and Col. Edward Segura at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Reserve commissioning ceremony. Opposite page: Segura administers the oath of office at the ceremony.






# READINESS INCLUDES BEING READY FOR A DISASTER



USMMA, and we really need to seize the capabilities afforded to us here," Passarella said. "A key point to the program is that the midshipman cost is neutral, which means it is a win-win for all involved."

Although, the USMMA is an engineering and science-based institution, many of the midshipmen intend on securing a pilot position in the Air Force Reserve. However, just as many midshipmen are intending on pursuing positions in career fields such as intel, cyber, engineering, logistics and maintenance.

"The intent for this program is to bring together USMMA midshipmen with Air Force Reserve commanders and hiring officials to fill any career field vacancies across the Air Force Reserve enterprise," Passarella said. "We have created a program specifically designed for the USMMA midshipmen, tailored to their class-year specifics, encompassing all pre-commissioning requirements with the intent to place the midshipmen into Air Force Reserve units between their junior and senior years."

"Ideally, in delivering this program out to the entire Reserve force, commanders at every level will know now what the USMMA has to offer and can now contact us directly looking for viable candidates to fill their open billets. There is not another academic institution like this anywhere, and the graduates from here have proven themselves under the harshest conditions in the world." 

Readiness comes in many forms for Air Force Reservists and their family members – including being ready for a disaster. Officials with the Reserve's Commander's Key Support Program encourage all Citizen Airmen and their family members to be familiar with a pair of resources critical to emergency and disaster preparedness: Air Force Be Ready and the Air Force Personnel Accountability and Assessment System.

Air Force Be Ready (<https://beready.af.mil>) is your one-stop shop for how best to prepare for all types of disasters, from explosions and hurricanes to tornadoes and droughts. The website offers valuable advice for disaster preparation, including how to put together an emergency kit, how to make a comprehensive survival plan and how to be prepared for any disaster. The site also features tips for what to do after a disaster strikes and a special section on how to prepare kids for a disaster.

The Air Force Personnel Accountability and Assessment System (<https://afpaas.af.mil>) standardizes the method for the Air Force to account, assess, manage and monitor the recovery and reconstitution process for personnel and their families affected and/or scattered by a wide-spread catastrophic event.

AFPAAS allows Air Force personnel to report their accounting status, update their family contact/location information, complete a needs assessment and view reference material. In the event of an exercise or real-world event, Reservists and their family members may be required to report their statuses in AFPAAS, so it's important that they remain cognizant of their AFPAAS reporting requirements by checking AFPAAS in the event of any type of disaster.

In addition, communicating the importance of having your family members use AFPAAS to report their status in the event of an evacuation when you are not with them is critical. For your family members, the login process is also at <https://afpaas.af.mil/>. Click on the "Click Here" button under the "Airmen/Civilians" heading. Then, under "Select Login Method," they will select "Personal Information" and log in with their sponsor's Social Security number, date of birth and last name. From here, they can update contact and location information for all of the immediate family members to be accounted for.



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