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CITIZEN AIRMAN

A photograph of two pilots in a cockpit, viewed from behind. They are wearing headsets and looking at various instrument displays. The cockpit is filled with numerous screens and control panels.

HURRICANE HUNTERS
FLY CRITICAL MISSIONS INTO

A blue graphic featuring a white line map of a city street grid, overlaid with a white radar-like pattern of concentric circles and radial lines.

**DEADLY
STORMS**





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



FROM THE TOP

COMPREHENSIVE AIRMAN FITNESS

Lt. Gen. Healy and I often discuss what it means to have a healthy and ready force. In the last issue of *Citizen Airmen*, Lt. Gen. Healy and I challenged all Airmen to stay focused and do their job as we prepare for the realities of Great Power Competition.

Prior to that, in January of this year, Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. David W. Allvin charged the Air Force Reserve to prioritize four lines of effort. One of those efforts was the pursuit of Warrior Ethos within our force. Serving in the profession of arms comes with responsibilities, requirements and attributes aligned with our Core Values: Integrity First, Service Before Self and Excellence in All We Do.

These unifying values serve as the foundation for our Warrior Ethos. Meeting CSAF's intent requires all Airmen to take care of each other and focus on preparing ourselves for the rigors of future conflicts. Our profession requires us to have the moral courage and

discipline to prioritize Comprehensive Airman Fitness. This concept presents an integrated framework to sustain a fit, ready and resilient force centered on four domains — mental, physical, social and spiritual.

Essentially, it means having a balanced lifestyle. Introduced in 2019, Comprehensive Airman Fitness is a cultural shift in how we view and maintain fitness in a more holistic manner. It enables Airmen to hold each other accountable against Air Force Core Values, while also reinforcing a personal commitment to integrating warrior ethos into our everyday actions. When we think of Comprehensive Airman Fitness, our core values and warrior ethos, three overlapping qualities stand out: Strength of Character, Determination and Mindfulness.

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Strength of character — a quality that comes from moral courage — is reflected in the core

value of Integrity First. This includes having the integrity to be responsible for ourselves and accountable to each other. A highly functional weapon system is not just a collection of parts; it is a unified whole that works together as one.

Our most valuable asset is our human weapons system. As a fighting force, we are not just a collection of individuals but the sum of our Airmen. A united front working together towards the common mission — the defense of our nation. You remain our nation's most competitive advantage, not just because of your unmatched expertise but by your strength of character in answering to a higher call.

DETERMINATION

Determination means looking over the horizon and beyond the stresses that lie immediately in front of us, as displayed by Service Before Self and Warrior Ethos. Working together, our sense of common purpose and goal gives us the fortitude to press ahead. As Reserve Airmen, you demonstrate determination and resolve daily — continually rising to meet each challenge and overcoming obstacles to get the mission done. The key to being a professional is the ability to do something reliably and on-demand. This next year will be a time of transition and transformation to increase our ability to do just that.

As we look towards the challenges of Great Power Competition and the organizational de-





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ISRAEL NUÑEZ
Chief Master Sergeant, USAF
Senior Enlisted Advisor to the
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CHIEF'S VIEW

velopments presented by Combat Wings, we must prepare to work through the associated stress that accompanies change. We will succeed, and not just through proper planning, but with grit and determination. For the last three decades, your selfless service has fortified our joint force. Today's challenge is no different. Your continued perseverance and commitment to excellence will lead us through any test to assured success.

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is reflected in the mental, social and spiritual aspects of Comprehensive Airmen Fitness. As we approach the holidays and the upcoming new year, we must be mindful of factors that contribute to both our joy and stress.

It is an opportunity to reflect, rest and recharge before returning to meet the demands and expectations of our nation. However, the holiday season may be difficult for some. As Wingmen, we ask that you look out for one another. While many of us look forward to spending time with our loved ones during the holiday season, not everyone can.

Take time to connect with your brothers and sisters in arms who may not have family to celebrate with this season. The holidays can also start or intensify financial hardships. Be it financial, family or emotional stresses, we must connect Airmen to the resources available to ease those burdens.

If you are in need, tell your supervisor. Supervisors, we encourage you to check-in with your subordinates deliberately and purposefully. Every single one of you and your families are important. As much as we need you to be physically and operationally ready, we need you in the right warrior mindset.

Let's close out this year knowing we've met CSAF's intent and are fully ready for any trials

the new year might bring. We appreciate the sacrifices of our deployed service members and their families and look forward to their safe return. From Cathy, Susie and both Lt. Gen. Healy and I, we wish you all a peaceful holiday season filled with joy and relaxation.

Chief Master Sgt. Israel Nuñez



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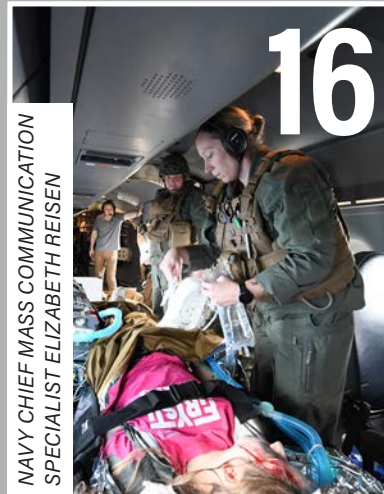
On the cover: The brave Reserve Airmen of the 403rd Wing's 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, flew a total of 18 missions directly into Hurricanes Helene and Milton in late September and early October to collect data for National Hurricane Center forecasts. For more on the Hurricane Hunters, see the story on page 6. (Photos by Lt. Col. Marnee A.C. Losurdo)



LT. COL. MARNEE A.C. LOSURDO



★ ROUND THE RESERVE ★



NAVY CHIEF MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST ELIZABETH REISEN



COURTESY PHOTO

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— By Lt. Col. Marnee A.C. Losurdo

HURRICANE HUNTERS FLY CRITICAL MISSIONS INTO

DEADLY STORMS

As millions of Americans evacuated their homes and headed to safer ground ahead of Hurricanes Helene and Milton this fall, the brave Reserve Airmen of the 403rd Wing's 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, flew multiple missions directly into the deadly storms, collecting data for National Hurricane Center forecasts.

Between Sept. 23 and 26, the Air Force Reserve Hurricane Hunter aircrews flew nine weather reconnaissance missions into Hurricane Helene, which made landfall on Florida's Big Bend before wreaking havoc across the Southeastern United States. Between Oct. 5 and 9, the Hurricane Hunters flew nine missions into Hurricane Milton, which made landfall near Siesta Key on Oct. 10 and carved a large path of destruction across the central Florida peninsula.

Weather forecasters rely on satellites for information; however, oceans are data-sparse environments, and satellites can't provide information such as the minimum sea level pressure of a hurricane, wind speed information or information about the storm structure, which is needed to predict hurricane development and movement, said Lt. Col. Ryan Rickert, 53rd WRS aerial reconnaissance weather officer, who flew a Hurricane Helene mission Sept. 26 directing the crew to the true center of the storm.

During a tropical storm or hurricane, 53rd WRS aircrews fly into these systems with the WC-130J Super Hercules aircraft at altitudes that range from 500 to 1,500 feet for low-level investigations and up to 10,000 feet for fix missions. In the initial stages of a storm, 53rd WRS crews will typically fly about every 12 hours, and as it approaches land,

they will start to fly every six hours, said Rickert, adding that during a fix mission, they can fly through the eye of a storm four to six times, and during each pass through the eye they release a dropsonde, which collects temperature, wind speed, wind direction, humidity and barometric pressure data. The aircraft also collects surface wind speed and flight-level data. This information is transmitted to the NHC to assist them with their storm warnings and hurricane forecast models in the Atlantic, Caribbean and eastern Pacific.

Another mission they fly is a survey mission, which allows forecasters to investigate areas of interest within a weather system.

Capt. Amaryllys Cotto, 53rd WRS ARWO, flew such a mission at 10,000 feet into Helene Sept. 23 before the storm was named.





Col. Elissa D. Granderson, 403rd Operations Group commander, flies a weather reconnaissance mission into Hurricane Milton. Aircrews with the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron flew missions into Hurricanes Helene and Milton to gather vital weather data for National Hurricane Center forecasts. (Lt. Col. Mark Withee)

“A survey mission is a non-standardized flying pattern for the purpose of investigating certain regions of a system, before it’s well developed,” said Cotto. “The data collected in the survey mission gives NHC forecasters a better understanding of how the system is behaving and its interaction with the surrounding environment.

“The dropsonde data is also ingested in the models, which produces a better forecast track and intensity output,” she said. “The data we provide is very valuable.”

Each mission has a purpose, whether it’s a survey, invest or fix mission and every single one of them improves the track and intensity forecast by 20-30%.

The 53rd WRS, the only Department of Defense organization still flying into tropical storms and hur-

ricanes, has been collecting this vital weather data for forecasts since 1944. The squadron’s operations area ranges from the 55-longitude line in the Atlantic to the International Dateline in the Pacific. While other C-130 units receive taskings from the geographic combatant commander they support or the Air Force Reserve Command for training missions, the 53rd WRS receives its taskings from the National Hurricane Center, a Department of Commerce agency.

Through an interagency agreement, tropical weather reconnaissance is governed by the National Hurricane Operations Plan, which requires the squadron to support 24-hour a day continuous operation with the ability to fly up to three storms simultaneously and with a response time of 16 hours. To accomplish this, the squadron has 10 full-time and 10 part-time Reserve

aircrews available to fly 10 WC-130J Super Hercules to meet weather reconnaissance taskings.

The Hurricane Hunters role in improving forecasts is crucial especially in an era of storms that go through rapid intensification, which according to NHC is when winds from a tropical cyclone increase at least 34.5 mph in 24 hours, which is a leap of two categories on the Saffir-Simpson scale. Helene spun up from a tropical storm to a Category 4 in about 64 hours, which didn’t provide Floridians much time to prepare or evacuate.

“Storms that move into the Gulf can be hard to forecast and they have resulted in significant damage over the past several years and are subject to life-threatening storm surge, catastrophic winds, flooding

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rainfall and isolated tornados. Some of these systems over the Gulf can go through rapid intensification with little lead time,” said Cotto.

“Rapid intensification is a phenomenon that is difficult to forecast and forecast models still have a hard time predicting it. This is a feature that Hurricane Hunters can analyze while flying the system, providing real-time insight of the storm. By relaying how well or fast it’s developing, NHC forecasters then have the chance to make quick updates on their watches and warnings and quality check the current forecast trends.”

With less time to prepare for hurricanes such as Milton and Helene,

advance preparation is key and the data the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron provides to NHC is vital, potentially saving lives and property, said Lt. Col. Brad Boudreaux, 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron pilot.

He was the pilot in command for the mission into Milton Oct. 8 that departed from Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi at 2 p.m. During his mission the hurricane re-intensified from a category 4 to a category 5, which made his first pass through the eyewall a rough ride, he said.

“They key to everything we do here is to narrow the cone of uncertainty,” said Boudreaux, ex-

plaining this is the most probable track of a storm. “Our job is to provide weather information to the National Hurricane Center so that they can provide the best forecast so people can prepare.”

Forecasts, storm warnings and evacuation orders are only effective if people heed them and prepare. It’s best for communities to prepare in advance for extreme weather, water and climate events, said Rickert.

For information visit <https://www.ready.gov/> or www.weather.gov/wrn/.



(Losurdo is assigned to the 403rd Wing public affairs office.)





Opposite page: Hurricane Hunters fly a mission into Hurricane Milton. Clockwise from top left: Lt. Col. Kelsey Carpenter, 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron aerial reconnaissance weather officer, and Lt. Col. Brad Boudreaux, 53rd WRS pilot, review weather data collected during a mission into Hurricane Milton. Maj. Ian Park, 53rd WRS aerial reconnaissance weather officer, does his pre-flight checks prior to a mission into Hurricane Milton. A Hurricane Hunter WC-130J Super Hercules aircraft takes off on a mission. Master Sgt. Cameron Beste, 53rd WRS loadmaster and dropsonde operator, reviews vertical weather profile data sent from the dropsonde to the aircraft during a mission into Hurricane Helene. (Photos by Lt. Col. Marnee A.C. Losurdo)

TAMPA CITIZEN AIRMEN ENDURE DEVASTATION; SHOW RESILIENCE, TEAMWORK AND SPIRIT


— By Tech. Sgt. Brad Tipton

The Tampa Bay area endured a historic period of hurricane activity, enduring Hurricanes Helene and Milton in the span of two weeks. Amid the devastation from western Florida to the southern Appalachia mountains, members of the Air Force Reserve 927th Air Refueling Wing, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, united in both preparation and recovery ranging from the installation in South Tampa, to the homes of impacted Citizen Airmen all along the coast.

The 927th ARW works alongside the active-duty 6th Air Refueling Wing, in many cases augmenting efforts, supporting missions and adding strategic depth. During the 2024 hurricane season, this included helping to protect MacDill's service members and KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft when the 6th Operations Support Squadron's weather flight predicted the incoming threats to the installation.

"We are tied in with the 6th ARW emergency management effort, working hand-in-hand and bringing some of our own unique capabilities," said Lt. Col. Brian Grier, 927th Mission Support Group deputy commander. "As soon as active duty declared HURCON (Hurricane Conditions), we stood up our unit and group control centers, began attending emergency operations center meetings, identifying our ride-out team for Raymond James Stadium, preparing and hardening our facilities and getting ready to ensure accountability for our members."

Helping to prepare and relocate the KC-135 aircraft, 927th Maintenance and Operations Group Citizen Airmen blended with active-duty crews on the flightline while leadership within the wing began executing well-established and rehearsed hurricane procedures and laying down lines of communication for command and control of resources and Airmen. Messaging flowed throughout the weeks right up and into the storms, with the 927th



A downed tree is shown on a road at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, following Hurricane Milton. Milton brought strong winds and heavy rain to the installation, which downed trees and flooded some low-lying areas. (Capt. Kaitlin Butler)



ARW emergency management team distributing vital information about the weather, preparations and, most importantly, the welfare of Citizen Airmen.

“We are proud of our emergency management team who volunteered to leave their own homes to stay at Raymond James Stadium to help recover the base,” said Grier. “Mr. DeJesus filled the vacant position, revitalized the program and went into immediate action with these two storms – learning as he went and building strong relationships with active duty.”

With base preparations made, including departure of the aircraft to safer installations, Tampa Bay braced for devastation not seen by the region in 100 years. Citizen Airmen who endured the storms awoke to a completely changed world.

Hurricane Helene made landfall on Sept. 26 in Florida’s Big Bend region as a category 4 storm. Shortly afterward, Hurricane Milton reached the Sarasota/Siesta Key area on Oct. 9, striking with category 3 force. Combined impacts from the two storms left an estimated three million residents without power across the state, untold wind damage to the city and its structures and flooding from storm surge reaching as high as eight feet in some areas.


Helene’s damage to the power grid was evident from night-time photos from the International Space Station, and Tropicana Field, home of the Tampa Bay Rays Major League Baseball team, in St. Petersburg, stood, roof in tatters, as a visible sign of the destruction from Milton’s 120 mile-per-hour winds.

“It was unbelievable,” said Chief Master Sgt. Heather Bragdon, 927th Operations Group senior enlisted leader. “You could see the destruction, as all the water had left our home. It was just overwhelming. People began texting me to see how they could help, and I didn’t have answers yet because I just didn’t know what to do.”

Bragdon’s South Tampa home, which had in many past hurricanes never experienced surge flooding of this magnitude, was inundated with three feet of storm water. Her personal belongings on the first floor and all of her vehicles were completely lost in the storm.

Help did not take long to arrive, however. Master Sgt. Terra Stinnett, 927th ARW Resilience Integrator, first sergeants from throughout the wing, and the 927th ARW command team worked to organize resources and response in support of impacted members – in many cases sending physical teams to help rip out storm surge damaged drywall and transport what personal items could be salvaged to storage.

Continued on next page



A street sign is shown on the ground at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, following Hurricane Milton. (Capt. Kaitlin Butler)



Members of the 927th Maintenance Group and the 6th Maintenance Group work together to prepare a KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft to evacuate MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, in front of Hurricane Milton. (Staff Sgt. Leah Ritchey)



Continued from previous page

“We’ve been very thankful for the support,” said Bragdon. “I didn’t always know what we needed, but people just started showing up anyway. Master Sgt. Randall, Lt. Col. Swee, and I all had teams of people at our houses helping from the operations group.”

Help was organized through a variety of avenues and demonstrated the bonds built between Citizen Airmen and the community across many years.


“We experienced a huge sense of community assistance from our local 927th family to my Leadership Tampa Bay family and family from Louisiana,” said Chief Master Sgt. Jerry Rayborn, 927th Maintenance Squadron senior enlisted leader, who experienced two feet of storm surge in his home.

“The 927th ARW leadership all personally provided support to help demo my water damaged home including kitchen cabinets, appliances, sheetrock and outdoor kitchen. The 927th Maintenance Squadron and commander came out in support, helping remove items to storage in preparation for demo day.”

“When I showed up, six or seven people were already working and that slowly grew,” said Brian Mays, a 927th ARW honorary commander who responded to Rayborn’s home after hearing the news. “What impressed me the most about Chief Rayborn was that he said he just wants to get as close to normal as possible and then find out who else out there needs help.”

Mays, himself a 10-year U.S. Army veteran, described the effort as a well-oiled military machine. “Somebody was always grabbing something, tossing it into the trailer, and somebody came behind them with a broom, sweeping to keep the mess down,” said Mays. “Tampa has to be the most veteran-friendly city. It truly embraces MacDill Air Force Base, and the base is also very transparent, so it doesn’t feel isolated. I commend the leadership of MacDill and the Tampa community.”

Recovery from Hurricanes Helene and Milton is still on-going in the Tampa Bay area and the 927th Air Refueling Wing remains poised to carry out its mission, able to do so through the resilience and teamwork demonstrated by selfless Citizen Airmen and members of the local community.

“Many of our members lost their homes or suffered damage to their property, but none of them lost their spirit,” said Col. Kurt Matthews, 927th ARW commander. “The resilience of our members brought tears to my eyes as I listened to them tell me, ‘It’s just stuff’ and ‘We’ll get back on our feet.’ Thank God, no one was hurt. Their families and squadron teammates rolled in to assist them with immediate recovery. Our Resiliency Integration team, first sergeants, base agencies and honorary commanders are providing valuable resources to our Airmen in need. Because we were ready, the mission still goes on!” 

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





Citizen Airmen work to restore houses of their wingmen damaged during Hurricanes Helene and Milton in the Tampa Bay area. Hurricane Helene made landfall on Sept. 26 in Florida's Big Bend region as a category 4 storm and Hurricane Milton reached the Sarasota, Florida, area on Oct. 9, striking with category 3 force. (Courtesy photos)



TRAVIS AFB BIDS FAREWELL TO LAST KC-10

By 60th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs



Team Travis members, veterans, and military and local community leaders gathered to bid farewell to the last U.S. Air Force KC-10 Extender and commemorated the aircraft's rich history in a ceremony Sept. 26, at Travis Air Force Base, California.

After 44 years of service, the KC-10 was decommissioned during the final farewell event hosted by Col. Jay Johnson, 60th Air Mobility Wing commander.

The ceremony featured opening remarks by the 60th AMW commander, a video introduction presented by Col. Patrick Brady-Lee, commander of the Air Force Reserve's 349th AMW, remarks by Gen. Johnny Lamontagne, Air Mobility Command commander, and a keynote speech by retired Gen. Paul Selva, former vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and former 9th Air Refueling Squadron commander. The 349th AMW is the largest associate wing in the U.S. Air Force Reserve.

"What I want to do is say thank you to all of you, to every one of you, for everything you have given that [KC-10] machine," said Selva. "Whether you are a maintainer, an operator or a member of the support team that makes it possible for us to fly the airplane, you have made the reputation that is the KC-10... this is not the end of an era, it's just another chapter of a long story."

A derivative of the McDonnell Douglas DC-10, the KC-10 entered service in 1981, and has been a key enabler of global airpower, supporting combat operations, humanitarian missions and allied partnerships around the world.

"For decades, the KC-10 has taken to the skies to provide in-flight refueling, a vital capability that delivers global reach for America and is the lynchpin to joint power projection," said Gen. David W. Allvin, chief of staff of the Air Force, in a video address. "From its initial days in Strategic Air Command through today, the KC-10 has linked the continents and

guaranteed our promise of American airpower anytime, anywhere."

"Your chests should be really high, with broad shoulders. You have made magic happen with your predecessors for the last 44 years," said Lamontagne. "You have made that history."

The KC-10's legacy is tied to the thousands of Airmen who maintained, flew and supported its missions, extending the reach of airpower across the globe.

"The KC-10's legacy is not just about the collection of impressive statistics, but more importantly, it's about the people, community and the Airmen who made the aircraft what it is," added Johnson. "As the KC-10 takes its last flight, its legacy doesn't end. With that last touchdown, those lessons will be passed on through friendship, through the knowledge you all have passed down through generations."



Opposite page: A KC-10 Extender, tail number 91948, sits on the flightline during the KC-10 Farewell Ceremony at Travis Air Force Base, Calif., Sept. 26. As the final base to operate the KC-10, Travis AFB had the honor of bidding farewell to an aircraft that has been a vital component of the U.S. military's global reach and power projection capabilities. (Tech. Sgt. Daniel Peterson) Below: Airmen stand together with the last KC-10 Extender after its retirement flight to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. (Senior Airman Lauren Jacoby)



Legacy

The KC-10 was designed to provide increased global mobility for U.S. armed forces. Although its primary mission was aerial refueling, it also provided airlift of personnel and equipment on overseas deployments. Beyond combat operations, the KC-10 and its crews provided essential support in humanitarian missions. Its refueling capabilities and cargo capacity enabled rapid response to natural disasters, such as hurricane relief and earthquake recovery efforts, in ensuring timely aid delivery to those in need.

During Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1991, the KC-10 fleet provided in-flight refueling to aircraft from the U.S. armed forces as well as those of other coalition forces. In the early stages of Operation Desert Shield, in-flight refueling was key to the rapid airlift of materiel and forces. In addition to refueling aircraft, the KC-10, along with the smaller KC-135, moved thousands of tons of cargo and thousands of troops in support of the massive Persian Gulf buildup. The KC-10 and the KC-135 conducted about 51,700 separate refueling operations and delivered 125 million gallons of fuel without missing a single scheduled rendezvous.

In March 1999, a NATO air campaign, Operation Allied Force, was launched against the government of Yugoslavia. The mobility portion of the

operation began in February and was heavily tanker dependent. By early May 1999, around 150 KC-10 and KC-135 aircraft deployed to Europe where they refueled bombers, fighters and support aircraft engaged in the conflict. The KC-10 flew 409 missions throughout the entire campaign and continued support operations in Kosovo.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, KC-10s have played a prominent role. The KC-10 has flown more than 350 missions guarding U.S. skies as a part of Operation Noble Eagle. During Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, KC-10s flew more than 1,390 missions delivering critical air refueling support to numerous joint and coalition receiver aircraft.

The KC-10 was also heavily relied upon during Operation Allies Refuge, the largest non-combatant evacuation operations in U.S. history, according to the State Department. The KC-10 moved more than 3,000 evacuees from safe havens in Europe and the Middle East to the United States and provided air refueling throughout the operation. More than 40% of the KC-10 fleet was deployed in support of this effort.

Look to the future

Looking to the future, air refueling remains a prominent focus as Air Mobility Command continues to project the Joint Force and the U.S. Air Force

continues to reoptimize for the Great Power Competition.

“Even when the Extender heads over the horizon today, the KC-10’s accomplishments will never fade,” Allvin said. “We can never forget that it was not the metal that made the KC-10 great – it was the people.”

There are generations of crews, maintainers and support Airmen who gave their blood, sweat and tears to build the aircraft’s legacy that is honored today, Allvin said.

The final destination for the aircraft will be with the 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. The AMARG, America’s Airpower Reservoir, is a specialized facility within the Air Force Sustainment Center. It provides aircraft preservation and storage, parts reclamation, disposal preparation, aircraft regeneration to flying status and depot maintenance for America’s military services, U.S. government agencies and allied governments.

As the KC-10 retires, the Air Force is replacing it with the KC-46A Pegasus. As of September 2024, 88 KC-46s have been delivered. The 60th AMW will gain the KC-46 and continue to provide unmatched air refueling and enable the U.S. military’s global reach and power projection capabilities.

ROUND THE RESERVE



DUKE FIELD RESERVISTS PLAY VITAL ROLE IN NORTHERN VIKING EXERCISE



Lt. Shelby Wolfe prepares an IV bag for a simulated casualty in a C-146A Wolfhound aircraft during a medical transport flight at a mass casualty drill held at Northern Viking 24. (Navy Chief Mass Communication Specialist Elizabeth Reisen)

A team of Reservists from Duke Field, Florida, demonstrated the versatility of the C-146A Wolfhound aircraft while supporting joint and NATO forces during Exercise Northern Viking 2024 in Keflavik, Iceland, Aug. 26 through Sept. 4.

Members of the 919th Special Operations Wing's 859th Special Operations Squadron used the venue to illustrate its mission is agile and accessible while still flexible enough to work with military and civilian entities during times of crisis. Aircrew members from the squadron welcomed the opportunity to demonstrate their skills in events across multiple domains.

"Not only were we challenged by having to contend with a drastically different environment, living up to its reputation

as the land of fire and ice with storms and an active volcano, but we also benefited from working with other U.S. and NATO forces," said Capt. Jason Brown, 859th SOS pilot and lead planner for the squadron's participation in the exercise. "Our primary mission remains SOF-focused, but there will always be a need to work with those who have differing requirements, missions or purposes. Northern Viking gave us an opportunity to work under a Navy and Marine Corps command structure with seven other NATO nations over a 10-day period."

The multinational exercise, led by U.S. Naval Forces Europe and executed by the U.S. Sixth Fleet, brought together naval, air and land components from NATO allies, including Iceland, Denmark, France, Norway, Poland and Portugal.

The unit, and its active-duty partners in the 524th SOS, provide the Air Force's only non-standard aviation capability transporting SOF members and equipment to some of the world's most austere locations. This was the first opportunity for the 859th SOS to train with the Icelandic quick reaction force and joint partners in a range of crisis response scenarios, including a volcanic eruption and other humanitarian disasters.



(Lt. Col. James Wilson, 919th SOW public affairs)

445TH MASS CASUALTY EXERCISE STRESS TESTS AEROMEDICAL EVACUATION SQUADRON



A 445th Airlift Wing C-17 Globemaster III is loaded with mock patients during a multi-unit mass casualty exercise. (Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly)

Members of the 445th Aeromedical Staging, Aerospace Medicine and Aeromedical Evacuation Squadrons participated in a mass casualty exercise at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, in August.

The objective of the training was to stress test the aeromedical evac-

uation crews to receive an excess of wounded warriors in a short period of time and to identify deficiencies.

"We were asked by the AE commander, Lt. Col. Melissa Seacat, to provide more realistic training scenarios for them for future combat," said Senior Master Sgt. Joseph Valenzuela, 445th



Aeromedical Staging Squadron nursing services superintendent. "We're being told to expect increased casualties (for this exercise) unlike anything we've ever seen before. We're not going to be preparing ourselves or other squadrons in the wing if we don't partner to do simulations like this."

About 40 members from the ASTS and AMDS squadrons assembled to become medical exercise players. The players got into moulage, or simulation of illness or injury, by using makeup techniques and acting. Moulage uses tactile cues to promote learner engagement through a more real-world experience.

As the C-17 lifted off with an AE crew inside, they had no idea of the mass casualty scenario that was unfolding on the flightline.


"We had no idea what to expect," said Senior Airman Andrea Plaugher, 445th AES aerospace medical journeyman. "All we knew was our plane was turning around due to a report of an active shooter on the base. We didn't know how many injuries there were or if ASTS was even coming to help. It was stressful having no clue what was in store."

As the AE crew landed and departed the plane, they were inundated with players from the ASTS and AMDS helping to provide a realistic training scenario to challenge the AE crew's performance.

"Initially, when I saw how many people were on the flightline it felt like a daunting situation," Plaugher said. "I've been on a lot of flights, and this felt much more real. But, as we started to assess the situation and work

together, I think the crew responded to the scenario well."

Valenzuela agreed the training was successful.

"I think that despite it being a little unorganized and chaotic initially, I think everybody did well on the ground teams," he said. "There's no way we can train and plan for every real-life scenario. The key to success in these exercises is being able to take what you know, use it efficiently under pressure and have flexibility. I think everybody had a positive attitude and came together to make it happen. We're going to continue to do more events like this in the future." 

(Senior Airman Angela Jackson, 445th AW public affairs)

U.S. SERVICE MEMBERS PROVIDE MEDICAL CARE IN EL SALVADOR



Lt. Col. Niyasdeen Dieguez Santiesteban, 482nd Medical Squadron pediatrician, evaluates an El Salvadoran girl for treatment at an outreach clinic at Ilopango, El Salvador. (Tech. Sgt. Justin Norton)

More than 40 people from 15 units across three U.S. military service branches participated in a campaign to augment health services in multiple locations across El Salvador Aug. 19 to Sept. 6.

Service members supported the AMISTAD campaign by integrating with existing El Salvadoran Ministry of Health providers and exchanging knowledge with Salvadoran healthcare professionals while promoting the health and well-being of their nation's citizens.

"Our purpose here was to deploy medical assistance teams to increase the medical readiness of U.S. forces and strengthen U.S. relationships in El Salvador," said Maj.

Anthony Boudreau, a nurse with the 302nd Aeromedical Staging Squadron, Peterson Space Force Base, Colorado, and mission commander for the campaign. "We wanted to exchange knowledge with one another and increase our interoperability with our partner nation."

During the campaign, U.S. forces from nine medical specialties accomplished more than 1,500 patient actions and delivered medical supplies to a host of medical facilities. They also delivered equipment and infusion pumps designed to combat the spread of Dengue, a viral infection that spreads through mosquito bites.

Along with providing real-world patient care, knowledge-exchange events were planned so nurses and practitioners from both nations could share best practices in their respective fields.

U.S. servicemembers conducted Advanced Trauma Life Support courses as well as Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics training.

The trauma course, led by Lt. Col. (Dr.) Andrea Blake, 302nd ASTS trauma surgeon, provided attendees with an approach to manage multiple-injured patients by quickly

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ROUND THE RESERVE



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assessing their conditions, stabilizing them and preparing them for transport to elevated levels of care. Army Lt. Col. Adriane Bell, Womack Army Medical Center family medicine faculty, led the obstetrics course, which educated participants on various methods of delivering a newborn when complications arise during childbirth. The training included hands-on training using mannequins.

Capt. Diana Trang, 60th Medical Group family medicine faculty, led a training course demonstrating the utility of point-of-care ultrasound technology. Nurses and doctors listened to a classroom training section before training on each other using ultrasound gel and mobile hospital beds.

Chief Master Sgt. Joseph Kim, 302nd Aerospace Staging Squadron senior air reserve technician and director of operations for the mission, addressed a large portion of the team on their final day supporting the AMIS-TAD campaign.

"All of you made this a successful mission, and you have our deepest gratitude," he said. "The beauty of U.S. military members is that we can come together from various backgrounds to be a team that will give it all they have to accomplish the mission. You helped local communities and please know that you made a difference to the beautiful country of El Salvador."



(Tech. Sgt. Justin Norton, 302nd AW public affairs office.)

HURRICANE HUNTERS RECEIVING UPDATED EQUIPMENT



Hunting hurricanes requires the right tools, many of which are on the WC-130J Super Hercules aircraft.

Reservists with the 403rd Wing's 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, collect a variety of data, from temperature, wind speed, wind direction, humidity and barometric pressure, which is sent to the National Hurricane Center to improve forecasts.

Being able to collect the data requires up-to-date and working equipment, which is the sole responsibility of the members of the 403rd Maintenance

Squadron's Meteorological Equipment Technician Shop. The shop is as unique as the Hurricane Hunters as they are the only facility in the Air Force that maintains WC-130J meteorological equipment.

Recently the MET shop received updated parts for the dew point hygrometer that is currently installed on the WC-130J Super Hercules.

"The hygrometer is used to measure dew point at flight level," said Maj. Garrett Black, 12th Operational Weather Flight director of operations and 53rd WRS Aerial Reconnaissance Weather Officer. Dew point is the temperature at which air is cooled to become saturated with water vapor to achieve a relative humidity of 100%. The higher the dew point, the greater amount of moisture in the air. Meteorologists use dew point to predict weather patterns.

The hygrometer is important in providing a dew point reading at aircraft flight altitude while the dropsonde provides dew point readings as it descends into the storm environment, with both measurements being transferred back to the NHC to assist in the weather forecasts.

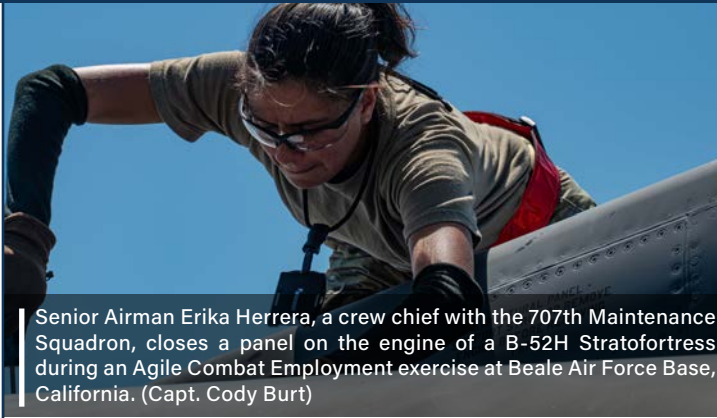
"We have been using this equipment for years," Black said. "Getting newer components for the equipment is just another way to ensure that the data we provide to the National Hurricane Center remains accurate."

While the use of the hygrometer is not new, the components inside are being updated to assist in providing more accurate dew point data readings during storm missions.



(Jessica L. Kendziorek, 403rd Wing public affairs office)





Senior Airman Erika Herrera, a crew chief with the 707th Maintenance Squadron, closes a panel on the engine of a B-52H Stratofortress during an Agile Combat Employment exercise at Beale Air Force Base, California. (Capt. Cody Burt)

Reserve Airmen from the 307th Bomb Wing, Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, and their active-duty counterparts in the 2nd Bomb Wing joined forces with the Reserve's 940th Air Refueling Wing at Beale AFB, California, to participate in an Agile Combat Employment exercise in August.

The ACE concept presents a layer of unpredictability for adversaries by employing aircraft in nontraditional, decentralized environments.

"The big thrust of this is we want to regularly exercise the fact that we can operate from areas other than our main home station," said Lt. Col. Courtney Hancock, 343rd Bomb Squadron commander. "The Agile Combat Employment construct is a big Air Force idea where they want to forward deploy units to operate out of bases they are not used to operating out of."

Beale was an ideal location for the mission because it has a runway large enough to launch and land B-52s, but it does not have the maintenance infrastructure to support the airframe.

While Beale could not provide operational needs for the B-52, its home units did step in with logistical support.

"We had a lot of home-grown support from the 940th Operations Support Squadron and the 314th Air Refueling Squadron out here," Hancock said. "They were integral in helping us bed down, getting us the tanker support we need and getting us set up with a lot of the home station support here."

Beyond logistics, it was up to the Total Force Integration package from Barksdale to make the mission happen.

The Reserve's 343rd Bomb Squadron and the 307th Operations Support Squadron teamed up with the active-duty 96th BS and 20th BS to take care of the air mission.

Back on the ground, the Reserve's 707th Maintenance Squadron teamed with one of the active-duty Air Force's newest units, the 20th Bomb Generation Squadron, to ensure the jet remained operationally ready.

While TFI packages are part of daily operations at Barksdale, putting the units into the ACE concept at Beale highlighted their agility and adaptability.

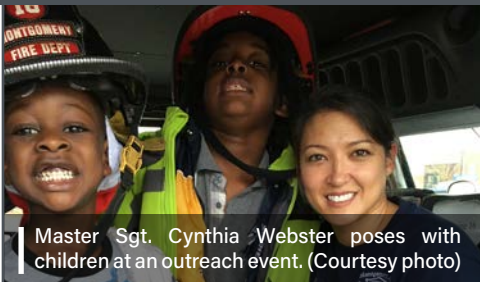
"This exercise is also practice to showcase our capabilities as a unit to deploy with a small maintenance package to a location that isn't specifically tailored toward the B-52," said Tech. Sgt. Dylan Arnold, a maintainer assigned to the 707th MXS.

The new location and the limited resources provided realistic training opportunities that simulated deployed conditions, allowing Airmen to hone their skills in an unfamiliar environment.



(Capt. Cody Burt, 307th Bomb Wing public affairs)

RESERVIST IS FIRST DRILL-STATUS AIRMAN TO SERVE AS JUNIOR ROTC INSTRUCTOR



Master Sgt. Cynthia Webster poses with children at an outreach event. (Courtesy photo)

In a historic milestone, Master Sgt. Cynthia Webster, a medical technician with the 908th Aeromedical

Staging Squadron, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, has become the first Air Force Reservist to serve as an [Air Force Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps](#) instructor while maintaining her drill status.

Webster began her new role as an Aerospace Science instructor at Mae Jemison High School in Huntsville, Alabama, in July.

Earlier this year an exciting new opportunity opened for drilling Reservists, Guardsmen and some separated veterans. Thanks to the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act, the Department of Defense unveiled new instructor pay tables, making the Junior ROTC instructor role accessible to a broader range of dedicated service members.

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ROUND THE RESERVE



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Webster originally took notice of Junior ROTC when one of her former commanders became an instructor after he retired. The role looked appealing to Webster.

"I might be able to share my passion for the military with younger generations," she said. "To demonstrate through my personal convictions

that military service is a selfless service, a calling, not just a business proposition where one's time, labor and talent is exchanged for things like college money."

She is hopeful that more Reserve members will consider this new opportunity. "I think it's a win-win for everyone involved," she said. "Serving as a JROTC instructor while simultaneously serving in the Reserve

helps senior NCOs relate to the junior members of their units. It's a win for currently serving Reservists like me because it broadened the range of opportunities available in the area.

Air Force Junior ROTC has nearly [830 programs](#) across the country and more than [200 current vacancies](#). 

(Keith Bland, Headquarters Air Force Junior ROTC)

GREY WOLF PARTICIPATES IN FIRST TRAINING EVENT



An MH-139A Grey Wolf helicopter from the 908th Flying Training Wing prepares to land during a Ready Airman Training exercise. (Bradley J. Clark)

The 908th Flying Training Wing, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, has been transitioning from a C-130-equipped tactical airlift unit to becoming the formal training unit for the MH-139A Grey Wolf helicopter for nearly four years now. After divesting the last of its C-130s in April 2022, and receiving its first Grey Wolf in April 2024, the wing has taken another first in the life of the U.S. Air Force's newest aircraft – participation in a training exercise.

The 908th Operations Support Squadron held a Ready Airman Training exercise in early September.


The exercise was a culmination event for the squadron, after having spent the previous five duty days, spread out since July 2024, covering items such as base defense, tactical combat casualty care, weapons handling, small arms

tactics, survival, evasion, resistance and escape tactics and other agile combat employment priorities, giving leadership a chance to test and evaluate multi-capable Airman skills.

"Most of the planning was accomplished by Tech. Sgt. Jesse Liethen, as he developed the ground exercise," said 703rd Helicopter Squadron Director of Operations Lt. Col. Justin McCullough, who also happened to be the copilot for the flight. "From there, the aircrew planning was relatively simple as it ended up being an exercise in base maneuvers for us. We are in the infancy stages of our flight training, but it was exciting to provide the ground members who were in the exercise a sense of realism to their scenario."

A little past the halfway point of the hour-long exercise, the Grey Wolf helicopter was spotted flying in the local pattern overhead. Then it began circling the training compound.

Those participating in the exercise on the ground then simulated calling for a show of force flyby, an air support concept that demonstrates air superiority.

After that, the Grey Wolf performed a landing in a grass field outside of the training compound, and simulated having a security forces team exit the aircraft and proceed to help reinforce the compound, then exfiltrate the area. 

(Bradley J. Clark, 908th FTW public affairs)



An Air Force legacy pilot who was part of the first C-130 demonstration team in the 1950s recently visited the 302nd Airlift Wing at Peterson Space Force Base, Colorado, for a tour of a C-130H aircraft.

Ninety-nine-year-old retired Lt. Col. Jim Akin was one of four pilots who flew the C-130A Hercules from early 1957 to 1960 as part of the first Air Force C-130 demonstration team, known as the Four Horsemen. The team was named in honor of Coach Knute Rockne's legendary backfield on Notre Dame's 1924 football team. The first C-130 entered service in the Air Force in December 1956, and the team showcased the aircraft's maneuverability and its capacity to take off and land in formation on short runways.

"It brought back memories, good memories and sad memories," said Akin. "It just taught me how much I miss it. That's the finest airplane they ever put in the air in my opinion, the C-130."

Akin served in the Army Air Corps and Air Force from 1944 to 1967, and flew in World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam. The list of aircraft he flew is long and distinguished and includes the C-119, B-25, P-38, C-130 and C-7A, as well as civilian crop dusters and executive transport aircraft. He was shot down twice in Vietnam while flying the C-7A.

Members of the 302nd AW, a C-130 pilot and maintainer, helped guide Akin through the aircraft as he walked around the exterior, through the cargo bay and sat in the crew compartment.

Col. DeAnna Franks, 302nd Operations Group commander, listened as Akin recalled key operations and advancements in the C-130 community while he scanned the flight deck, kicked the tires and ran his hand lovingly along the airframe.

"I tried to relate to my career of flying C-130s in the last 20 years," said Franks. "But it doesn't really scratch

the surface to the impact Lt. Col. Akin had on our Herc family. It was truly an honor to share with him what our Airmen fly today and I could tell he was reliving many moments of history."

He was accompanied on the tour by his daughter, Sharon Benn, and his granddaughter, Col. Elizabeth Mathias, head of the U.S. Air Force Academy Department of English and Fine Arts.

"The visit was poignant because I saw my grandpa relive an important part of his life," Mathias said. "He served in the Air Force long before I was born so while I've heard his stories, I had never seen him in an Air Force setting before this visit. He has so many memories of the C-130, it's been such a big part of his identity as an Airman and pilot and it was powerful to see him in his element."



(Tech. Sgt. Justin Norton, 302nd AW public affairs office)



Retired Lt. Col. Jim Akin stands between his granddaughter, Col. Elizabeth Mathias (left), and daughter, Sharon Benn, in the crew compartment of a 302nd Airlift Wing C-130H Hercules. (Tech. Sgt. Justin Norton)

ROUND THE RESERVE



RESERVE INCREASES OFFICER AND ENLISTED BONUS PROGRAM FOR FY25

— By Bo Joyner

In an effort to boost both recruiting and retention, the Air Force Reserve has increased its Officer and Enlisted Incentive Bonus Program for fiscal year 2025.

Lt. Gen. John P. Healy, the chief of the Air Force Reserve and commander of Air Force Reserve Command, recently approved the Reserve's FY25 Incentive Bonus Program, which runs from 1 October 2024 through 30 September 2025.

The program features a new critical skills list, variable contract year offerings and increased amounts offered for recruiting and retention bonuses. The program applies to traditional Reservists, individual Reservists and potential Reserve applicants.

"Current conditions require the Air Force Reserve to prioritize the generation and sustainment of a ready force," said Col. Tyisha Owens, chief of AFRC's Recruiting and Retention Division, A1Y. "The new officer and enlisted critical skills lists for FY25 and incentive bonus program should help us meet our recruiting and retention goals."

For FY25, 15 officer Air Force Specialty Codes and 52 enlisted AFSCs are identified as critical skills for incentive bonus eligibility. In addition, seven enlisted by-location AFSCs are bonus eligible.

In the new fiscal year, the Reserve is offering an officer accession bonus of up to \$20,000 for both non-prior service and prior service members and an affiliation bonus of up to \$20,000 for of-

ficers making the move from the regular Air Force or the Inactive Ready Reserve (IRR) to the Air Force Reserve. Affiliation bonuses are paid 50% lump-sum up-front, followed by two equal, incremental payments.

On the enlisted side, the Reserve is offering an accession bonus of up to \$20,000 for both non-prior service and prior service members, an affiliation bonus of up to \$20,000 for Airmen making the move from the regular Air Force or the IRR to the Air Force Reserve, and a retention bonus for Airmen who reenlist.

Reenlistment-eligible Airmen in one of the 52 enlisted critical skills, in the grade of E5 through E7, with more than five but less than 11 years of military service may be eligible for a lump-sum,



paid-up-front bonus of \$15,000 for a three-year contract.

Reenlistment-eligible Airmen in a non-critical skill in the grade of E5 through E7, with more than five but less than 11 years of military service may be eligible for a lump-sum, paid-up-front bonus of \$10,000 for a three-year contract.

Additionally, an enlisted affiliation bonus is offered to prior-service regular Air Force or IRR Airmen with at least a 3-skill level qualification and no break in service in one of the 52 enlisted critical skills who affiliate into the selected Reserve. Airmen who meet these criteria may be eligible for a lump-sum, paid-up-

front bonus of \$20,000 for a four-year contract.

Members who are currently or become Air Reserve Technicians or Active Guard Reservists are not eligible for any of the FY25 bonuses. Also, members will incur a Reserve service commitment upon acceptance of a bonus that requires minimum satisfactory participation.

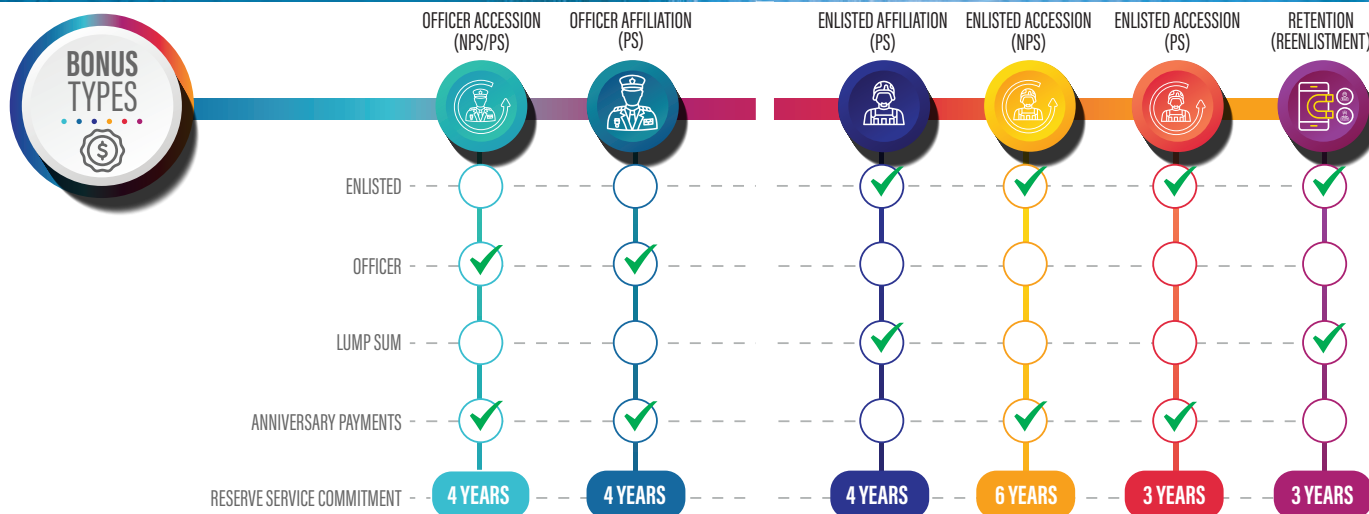
The FY25 Air Force Reserve Officer and Enlisted Incentive Guide, which contains all of the critical skills AFSC lists and bonus program details, is available on the myFSS website by using the "Search" bar and typing "AFR Enlisted Incentive Program" or "AFR

Officer Incentive Program" or "PSDG." The PSDG, or Personnel Services Delivery Guide, will be listed by the title under the heading "Benefits and Entitlements."

For more information, traditional Reservists should contact their Wing Talent Management Consultant, formerly the Career Assistance Advisor, in their servicing Force Support Squadron. Individual Reservists should reach out to the HQ RIO Talent Management Consultant.



FY24 BONUS REFERENCE CHART



Accession (Officer)	\$20K	4-year contract/CSL Paid over 3 years	> No more than 20 total years of service based on pay date; to receive payment, must become fully qualified in DAFSC
Affiliation (Officer)	\$20K	4-year contract/CSL 50% paid lump sum up front & 2 equal payments for remainder	> No more than 15 total years of service based on pay date
NPS (Enlisted)	\$20K	6-year contract/CSL Paid over 6 years	> To receive payment, must become 3-skill level qualified in DAFSC
Prior Svs (Enlisted)	\$15K	3-year contract/CSL Paid over term of contract	> No more than 16 total years of service based on pay date; includes other services
Affiliation (Enlisted)	\$20K	4-year contract/CSL Paid lump sum/up front	> No more than 20 total years of service based pay date; must be at least 3-skill level qualified in CSL dafsc on date of enlistment
Affiliation RCAIB (Enlisted)	\$10K	3-year contract/Non-CSL Paid lump sum/up front	> No more than 20 years of service based on pay date; must be at least 3-skill level qualified in non-CSL DAFSC
Retention (Enlisted)	\$15K	3-year reenlistment/CSL Paid lump sum/up front	> Be within 6 months of ETS; Be in the grade of E-5 to E-7;
	\$10K	3-year reenlistment/Non-CSL Paid lump sum/up front	> Be between 5 to 11 years of service based on pay date

NOTES: 1. Contract lengths are based on minimum allowable standards, applicants may enlist longer. 2. Critical Skills List (CSL) DAFSC.

ARPC INCENTIVE & BONUS PROGRAMS

Incentives/Critical Skills List Total	
Continuation Pay, Officer (J-Book)	GI Bill Amortization
Continuation Pay, Enlisted (J-Book)	GI Bill Lump Sum Retroactive
Continuation Pay Total	GI Bill Normal Cost Enhanced Benefit
Education Loan Repayment Bonus, Health Prof, Initial	GI Bill, Education Benefits Bonus, Officers
Education Loan Repayment Bonus, Health Prof, Anniversary	GI Bill, Education Benefits Bonus, Enlisted
Health Prof Spec Training Bonus, Initial	MOIB Kicker, Officer
Health Prof Spec Training Bonus, Anniversary	MOIB Kicker, Enlisted
Health Prof Total	Montgomery GI Bill Total
Foreign Language Proficiency Pay, Officer	Tuition Assistance, Officer
Foreign Language Proficiency Pay, Enlisted	Tuition Assistance, Enlisted (OBAN 91)
Foreign Lang Proficiency (FLPP) Total	
Aviation Bonus	



REENLISTMENT BONUS UP TO \$15,000

FY25 GUIDE



Is it time to reenlist and renew your commitment? If so, you may qualify for a retention bonus of up to **\$15,000**; paid in a lump-sum, up-front. To qualify, you must be within six months of your ETS, in the grade of E5 to E7, and have 5 to 11 years of satisfactory service (based on pay date). Airmen reenlisting in a critical skills DAFSC may be eligible for a \$15K bonus and members reenlisting in a non-critical skills DAFSC may qualify for a \$10K bonus. To reenlist, coordinate with your **Wing Talent Management Consultant (TMC)** for additional details. Learn more about FY25 bonuses and incentives by scanning the QR code above or go to myFSS (CAC login) and type "AFR enlisted incentive program" into the search bar.

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