



# The Flying Razorback

188th Fighter Wing

Arkansas Air National Guard

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## A new direction



Lt. Col. Mike Flatten, 22nd Special Tactics Squadron; Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III; Lt Gen Harry Wyatt, director of the Air National Guard; and a Special Operations JTAC converse about the training capabilities at the 188th Fighter Wing's Detachment 1 Razorback Range located at Fort Chaffee, Ark., Jan. 18, 2013. (National Guard photo by Senior Airman Hannah Landeros/188th Fighter Wing Public Affairs)

### Air Force Chief provides insight on 188th future during visit to wing

By Maj. Heath Allen  
188th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

FORT SMITH, Ark. — The 188th Fighter Wing moved one step closer to its future Jan. 18 during a visit by Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III.

Welsh along with Lt. Gen. Harry Wyatt III, director of the Air National Guard, toured the 188th's

facilities and met with wing and state military leadership as well as members of the Arkansas and Oklahoma Congressional delegation. Welsh also met with community leaders and city officials during a social gathering held in Fort Smith Jan. 17.

"I expected to see an out-

standing fighter wing that does a great service to our nation and, I believe, the state of Arkansas, and that's exactly what I've seen," Welsh said during a press conference following his tour. "They have a great installation here. There's a great range complex that they train on. They are immersed in the

mission of our Air Force, and I got to see that this morning."

For nearly a year, the 188th has endured uncertainty concerning its A-10 Thunderbolt II mission, which is slated to be replaced with a remotely piloted aircraft mission. And for nearly a year, the Arkan-

SEE **FUTURE** PAGE 8



**Col. Mark Anderson,**

188th Fighter Wing commander

**Col. Pete Gauger,**

188th Fighter Wing vice commander

**Chief Master Sgt. Asa Carter,**

188th Fighter Wing command chief  
master sergeant

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### The Flying Razorback

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# Wing Climate Survey Top 10

## Providing proper recognition, honest feedback best method to counter favoritism

*Editor's note: This article is one in a series of 10 addressing the Top 10 issues from the recent Wing Climate Survey. Favoritism was identified as one of the Top 10 concerns that 188th Airmen have. Another survey will be conducted in the upcoming months for the 188th Operations and Maintenance Groups.*

**Commentary by Col. Pete Gauger**  
188th Fighter Wing vice commander

**Fa•vor•it•ism** - NOUN : 1. unfairly favoring person or group: the practice of giving special treatment or unfair advantages to a person or group "accused of showing favoritism toward certain students." 2. status as a preferred person: the state of being a favorite person or group.

General Colin Powell once said: "By trying not to get anyone mad, and by treating everyone equally 'nicely' regardless of their contributions, you'll simply ensure that the only people you'll wind up angering are the most creative and productive people in the organization."

I am addressing one of the top ten issues identified by the Command Staff and the Community Action Information Board as part of a continuing series in this publication. Favoritism was highlighted as an area that needed to be addressed. Fifty-nine percent don't see this as a problem, but the other 41 percent either slightly disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree that people in their work area do not practice favoritism.

Junior officers and enlisted members, as well as junior level technicians identified favoritism as more of a concern. It's identified as less of a problem as you look at the higher ranks, which makes sense, because assuming there is flagrant practicing of favoritism, they would be the beneficiaries of these actions.

As always, I like to break down what we're actually talking about. If we are talking about favoritism as an unfair preferential treatment as a result of criteria outside the scope of duties or based on personal rather than professional criteria, that's one thing. It's quite another to promote or treat differently those that truly differentiate themselves based on attitude and performance.

Also, does favoritism mean different sets of rules for different people? These are issues that need to be considered. Using the climate survey, half of the respondents didn't know how favoritism was being displayed. One could make the assumption that they have a general sense that "the good ole boy" environment is

in full effect but couldn't say how.

According to the survey, the next two most common ways it's displayed was in performance report ratings and personal relationships being used to make professional decisions. I do find it encouraging that no member feels favoritism is being used for job opportunities, and also the perception that favoritism based on race/sex/ethnic differences is being employed is almost non-existent with the exception of three white males.

The answer to improving the issue of favoritism is tied to several of the other top ten issues: Mentoring/Feedback; Recognition; Discipline; and Professional Workplace. Let me explain what I mean.

Our wing commander, Col. Mark Anderson, has placed an emphasis on mentoring and feedback. We review the status of OPRs/EPRs every week. A feedback tracker has been created by every group. A new ANG plan will require all enlisted members will soon receive EPRs, instead of only AGRs.

Part of the OPR/EPR process is to get feedback midway through the rating period. Technicians get midterm feedback in the appraisal system: My Biz/My Workplace. The midway feedback is extremely important as it gives all of us the chance to make a change prior to the actual rating or appraisal.

Supervisors and commanders are challenged to be honest and give each an opportunity to change on areas needing improvement. This process takes courage but is vital to morale and developing and maintaining an awesome wing. I've always believed that you can't expect change unless you aren't willing to discuss it, and it's hard because we all have faults, including the feedback provider.

In addition, there is an awards tracker mandated for every group/squadron. This ensures there's a process in place to maintain visibility that our people are getting recognized, fighting any chance of omitting those deserving.

Treating people fairly but not necessarily equally is an interesting dynamic. Let me ask you, do you as a leader treat the person who always volunteers, works hard and has an awesome attitude the same as the person who's frequently late and avoids the idea of doing anything extra?



# From the desk of the Wing commander

**Commentary by Col. Mark W. Anderson**  
188th Fighter Wing commander

Members of the 188th Fighter Wing, I wanted to provide you with an update on some of the recent events and some words on the way forward.

## **CSAF/DANG visit**

The visit from Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III and Air National Guard Director Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III went extremely well thanks to the tireless efforts of countless members. Gen. Welsh arrived on the evening of Jan. 17 and departed about 2:30 p.m. that next day.

On the first day Gen. Welsh was treated to a first-class reception by the community at the Movie Lounge. The next day the community lined the streets in support of the 188th as he entered the base.

We then gave him our value and capabilities brief with rockstar guest speakers from the Army and Air Force Special Forces talking about their experiences here.

In addition, former 188th pilot Maj. Jay Spohn (first Air National Guard pilot to fly the F-35) spoke about how the F-35 would fare here. Then we took Gen. Welsh on a base tour. After the tour it was on to Operations to observe a live mission data link of Navy SEALs and A-10C Thunderbolt II "Warthogs" training at Fort Chaffee.

Following Ops, we traveled by helo to Razorback Range where he saw first-hand our A-10s supporting a close-air Support mission with Air Force Special Forces, and Army UH-60 Black Hawks and CH-47 Chinooks.

Afterwards, we flew back to base where he, U.S. Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla.; U.S. Sen. Mark Pryor, D-Ark.; U.S. Sen. John Boozman, R-Ark.; U.S. Rep. Steve Womack, R-Rogers; and U.S. Rep. Tom Cotton, R-Dardanelle, heard amazing accounts from the recent

deployment to Bagram, Afghanistan.

I believe Gen. Welsh and Lt. Gen. Wyatt were very impressed with our Airmen as well as our capabilities, facilities and training partners. In fact, I've recently heard several instances where they were both bragging on Fort Smith.

However, in the end the Air Force still intends to remove the A-10 from service. That combined with the ANG's Capstone Principal No. 1 (at least one flying wing/state) means that we will be converting to new missions.

## **The new missions**

The good thing is we will have new missions — great missions — missions that will keep the majority of jobs in the Fort Smith community. This mission will be remotely piloted aircraft and intelligence. In both areas, we will have regular engagement in some of the most important and contested regions of the world.

Our talented Airmen will be collecting, analyzing and targeting on a real-time basis from home-station. These missions will have both tactical elements and national strategic implications.

The 188th should be extremely proud that we have been entrusted with such a critical component of our nation's defense. Bottom line: When the conversion is finished, the 188th will have a more direct and more frequent impact on our nation's global engagements than ever before.

## **The conversion**

The conversion starts now. We've had the 188th conversion team in place for several weeks now and they are doing outstanding work. The overall conversion project officer is Lt. Col. Toby "Yobi" Brallier; his assistant is Lt. Col. John Easley. Under their direction, we have the conversion committee and several subcommittees. The subcommittees include: Personnel/training, facilities, operations, intel and maintenance.

Each subcommittee will have a counterpart assigned from ANG to assist and provide guidance. For the full-time members: The union and the Arkansas National Guard Human Resources Office will be heavily involved in every step along the way. Although we are making significant progress, we do need three items from ANG in order to move from the planning stage to the execution stage. Until we get the timeline, the manning document, and have the SATAF, we will be somewhat limited on specific plans.

I promise you, the conversion team is 100 percent committed to pushing information to our members. They already have designed several information sharing plans which you will hear about soon.

In fact, they even have a series of briefings planned for Sunday, Feb. 3. There will be qualified people from most of the major new career fields sharing information. These experts are coming to talk about their jobs, including qualifications, training, work schedule, critical skills, etc. These briefings will be given several times throughout the day and are open to all unit members. We will film the briefings for those that are unable to attend.

## **Expectations**

I'd like to take a minute to try to manage transition expectations. Please understand, this conversion will be the 188th's largest and most challenging mission change to date. First, since the FY-13 National Defense Authorization Act changed so much and was so controversial, the Air Force and ANG



**Col. Mark W. Anderson**  
188th Fighter Wing commander

planners got a late start.

As a result, some personnel/training actions may happen faster than what we would like. Second, the mission change is the most radical in the 60-year history of the 188th. This will require long off-station training courses for most of those who convert. Training lengths will vary but it won't be uncommon for some members to be off-station for 4-9 months.

Third, significant construction will be required. Until the construction is complete some will likely have to go TDY to maintain proficiency awaiting permanent facilities. And finally, the nature of any conversion lends itself to some downtime.

Some will train early and will have to wait on facilities and others to catch up before we can do the mission here. Some will train late while awaiting school slots. In either scenario, our leaders must stay engaged and ensure our Airmen are cared for, are focused, and are as productive as possible.

None of the obstacles ahead of



# Community with a cause



Members of the Fort Smith, Ark., community gathered outside the gate of the 188th Fighter Wing to show their support of the 188th and to welcome Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. Mark A Welsh III, Jan. 18, 2013. Welsh toured the 188th's facilities and learned about the unit's mission. He also discussed the 188th's future with 188th and state military leadership as well as members of the Oklahoma and Arkansas Congressional delegation. Welsh also met with city officials and community leaders during a Jan. 17 gathering in Fort Smith. (National Guard photo by Senior Airman Hannah Landeros/188th Fighter Wing Public Affairs)



(National Guard photo by Senior Airman Hannah Landeros/188th Fighter Wing Public Affairs)



(National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Cody Martin/188th Fighter Wing Public Affairs)



(National Guard photo by Senior Airman Hannah Landeros/188th Fighter Wing Public Affairs)



(National Guard photo by Senior Airman Hannah Landeros/188th Fighter Wing Public Affairs)



## Change makes us stronger, more resilient

**Commentary by Maj. Shane Pair**  
188th Fighter Wing chaplain

If we are honest, none of us really like change. Yes, we like it when others conform to our ideas, but most often we don't enjoy conforming to other's ideas. Yet, we as members of the 188th find ourselves facing change, and, if we are honest, we don't really like it much.

I think the main reason we find ourselves a little hesitant to embrace the change before us is because we cannot predict the future. Anytime there is change, there are risks of which, we are not fully aware, making most of us a little nervous.

Will this change mean a loss in person-ness? Will this change mean I have to retrain? Will this change mean that we will be here for the next "X" amount of years so I can retire, or will I have to move somewhere else to accomplish my goals? All these are some of the great and expected questions. The problem with these questions is no one has a crystal ball that will show us exactly how the future will turn out, and that makes most of us nervous. So what are we to do in this face of change then?

For me, I turn to my faith to try and find answers. As a Christian, I am reminded that I serve a God that has ordered my days before I was even born (Psalm 139:16). I also believe the God I serve is in control of all that takes place.

In the writings from the Gospel of Mat-

thew (6:25—27) Jesus said to his followers: "I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" Matthew 26 reads: "Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" And Matthew 27 reads: "And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?"

My friend, life is full of change and it is always going to change; the only question we have to ask ourselves is: "How will I respond to the changes around me?" My father once told me when I was having a hard time adjusting to a difficult transition (change) in my life: "Son, the person who can accept and embrace change in life will succeed, but the one who cannot accept and, even, resists change will be a miserable failure."

Today I choose to embrace the change that lies ahead, and take on the journey to see where it might lead. This will take believing in those around me, believing in the leadership over me, and relying heavily on my God.

But in the end, I believe the journey will be worth it. I hope you will find yourself embracing the journey of change as well. I look forward to seeing you along the way. Know you remain in my thoughts and prayers.

## 188th vacancy: Equal Opportunity NCOIC

A vacancy exists in the 188th Fighter Wing Equal Opportunity Office for a noncommissioned officer in charge (AFSC 3S1X1). This position is a traditional Guardsman slot and is a master sergeant billet. Interested individuals must be an E-5 or above and have no record of disciplinary action, financial irresponsibility or previous record of having failed to graduate from a formal EO training course.

To apply for this position, submit a resume detailing experience, military and civilian education and a copy of current physical fitness assessment to Maj. Lionel Riley, 188th Fighter Wing EO chief, via e-mail at [lriley@cox.net](mailto:lriley@cox.net) or by mailing 188FW/EO ATTN: Maj. Lionel Riley, 4850 Leigh Avenue, Fort Smith, AR 72903.

This position performs, supervises and

manages equal opportunity (EO) and human relations education (HRE) programs; conducts administrative functions to support EO programs; promotes an environment that enhances the Air Force mission through an inclusive corporate culture that promotes positive human relations and teamwork in an environment of equity, dignity and respect; provides advice, consultation, education, alternative dispute resolution and referral services to enhance mission effectiveness; assists commanders and directors to resolve conditions that impact operations and mission effectiveness; emphasizes areas that potentially undermine the installation's readiness posture and human relations environment; analyze and advise on unit environment and morale.

## 188th Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office

**Sexual Assault Prevention coordinator**

Maj. Heath Allen

479-573-5221

**Victim Advocates**

Capt. Lance Griffith

479-573-5126

Tech Sgt. Michelle Malone

479-573-5302

Tech Sgt. Kelly Webb

479-573-5355

SAFE Helpline: 877-995-5247

**Joint Force Headquarters SARC**

Liz Bishop: 501-212-4099

## Favoritism

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In what areas should they be treated differently? One area they should not be in regard to rules. Some rules have flexibility and others do not. While I am a proponent of leaders being allowed to exercise judgment, this judgment should be based on professional reasons. When personal motives enter in, this is detrimental to the unit's mission and morale.

I believe there is a very open and objective climate currently, and this will go a long way toward addressing this. While I can't give you specifics concerning discipline (when administered, I believe members have a right to privacy and confidentiality), I do believe today that we have a fair and equitable climate concerning discipline.

I believe these initiatives and actions reduce the risk of having an environment that allows unprofessional dynamics to affect job opportunities, performance ratings and personal relationships affecting professional decisions and decisions being made based on race/sex/ethnic differences. My desire is that all personnel have an equal opportunity to shine and we create an environment where the most deserving are the most rewarded, and every single member knows what's expected, and how well they are meeting those expectations. It takes a willingness to express these expectations, as well as a willingness to accept them. There also has to be an opportunity to discuss these expectations, with a possibility of altering them based on valid input.



## MilPDS conversion slated for March

By Tech Sgt. Patrick Crumby  
188th Force Support Squadron

On March, 3, 2013, the Air Force Personnel Operations Agency is upgrading MilPDS and migrating to a newer more secure platform called Oracle R12. MilPDS will be unavailable from March 4-27.

Airmen's base pay and entitlements (BAH, BAS, Haz Duty, Family Sep, etc.) managed by Air National Guard Financial Management Offices will not be affected. This was originally scheduled in December 2012, but was cancelled.

This article will address a list of critical actions which can have an effect on pay. Airmen who have an ETS between Jan. 25, 2013 and April 30, 2013, are advised to reenlist/extend no later than Feb. 22, 2013. All promotions/demotions will need to be updated by Feb. 22 as well.

If you have an ETS outside of the upgrade window (April 15) re-enlistment/extensions during this timeframe will not be updated until after the upgrade is complete. Members will not submit a voluntary retirement/separation/discharge/conditional release vPCGR application with an effective date during the month of March 2013.

If you have an approved voluntary retirement/separation/discharge/conditional release in the month of March 2013 you have until Feb. 1, 2013, to cancel or change that action, after which you will have to wait until the upgrade is complete. SGLI/FSGLI changes after Feb. 15 will be held and updated after migration is complete.

Also, DD214s will not be affected. DEERS/RAPIDS will not be affected. One exception is that marital/dependent changes can be updated in DEERS not MilPDS until upgrade is complete. For officers (OPRs) and AGR (EPRs) your evaluations will not be updated during the downtime.

Report on individual personnel (RIP) and point credit summaries (PCARS) will not be available via MilPDS (you can still get one off of vMPF).

All other self help applications such as vMPF, vPCGR, PRDA, Air Force Portal will still be available and will not be affected during this upgrade/migration. For further questions about this upgrade, please contact the 188th Fighter Wing Personnel Systems manager, Tech Sgt. Patrick Crumby, at 479-573-5766.

## Citizen Airman Dining Hall menu

### Saturday, Feb. 2

Chick-Fil-A: Chicken nuggets, chicken sandwich, coleslaw, chips, cookie, tea.

### Sunday, Feb. 3

Golden Corral: Assorted sandwich, broccoli and cheese soup, chips, cookie, tea.

## Blood drive scheduled for February UTA

**What:** Arkansas Blood Institute Blood Drive

**When:** 0845-1400, Saturday, Feb. 2

**Where:** Supply parking lot

**POC:** Maj. Heath Allen, 479-573-5221. You can schedule an appointment or simply drop by

**Info:** Each donor receives a baseball cap (while supplies last); a health screening and donor reward points

**Note:** Members who have recently deployed to Afghanistan can donate blood. For more info visit [www.arkbi.org](http://www.arkbi.org)

## 188th Fighter Wing to celebrate Black History Month

**When:** 1300-1415, Sunday, Feb. 3

**Where:** Headquarters auditorium

**Guest speaker:** Dr. Charles F. Robinson II. He has been a University of Arkansas professor for more than 20 years, publishing four books and earning the Fulbright College Master Teacher Award, the Arkansas Alumni Distinguished Teacher Award and the Student Alumni Board Teacher of the Year Award.

**Entertainment:** Afrique Aya Dance/Drum group: Dancers and drummers dedicated to enjoying and sharing the music and culture of West Africa. Inspired by rhythms and rituals from Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), Afrique Aya celebrates the synergy of nature, spirit, movement, and percussion. In West Africa, dancing and drumming are catalysts, grounded in a rich tradition of storytelling. Through performances and workshops designed to bring people together, Afrique Aya connects with earth-based, lyric movement and music that convey a vibrant, universal narrative.

## 188th UTA news

### Upcoming drills

Feb. 2-3

Mar. 2-3



### UTA pay dates

Feb. 13

Mar. 13

## Random installation vehicle checks

Air Force Instruction 31-101 states that installation Commanders determine when, where and how to implement random checks of vehicles or pedestrians based on the results from the Installation Defense Risk Management Process and thorough crime trend analysis.

The commander institutes the Random Installation Entry/Exit Vehicle Checks (RIEVC) program in the same manner as the RAM program. The intent is to protect the security of the command and to protect government property.

Checks are not conducted

merely to establish probable cause. Installations may use a locally devised computer program to randomly select entry/exit point checks. The installation commander and the SJA must approve the method used to randomly select entry/exit point checks.

The installation commander or his/her designee authenticates the list of entry/exit vehicle checks timelines, which is sent to SF for implementation. The frequency of producing a random list is devised locally by the IDC. AFI 31-101, Integrated Defense, directs the above action.



# 188th AFSC Conversion Expo slated for Feb. 3

The 188th Fighter Wing will hold an AFSC Knowledge Fair at the RTS Sunday, Feb. 3 for the new 188th Fighter Wing missions. There will be three scheduled identical presentations at three separate times in order to accommodate everyone's busy schedule. Each session will feature guest speakers from several of the AFSCs that make up the bulk of the new missions. The speakers will inform members about what they do in each AFSC and the training they go through as well as answer any questions they may have. This will give affected unit members the opportunity to learn about the different AFSCs the future mis-

sions will feature. Supervisors please ensure that your attending subordinates are evenly distributed throughout each of the three sessions. These briefings are open to all unit members.

### AFSC Conversion Expo Schedule

1st session: 0800-0930

2nd session: 1000-1130

3rd session: 1400-1530

## Fans don't let fans drive drunk: Pass your keys to a designated driver this Super Bowl Sunday

By Senior Master Sgt. Becky Hawk  
Air National Guard

Super Bowl Sunday is one of America's biggest and most entertaining national sporting events as friends and families gather to socialize and watch the big game. Yet, it is also one of the nation's most dangerous days on the roadways due to impaired driving.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 130 people, representing 39 percent of all traffic fatalities, died during the 2011 Super Bowl weekend in crashes involving impaired drivers with blood alcohol concentration (BAC) levels of .08 or higher.

Please remember that fans don't let fans drive drunk. If you plan on using alcohol while cheering your team on to victory, pass your keys to a sober, designated driver before the Super Bowl party begins.

If you are hosting a Super Bowl party, please remember you can be held liable and prosecuted if someone you serve ends up in an impaired driving crash. Make sure all of your guests designate their sober drivers in

advance, or help arrange ride-sharing with sober drivers.

Serve lots of food – and include lots of non-alcoholic beverages at the party. Stop serving alcohol at the end of the third quarter of the game and begin serving coffee and dessert. Keep the numbers for local cab companies (Razorback Cab: 479-783-1118) handy, and take the keys away from anyone who is thinking of driving while impaired.

Impaired driving is no accident nor is it a victimless crime. In 2010, 13,470 people died in highway crashes involving an impaired driver or motorcycle rider with a BAC level of .08 or higher.

Driving impaired or riding with someone who is impaired is simply not worth the risk because the consequences are serious and real. Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for impaired driving can be significant.

Please act responsibly. Pass your keys to a sober driver before the big game begins. And remember, real Fans Don't let fans drive

### Commander

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us are insurmountable. We will be extremely organized and will communicate well. Best of all, we have outstanding Airmen, NCOs and officers that excel in these challenges. We will do fine; just be patient, as it won't all happen overnight.

#### The budget

I'm sure you've seen the recently released NGB budget guidance. Until Congress and the President release a fiscal plan, all expenses will be highly scrutinized to ensure only mission essential expenditures are made.

Please look at the NGB guidance for details (S:\FW\FW\Command & Control\FM); however, if you're unsure if expenditure is authorized, please contact Lt. Col. Grace Ryals or 1st Lt. Rick Carman from the Comptroller Flight at 479-573-5369 if you are uncertain.

There are some cases where I am authorized to make exceptions to the guidance for mission critical activities. Fortunately, most of the restrictions as they currently are written are not going to be a huge impact on the 188th.

#### The inspection

Good news! Due to the conversion, the Unit Compliance Inspection (UCI) portion of the inspection is cancelled. It will be rescheduled for after we officially declare operational readiness in the new missions.

The other parts of the compliance visit are still being worked by the Air Force Inspector General team. I'm very optimistic that the Logistics Compliance Assessment Program (LCAP) inspection and the Combat Shield inspection will also be cancelled.

However, I believe the Health Services Inspection (HSI) will go as scheduled. For all of you that have been working on your programs and particularly MICT, thank you. The organization is better for your actions. Checklist owners (except Ops and Maintenance) keep working on your MICT; those will be needed in the upcoming months for our Management Internal Control Plan.

I am so proud of this organization. The 188th has powered through a ton of adversity and uncertainty the past couple of years and we are stronger for it. The good news is we now have a way forward. Airmen, keep the fantastic attitude. Officers and NCOs, keep leading and communicating. We have an amazing team and we are going to excel in everything the future holds.

I'm honored to be your commander. Please let me know if there is anything I can do for you.

## 'Ask the commander' now available

Have a question or concern you would like addressed? Whether it's a quirky question about the history of the base, a simple inquiry about how certain processes are accomplished on base or a serious concern about an issue of importance to you, there's a new communication tool to help address those questions and concerns. It's called "Ask the Commander" and it's a way for 188th Airmen and their families to communicate with 188th leadership about issues that impact them individually as well as the wing. Individuals seeking information or to have their problems or issues addressed can e-mail [188fw.askthecommander@ang.af.mil](mailto:188fw.askthecommander@ang.af.mil). Leadership will do their best to address each issue in a timely manner. Answers to issues that have a base-wide impact will be considered for publication in The Flying Razorback as well as the 188th Facebook page and Website.



## Future

Continued from Page 1

a year, the Arkansas Congressional delegation has fought to keep the 188th's manned aircraft flying mission in Fort Smith. But nothing during Welsh's visit altered the course of the 188th, which is heading toward a mission conversion.

"We had a great visit and some very candid conversations about the future of A-10s and the future of the 188th," said Col. Mark Anderson, 188th Fighter Wing commander. "We understand the Air Force is facing tough decisions. But even in our disappointment that we will likely no longer have A-10s we also understand how important it is to have a mission. And the bottom line is that we will have a mission at the 188th and it's an emerging mission that keeps us in the fight and engaged in helping defend our nation."

U.S. Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla.; U.S. Sen. Mark Pryor, D-Ark.; U.S. Sen. John Boozman, R-Ark.; U.S. Rep. Steve Womack, R-Rogers; and U.S. Rep. Tom Cotton, R-Dardanelle, were all present during a meeting with Welsh, Wyatt and 188th and Arkansas National Guard state leadership.

"I will be working with the members of this delegation, the leaders of the City of Fort Smith and the Arkansas National Guard in doing what we can to salvage out of this decision, the very best possible circumstance for Airmen located out of Fort Smith," Womack said. "A remotely piloted aircraft mission, surrounded by any other ancillary-type missions to go with it, to build the very best circumstances in going forward."

Under the plan, the 188th will add a targeting squadron, intel group and an RPA mission.

"The intent would be — in every way possible — to keep as many people as possible who currently wear the 188th Fighter Wing badge assigned to the 188th Reconnaissance Wing, if that's what it ends up being," Welsh said.

Manpower studies suggest the number of military and full-time positions at the 188th will remain steady.

"The intent is not for the unit to go away," Welsh said. "And one of the things that I think everybody involved in the whole discussion will tell you is that the



Col. Mark Anderson, 188th Fighter Wing commander, left; Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III; Lt. Col. Mike Flatten, 22nd Special Tactics Squadron; and Brig. Gen. Dwight Balch, Arkansas Air National Guard commander, observe close-air support training at the 188th's Detachment 1 Razorback Range located at Fort Chaffee, Ark., Jan. 18, 2013. Welsh toured the unit's facilities and learned about the wing's mission. (National Guard photo by Senior Airman Hannah Landeros/188th Fighter Wing Public Affairs)



Members of the Fort Smith, Ark., community gathered outside the gate of the 188th Fighter Wing to show their support of the 188th and to welcome Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, Jan. 18, 2013. Welsh toured the 188th's facilities and learned about the unit's mission. He also discussed the 188th's future with 188th and state military leadership as well as members of the Oklahoma and Arkansas Congressional delegation. Welsh also met with city officials and community leaders during a Jan. 17 gathering in Fort Smith. (National Guard photo by Senior Airman Hannah Landeros/188th Fighter Wing Public Affairs)

strength of the 188th Fighter Wing is not the hardware on the ramp, it's the people who make it work — the people who fix it and fly it, and deal with the imperfections of the mission and somehow accomplish it anyway. They've always been the excellence of this organization.

"Someone who worked on a specific

system on the old plane thinks they don't have any job in the new one, but they do. They transition to a new mission and keep doing great stuff."

While Welsh came away impressed with the 188th's facilities, he said the Air National Guard's capstone principle of one flying wing per state would likely be the decisive, but not only, factor that prompts the 188th's transition to remotely piloted aircraft.

"The director of the Air Guard and the state adjutants general are going to have to have

a discussion about how they think the best posture of the force nationwide is, and I respect their views on it," Welsh said.

Of the five A-10 wings in the Air National Guard, the 188th is the only unit slated to change missions. For now, the A-10



## Future

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wings based in Idaho, Michigan, Indiana and Maryland were spared because they were the state's lone Air National Guard flying mission.

"Well, right now in the National Defense Authorization Act, the intent is for the 188th to transition," Welsh said. "Now we will look at the long-range look for the entire Guard in this next nine-month forecast."

Welsh said once the NDAA is finalized, the Air Force will have a more accurate gauge of exactly when the 188th's conversion to RPAs will begin.

"Once we have the final congressional decisions and once we have the paperwork complete, then we will move forward with an appropriations bill that allows us to do that," Welsh said. "Then we'll move forward with the timeline."

That RPA path that the 188th appears to be headed toward didn't stop the unit from conveying to Welsh the value of its vast airspace and training range, which ranks No. 1 among all Air National Guard fighter units and No. 1 among all A-10 Thunderbolt II wings Air Force-wide in terms of proximity to base and cost efficiency.

Welsh also took an aerial tour of Fort Chaffee on an Arkansas National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk from the 77th Theatre Aviation Brigade based at Camp Joseph T. Robinson.

Welsh was transported to the 188th's Detachment 1 Razorback Range where he observed close-air support training with the 188th's A-10s and attack controllers with the Air Force's 22nd Special Tactics Squadron.

The 188th also communicated to Welsh the importance of the unique special forces training conducted regularly at Razorback Range just minutes away at nearby Fort Chaffee. The 188th trains hundreds of attack controllers for the U.S. Army Rangers, Navy SEALs and Air Force special operations each year. A representative from each was present at the Jan. 18 meeting.

The 188th also pitched its ability to potentially take on new fighter missions in the future such as the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. Maj. Jay Spohn, former 188th pilot, talked about the importance of the



Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, right, talks with Maj. Joe Harrison, 188th Civil Engineer Squadron commander, at the 188th Fighter Wing in Fort Smith, Ark., Jan. 18, 2013. Welsh toured the unit's facilities and learned about the wing's mission. (National Guard photo by Senior Airman John Hillier/188th Fighter Wing Public Affairs)



Members of the Fort Smith, Ark., community gathered outside the gate of the 188th Fighter Wing to show their support of the 188th and to welcome Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, Jan. 18, 2013. Welsh toured the 188th's facilities and learned about the unit's mission. He also discussed the 188th's future with 188th and state military leadership as well as members of the Oklahoma and Arkansas Congressional delegation. Welsh also met with city officials and community leaders during a Jan. 17 gathering in Fort Smith. (National Guard photo by Senior Airman Hannah Landeros/188th Fighter Wing Public Affairs)

188th's ranges and airspace, how his training with Special Forces at the 188th was unique and how the unit is a good fit for 5th generation multi-role fighters. Spohn was the first Air National Guard pilot selected to fly the F-35.

"The training that I got at the 188th is something you can't duplicate anywhere else," Spohn said. "Its ranges, airspace and the ability to train with JTACs [Joint Terminal Attack Controllers] regularly is invaluable training to the warfighters on the

ground and to the pilots providing close-air support. You simply can't beat it."

Despite the 188th's catalog of unique assets, its transition to RPAs appears to be on autopilot. Welsh said regardless of the Air National Guard unit selected for conversion, it will be a tough call.

"All of us are going to have opinions as we move forward on this," Welsh said. "I think everybody's trying to do the right thing. It's not a matter of evil people, it's a matter of tough problems."