

Jun 2011

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Hero in a Hellcat

by Lt. Col. Matthew C. Conrad
970th Airborne Air Control
Squadron Commander

Memorial Day has come and gone, and many of us enjoyed the extra day off. But my family and I had the chance to remember the actions of a survivor and hero of World War II.

My daughter had to interview a veteran for her high school history project. Since her mother and I were interviewed last year we were ineligible. So we began brainstorming to recall any veteran who would be willing to talk of their experiences. We eventually got in touch with my dad's cousin, 91-year-old Charles Hubenthal.

Cousin Charles, like most of his generation, is a proud but humble man from Lucerne, Ind., who spent all of his life on a farm except for a brief time between 1943 and 1945, when he trained and flew for the US Navy. We sat mesmerized for more than three hours as he related his experiences in training and aboard the USS *Essex* where he flew F6 Hellcats in Fighting Squadron 83.

One of the first things you notice about Charles is his humble demeanor. Had we not specifically asked about his 60 combat sorties flown and 7 Air Medals and one Distinguished Flying Cross earned in the Pacific, they would never have come up.

Charles told of his early days in the field "shuckin' corn next to Bunker Hill Air Base [which is now Gris-

som Air Reserve Base] and thought I would like to fly."

He spent more than a year in training to get his pilot's wings and waited a few more months to join the fleet on dive bomber aircraft. When he arrived in the Pacific theater, he was sent back to Hawaii to train instead in the F6 Hellcat, being told the fleet had too many dive bomber pilots.

Two of the more striking events Charles described were those that took place in his Hellcat off the *Essex*. During one of his first missions, he and a Lieutenant Spotts, whom he called "Spotty," were on a mission to deliver a life raft to a downed pilot. Charles followed procedure and released the raft at the altitude called for, but unfortunately the raft was not near enough to the downed airman. As he relayed his regrets for not being lower and more precise, he said through a somber voice, "That is one thing that I have had to live with these years. I don't think we ever rescued that downed airman. If only..."

Charles said that day didn't get much better. When they returned to the carrier group, Spotty lined up

on one carrier but made a bid for a different one at the last minute. Being a good wingman, of course Charles followed, and he and Spotty spent a fateful night on the USS *Wasp*.

The next day, while Spotty went to retrieve his plotting board from his airplane on deck, the *Wasp* was attacked by Japanese aircraft. Spotty was too close to the explosion and a medic informed Charles, "He didn't make it.

He was burnt to a crisp."

A better day was April 7, 1945. Charles launched off the *Essex* on the wing of Lieutenant Jack Lyons on a reconnaissance mission in search of the Japanese fleet led by the battleship *Yamato*. Some 225 miles from the American fleet, Charles and Jack Lyons spotted the Japanese battleship. Charles not only remembered the excite-



On the cover...

Tech. Sgt. Bryan Jones calls from the cockpit of a KC-135 to his coworkers on the ground the direction to point the nose of the plane directly into the wind on the reserve portion of Tinker Air Force Base's flightline on March 19, 2011. As part of the fan balance analysis process, the plane must face the wind to ensure the most precise measurement possible. Read more about the 507th Maintenance Squadron on page 6.





F6 Hellcat photo by Kas von Zonneveld (used with kind permission)

ment of spotting the Japanese fleet, but also described the flight on Lyons's wing in great detail as they climbed through the very adverse weather they encountered. He was extremely close to his lead and although he was determined not to get separated as they returned to the ship, he was sure they were going to touch wings. Fortu-

nately, they did not, and with the information they brought to the ship, the Americans were able to sink three destroyers and the battleship *Yamato* that day.

It is hard for me to put into words what it is like talking with a real hero like Charles. What a great example of what it means to persevere. He told several stories that

afternoon each with a quiet confidence that describe so many of his generation.

Hearing such a powerful and moving story from the eyewitness made me think what these men had inside — to face death and fear on almost a daily basis — but, to a man, to keep fighting.

People like Charles Hubenthal passed the test. They have left us all who wear the uniform with quite a legacy to live up to.

I encourage all reservists to seek out and engage our veterans. It certainly made a lasting impression on me and my family.

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Chaplain's Corner: 'Dear Paco'

By Chaplain (Maj.) Dwight Magnus, 507th ARW Wing Chaplain

Ernest Hemingway told a story of a father and his teenage son who had a relationship that had become strained to the point of breaking. Finally the son ran away from home. His father, however, began a journey in search of his rebellious son.

Finally, in Madrid, in a last desperate effort to find him, the father put an ad in the newspaper. The ad read:

"DEAR PACO, MEET ME IN FRONT OF THE NEWSPAPER OFFICE AT NOON. ALL IS FORGIVEN. I LOVE YOU. YOUR FATHER."

The next day at noon in front of the newspaper office, 800 Pacos showed up.

I am grateful for a wonderful relationship with my father. One of the greatest compliments I have ever received is, "You're just like your dad!"

I do know that there are many who have distant relationships with their fathers.

In honor of Father's Day, this month I encourage you to forgive, seek reconciliation, and make an effort to restore or improve your relationship with your father this month. You will be glad you did.

Military psychiatrist: Education, action keys to fighting PTSD

By Terri Moon Cronk
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Stemming the incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, requires awareness, education and recognizing its symptoms, a senior military psychiatrist said.

Navy Capt. Paul S. Hammer, director of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, spoke during a May 16 media roundtable event held here as part of Mental Health Month.

“(It’s important) to make sure people are aware, educated, and that they look for it in themselves, their friends and fellow servicemembers,” Hammer said. “They must act on it so something is done.”

Taking action doesn’t necessarily call for a major intervention, he said.

“Sometimes reaching out and talking to someone can put that person on the right path to get the help he needs,” he suggested.

Recognizing signs of the stress disorder early can be the key to successfully diagnose and treat affected individuals, Hammer said.

“PTSD can be a really complicated entity,” he said. “People think it’s one thing, but it can manifest itself in a lot of different ways and contexts.”

PTSD is not gender-specific and telltale signs vary from one person to the next, but Hammer said some factors might add up to the stress diagnosis. He said it’s important to recognize such

symptoms as combat stress, substance abuse, talks of suicide and depression. Getting help begins with awareness and education at all levels of the military, he said.

Hammer said post-traumatic stress was once a condition discovered only after troops returned home following deployments. Now, however, the services include post-traumatic stress awareness instruction for new recruits in basic training, and warfighters are monitored

many people, the longtime stigma is an overwhelming barrier to diagnosis and treatment.

Denial of post-traumatic stress also can develop, which he described as a “tougher nut to crack.” Denial is a person’s perception that people are doing fine, Hammer added.

“They don’t want to see themselves or be seen as weak, damaged or ill,” he said.

“I think huge headway has been made on stigma,” he said.



U.S. Air Force illustration by Tech. Sgt. Zach Jacobs

for symptoms during their military careers.

“We’ve got to take care of ourselves and take care of each other,” Hammer said. “The idea of awareness is to take appropriate action and have the courage to reach out and take help.”

“The Army (incorporates awareness) in resilience training and comprehensive soldier fitness, and by training master resilience trainers,” he added. “So there’s a huge effort among the services to really develop a level of resilience.”

Combating the stigma attached to mental health counseling also is taught to servicemembers as part of the military’s awareness campaign, Hammer said. For

“You see senior officers and senior enlisted members who are much more willing to speak out and talk about it. I can’t imagine a time, when I first came in, that I would hear a sergeant major talk about PTSD, and now it’s routine.”

“No doubt the stigma is still out there, but we’ve still made an enormous amount of progress,” Hammer said. “But there’s more to do. We’re not resting on our laurels. We’re still working on it.”

Resources for post-traumatic stress disorder; whether for veterans, the general public, healthcare providers or researchers, can be found on the Department of Veterans Affairs’ PTSD website at www.ptsd.va.gov.

AF Central Ticket Program offers discounts to Airmen, families

Air Force Personnel, Services & Manpower Public Affairs

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas -- The Air Force Central Ticket Program provides discount tickets to Airmen, their families and authorized Morale, Welfare and Recreation program customers at nationwide attractions and recreational events.

Discount tickets are available for purchase at installation force support Information, Tickets and Travel offices.

Sandy Hillard, the Air Force Services Agency’s community and leisure branch chief, said centralizing how the Air Force acquires tickets for attractions provides greater cost savings at ITT offices to eligible customers.

“We work with representatives from numerous attractions that Air Force personnel want to visit to obtain the best discounts possible,” Hillard said. “ITT offices also provide local and national destination and entertainment tickets for sale at discounted prices worldwide.”

The AFCTP formed agreements with nationally recognized attractions like Disney, Sea World, Busch Gardens, Universal Studios, Six Flags and others.

The AFCTP is managed by the Air Force Services Agency’s community and leisure branch.

For more information on vacation destinations and other recreational activities, visit your local ITT office or go online to www.aftravelonline.com.

Air Force leaders issue summer safety message

Armed Forces News Service

WASHINGTON — Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz and Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James Roy send the following Critical Days of Summer safety campaign message to the Airmen of the U.S. Air Force and their families:

“Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day marks the season of greatest risks for our Air Force team. To counter those risks, we will kick off the Critical Days of Summer safety campaign for 2011 on May 28th.

“Unfortunately, last summer we lost 16 Airmen. While this was an improvement over the 21 lost the previous year, we must strive to do better. The 2011 Air Force goal is zero preventable mishaps and fatalities. The leading causes of preventable fatalities during the Critical Days of Summer are off-duty private motor vehicle mishaps and drowning. We therefore emphasize the importance of fastening seatbelts, driving at reasonable speeds, and avoiding situations of driving while distracted, under the influence,



U.S. Air Force illustration by Tech. Sgt. Grady Epperly

fatigued, or otherwise impaired. While participating in aquatic activities, we also strongly urge the use of proper equipment such as personal flotation devices, and avoiding hazardous areas and dangerous water conditions.

“We challenge all Airmen to

make this year safer than last. Be each other’s wingman—use risk management principles, both on and off duty, and exercise sound judgment. We encourage each of you to invest a high level of commitment in taking care of one another. Our most important objective for this summer’s

campaign is protecting military and civilian personnel and their families.

“Enjoy the summer months ahead, be a good wingman and be safe. Thank you for your service, and all that you do for our Air Force and our Nation.”

Program gives servicemembers, families free museum visits through Sept. 5

*By Terri Moon Cronk
American Forces Press Service*

WASHINGTON — Servicemembers and their families can visit a wide array of museums for free from Memorial Day through Labor Day, courtesy of the second annual Blue Star Museums program.

Kathy Roth-Douquet, the Blue Star Families chairman, and Rocco Landesman, the chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, announced this year’s program May 23 in San Diego, Calif.

“Blue Star Museums recognizes and thanks our military families for all they are doing for our country,” Landesman said, “and simultaneously begins young people on a path to become lifelong museum-goers.”

Roth-Douquet noted the program’s success in its first year.

“We are thrilled that 300,000 military family members visited our partner museums in the summer of 2010,” she said. “We hope to exceed that number this year as the military community takes advantage of the rich

cultural heritage they defend and protect every day.

“We appreciate the NEA and the nation’s museums who chose to partner with us,” she continued. “We also are grateful to our friends at the MetLife Foundation, the lead supporter of the Blue Star Museums outreach initiative, whose generous donation helps make our works possible.”

This year, more than 1,300 museums in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and American Samoa are taking part in the initiative, including

more than 500 new museums this year, officials said, and others may join throughout the summer.

The Blue Star Museums program runs from May 30 through September 5. The free admission program is available to active-duty military ID holders and up to five immediate family members. Active-duty National Guard and Reserve members also are eligible.

For a list of museums taking part in the Blue Star Museums program, visit www.arts.gov/national/bluestarmuseums.



KEEPING THEM IN THE AIR

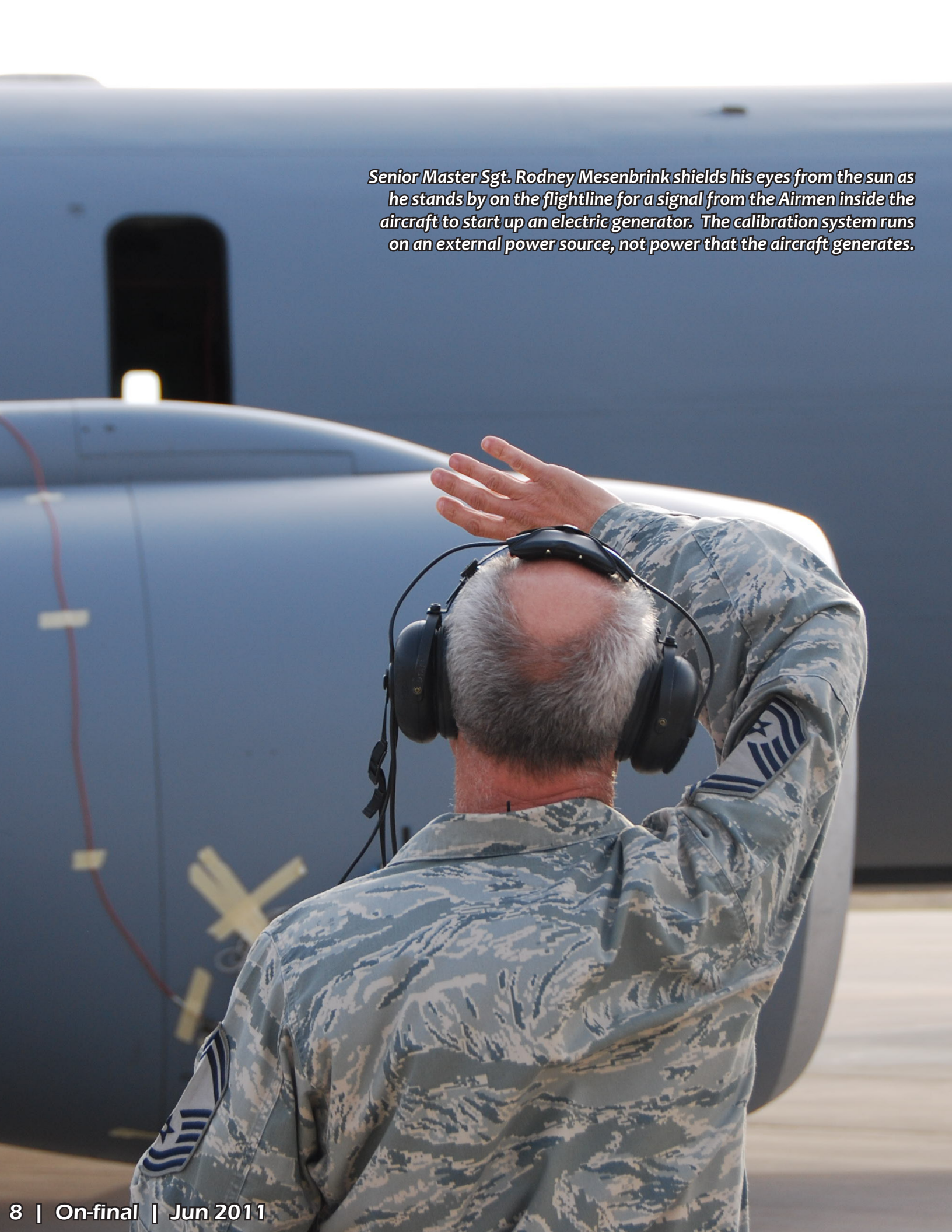
**A diverse crew makes maintaining
\$50 million aircraft look easy.**

Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Zach Jacobs



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Tech. Sgt. Bryan Jones (left front) and Senior Airman John Brown (right) prepare to start the engines on Number 3503 while Staff Sgt. Tyson Sandstrom observes the process. Outside the plane, Senior Master Sgt. Rodney Mesenbrink (far left), propulsion flight chief, stands as a ground observer. This fan balance process involved six Airmen, three of whom were training on the process for the first time.

A photograph of a man in a military uniform, seen from behind, wearing large headphones and sunglasses. He is standing on a flightline next to a large blue aircraft. His right hand is raised to his forehead, shielding his eyes from the sun. The aircraft has a yellow 'X' marking on its side. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

Senior Master Sgt. Rodney Mesenbrink shields his eyes from the sun as he stands by on the flightline for a signal from the Airmen inside the aircraft to start up an electric generator. The calibration system runs on an external power source, not power that the aircraft generates.

It's a brisk, windy morning in mid-March, as an overcast sky and a burgeoning sunrise tussle on the horizon.

Stadium-style lights illuminate portions of the flightline on the Reserve side of Tinker Air Force Base.

On any given morning, it's commonplace to see a half dozen KC-135 Stratotanker airplanes parked in predesignated spots from the Reserve portion of the flightline.

But unlike the usual formation the tankers take on the flightline, one of them, Number 3503, sits a few degrees cockeyed from its nearly 50-year-old sister aircraft.

A half-dozen Airmen — air reserve technicians and guardsmen alike — brave the breeze and hitch 3503 to a yuke, or aircraft towing vehicle, to angle the plane to a specific direction: headfirst into the 20-knot-strong wind.

Another four enlisted Airmen and one civilian sit inside the cockpit and examine the plane's on-board instruments to ensure the plane is pointed directly into the wind.

Another Airmen attaches a blue device, about the size of a small lunchbox, to the side of Engine Three.

Meanwhile, two more Airmen set up a diesel-powered electric generator and lay down an orange extension cord from the tip of the plane's right wing to the interior of the plane, where a Panasonic Toughbook and what looks like a paramedic's emergency kit sit ten feet behind the cockpit.

Although it seems like these maintainers from the 507th Maintenance Squadron are about to give life-saving shocks with an industrial-sized automated external defibrillator to a two-ton engine, they're actually performing diagnostic work that helps keep these 50-plus-year-old tankers flying and refueling.

And these Airmen do their jobs not only with expertise and flair, but also with a very positive attitude.

Tech. Sgt. Robbie Irvin, a full-time guardsman with the 137th Maintenance Squadron, compares the diagnostic work the crew is doing — fan blade calibration — to balancing a new or repaired tire on a car. This process, he said, is much more complicated, though.

Irvin said that the computer tells technicians where to put weights on the rear spinner cone to correct the engine's blade balance.

There are 24 balancing spots on the cone, said Irvin, and technicians will install small weights on those spots to ensure



TOP: A straight-on view of Engine Three of Number 3503. BOTTOM: Tech. Sgt. Bryan Jones (right) shows Senior Airman John Brown different areas of Engine Three to be observed on the initial run. The maintainers liken the fan blade calibration process (and importance) to balancing a tire on a car.

proper, balanced spinning of the fan assembly.

Irvin spent seven of his ten-year-long Air National Guard career maintaining the C-130 Globemaster aircraft. The last three years, though, he's been here at Tinker, keeping KC-135s up in the air.

When asked about his reasons for being a maintainer, four-day-long work weeks and camaraderie were two of Irvin's main reasons. However, he said he said a sense of accomplishment and achievement, especially on trips or deployments, were a gratifying reason to stay maintaining.

Tech. Sgt. Nick Charles is an ART and a second-generation maintainer. After six years working on the C-130 in active

duty, Charles transitioned over to the Reserve, one of the best decisions he's says he's made.

Charles has been with the 507th since October 2009 and enjoys not only the gratification of fixing planes, but also "the challenge of being able to troubleshoot."

And as a non-commissioned officer, he's thinking about future generations of maintainers.

"I want to raise up people under me that, instead of complaining, want to fix things," said Charles.

Charles advised any Airman, not just maintainers, when creating processes, to "make it where anyone can take over" if they were to leave.

John Brown, another ART, joined the 507th in January. As a traditional reservist at Dover Air Force Base, Del., he worked on the C-5. In his civilian life, he worked various jobs, ranging from an engine mechanic to managing a concrete plant.

So, when he was offered an ART maintainer's job at Tinker Air Force Base, Brown said he said "yes" as quickly as he could.

Brown said his 507th MXS chain of command and peers are "willing to give you what you need." He

ARTs here enjoy 'the challenge of being able to troubleshoot.'

added that upon his arrival here, whether with moving to his new house or with training on maintaining a new airframe, the folks at the 507th "made me feel welcome."

And Tech. Sgt. Bryan Jones, a four-year ART with the 507th, moved from working on F-15 and F-16 aircraft in active duty to KC-135s with the Reserve.

Jones said the transition was "very simple," since those three aircraft use the same core engine.

Jones said being an ART is the "best kept secret" in the Air Force, adding that one can get "all the benefits, but still be a civilian...it's the best of both worlds."

"We help supplement the active duty Air Force and we do it for much cheaper," said Charles.

So what does the 507th MXS senior leadership say about their Airmen?

Senior Master Sgt. Rodney Mesenbrink, propulsion flight chief, said his Airmen are "hungry for knowledge."

"These are some of the most eager-to-learn young folks I've seen since I've been here," said the 25-year veteran of the 507th.

A diverse group of people comprise this squadron, said Mesenbrink, but they look past their personal backgrounds and other work experiences to "get the job done and done well."



Inside the aircraft, Tech. Sgt. Robbie Irvin (left) double-checks the connection of the testing equipment while Airman 1st Class David Noviello monitors the readout on the computer. Irvin and Noviello are members of the Oklahoma Air Guard's 137th Maintenance Group, a partner unit to the 507th.

INSET: The equipment receiver is mounted on the side of the aircraft's engine, while a data cable connects the receiver and the computer inside and a power cable runs along the wing to a portable electric generator on the flightline.



465th ARS taking applications for pilots, undergraduate pilot trainees

By Tech. Sgt. Zach Jacobs
507th ARW Public Affairs

Lt. Col. Michael J. Remualdo, director of operations for the 465th Air Refueling Squadron, said last month the squadron is actively seeking candidates for undergraduate pilot training and fixed-wing aircraft pilots.

Applications for UPT candidates are due no later than October 15 and must include an applicant's one-page resume; a one-page letter of introduction; Air Force Officer Qualification Test scores; test of basic aviation

skills, or TBAS, scores; a copy of a Federal Aviation Administration private pilot's license; and copies of all college transcripts.

Individuals over 29 years of age as of November 1 will not be considered due to timing constraints; also, the 465th will not apply to higher headquarters for age or moral waivers.

Pilot applicants must include copies of all officer performance reports, copies of all Air Force Forms 8, a copy of an AF Form 942, a two-page copy of their Flying History Summary, and

two letters of recommendation in their applications.

Prior KC-135 aircraft flying experience is highly desired, but not required.

Squadron visits for both pilot and UPT applicants are encouraged, but no hardcopy applications should be mailed.

Anyone interested should contact Remualdo with any questions at 405-245-2746 or 405-734-3269, or email him at michael.remualdo@tinker.af.mil. UPT applications should also be directly emailed to Remualdo.

Wing education office offers more than 50 tests for language proficiency, formal language training

By Tech. Sgt. Zach Jacobs
507th ARW Public Affairs

TINKER AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. — A wing education official reiterated the availability of language proficiency testing and examinations for formal language training placement here May 23.

Master Sgt. George Piper, chief of education and training for the 507th Force Support Squadron, said the Defense Language Proficiency Tests and the Defense Language Aptitude Battery examination are available at the education office for servicemembers to take.

The DLPT is used to evaluate the ability to understand written and spoken material presented in a foreign language, Piper said.

"DLPTs are administered to all officers and Airmen in the Air Force Reserve who claim proficiency or native ability in one or more foreign languages," said Piper.

"The test takes between two and five hours, depending on the language being tested," Piper said.

The DLAB evaluates potential ability to complete formal foreign language training. It is used to screen and select foreign language

trainees.

"Any military member can take this test if he or she has a memorandum from his or her commander," Piper added.

A sufficient score on a current DLPT exam may qualify a servicemember for a monthly bonus, depending on the language known and that servicemember's AFSC.

For more information or to schedule an appointment for a DLPT or DLAB exam, contact the education and training office at 405-734-7075.

CCAF...



Your Key To Advancement!



Call the Wing Education Office at 734-7075

507th AIR REFUELING WING RECRUITERS



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Master Sgt. Melissa Melichar (in-service recruiter) Tinker AFB, OK 405.739.2980



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Master Sgt. Marcel Jacques Midwest City, OK 405.733.9403



Master Sgt. Tony Anderson Midwest City, OK 405.733.7639



Staff Sgt. Senecca Collins Tulsa, OK 918.250.3400

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