

# Gulf Wing

403rd Wing, Keesler AFB, Miss., Air Force Reserve Command

Home of the Flying Jennies & the Hurricane Hunters

Volume 26, Issue 7, August 2005



## Dolphin Delivery

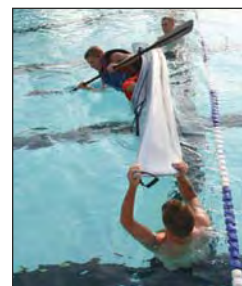
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## Holy Cow! Batman

Col. Michael Underkofler explains the value of continuing education and promotes lifetime learning for all Air Force Reservists.

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#### Gulf Wing Awards

1st Place, Best Magazine, Air Force Media Contest, 2003, 2004  
1st Place, Best Command Publication, AFRC Media Contest, 2004  
1st Place, Best Magazine, AFRC Media Contest, 1989, 2003, 2004

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No one knows how or why Noah, a rough-toothed dolphin, ended up near death on a Texas beach last August; however his journey home drew national media attention July 15 when he was loaded onto an Air Force Reserve Command C-130J-30 for a flight to Florida.

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## UTA DATE CHANGE

The November UTA is changed to Oct. 29-30.

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## Gulf Wing People

## Quick Peek

State Senator tours 403rd Wing

By Staff Sgt. J. Justin Pearce  
Staff Writer

Sen. Hank Erwin paid a special visit to the Hurricane Hunters July 29 to satisfy his curiosity about the future of the Air Force. After attending a building dedication at Keesler in honor of his father, Medal of Honor recipient Red Erwin, the Alabama state senator and his wife toured the 53rd WRS and a C-130J-30 while Brig. Gen. Richard Moss, commander, 403rd Wing, brought him up to speed on the improvements in the newest generation of Hercules.

"This is a whole new way to fly with this technology," said Erwin as he gazed at the new heads-up display. "And there's a lot of room up here — I thought it was going to be cramped."

"It's amazing what this thing can do — put it on auto pilot and it will fly for you," said General Moss as he and the senator walked through the cargo area. Erwin said the tour impressed him. "To get a chance to climb aboard a



After climbing aboard a C-130J-30 and learning about the new systems and technology, Sen. Hank Erwin of Alabama left Keesler with confidence in the new airframe and its capabilities.

new C-130J and see the computer technology that comprises the new Air Force gives me the encouragement that we have the best aircraft, personnel and Air Force in the world."

Senator Erwin's father received the highest honor bestowed upon an American for saving the lives of his B-29 aircrew during a combat mission over Koriyama, Japan in 1945. After a faulty 20-pound flare burst into flames and literally melted his face, he managed to find the flare by touch, pick it

up and hold it firmly to his body as it set him ablaze. The smoke-filled aircraft nose-dived toward the ground. He made his way to the cockpit window, having to stop and unlock the navigators table to pass by, still burning in flames. Ten seconds later and 300 feet from the ground, he launched the flaming canister to the wind from the cockpit window and collapsed to the floor in flames. His actions allowed the pilot to pull the plane out of its dive, saving the crew.

## Gulf Wing Salutes

### PROMOTIONS

#### SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT

Ronald E. Childres, 403rd LRS  
Michael J. Festino, 403rd MXS  
Jack D. Morris, 403rd MXG  
Stephen J. Schaff, 815th AS

#### MASTER SERGEANT

Michael T. Tartt, 403rd MSG

#### NEWCOMERS

2nd Lt. Kathleen M. Barrios, 815th AS  
SrA Derrick Bell, 41st APS  
Tech. Sgt. James Blackwell, 403rd MSF  
SrA Trey C. Blanchard, 403rd ASTS  
Amn. Basic Eli S. Campbell, 403rd CF  
SrA Rafael Carambot Rivera, 403rd MXS  
Amn. Basic Jamie M. Collins, 403rd SVF  
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Lt. Col. Richard Gist, 403rd ASTS  
SrA Patrick T. Green, 403rd MXS  
Amn. Israel Haskin, 403rd MSF  
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A1C Scotty Ingram, 403rd SFS

SrA Gloria Kehrney-Abel, 403rd OSS  
SrA Allen J. Kiggins, 403rd MOF  
A1C Joshua Ladner, 403rd CES  
SrA Matthew T. Lowe, 403rd LRS  
SrA Rodney O. McQuirter, 41st APS  
A1C Sergio M. Molas, 41st APS  
Tech. Sgt. Sonya K. Pinnell, 403rd ASTS  
Maj. Michael W. Taylor, 403rd OSF  
A1C Jeremy W. Walker, 41st APS  
A1C Omarsharif K. Walker, 403rd MXS

#### CDC COMPLETION

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SrA Roland J. Broussard, III, 2A551  
Staff Sgt. Angelia Fogle, 2S051  
SrA Dorothy M. Gipson, 1C351  
Staff Sgt. Tami A. Graham, 2AX7X  
SrA Leatrice L. Gray, 2A754  
Staff Sgt. Terry R. Hall, 2T271  
Staff Sgt. Dale J. Hoda, 4N051A  
SMSgt. David A. Hufton, 1N071  
Staff Sgt. Ladonna D. James, 3S051A  
SrA Rachel A. Lee, 2A551  
SrA Shawn P. McCollough, 2A651B  
A1C Daniel M. Neglia, 10023  
TSgt. Thomas F. Newberry, 2AX7X

A1C Jonathan M. Padgett, 10023  
SrA Christopher J. Pierre, 2F051  
Amn. Nathanael E. Robertson, 3E453A  
SrA Laura L. Rutherford, 4N051A  
SrA Charnique J. Slater, 3S051B  
TSgt. John D. Smith, 2A553C  
Staff Sgt. Stephen J. Strausbaugh, 2A553A  
SrA Christopher James Tucker, 3E351C  
Master Sgt. Joseph F. Wozniak, 2AX7X  
SrA Michael M. Young, 2T251

## Pay Date

## Aug. 15

## Next UTA

## Sept. 10-11



Photo by Staff Sgt. Justin Pearce

On a hot UTA Sunday in July, Senior Airman Michael Staten, a crew chief with the 403rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, pumps liquid oxygen into a Hercules C-130H. The liquid oxygen, or LOX, is stored on board for aircrew to use in emergencies and for high altitude flying when the crew compartments cannot be pressurized. Read more about it on Page 14.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Eaton

Maj. Brian Bell (right) assumes command of the 403rd Communications Flight from Col. Michael Dawson, commander, 403rd Mission Support Group. Major Bell resides in Fredericksburg, Va. where he is employed at the Pentagon as Deputy Branch Chief, Critical Infrastructure Protection, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Deputy Directorate of Antiterrorism.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. James B. Prineas

Aircraft 8153 was delivered to the 403rd Wing July 12 becoming one of what will be eight of the "stretched" version of the Hercules based at Keesler and assigned to the 815th Airlift Squadron. The unit participated in the first combat deployment of the aircraft when it deployed a J-model and crew last December in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom where they proved the efficiency and durability of the new airframe and won over theater commanders with the capabilities of the longer aircraft. The Flying Jennies have participated in the testing and evaluation of the J-model since the Air Force first acquired the weapons system in February 1999.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Michael Duke

Staff Sgt. Anthony Hinkel (foreground) checks a fuse on a C-130H radar as Tech Sgt. Ronald Martin monitors the power settings. Both Airmen are integrated systems technicians with the 403rd Avionics Flight's Comm-Nav shop. The radar systems are brought in to the Comm-Nav shop for repair and checked for operability on a regular basis.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Michael Duke

Staff Sgt. Anthony Hinkel checks the connections on a C-130H weather radar antenna. The radar systems have been a workhorse for Hurricane Hunter missions and are brought in to the Comm-Nav shop for repair and checked for operability.

# Comm-Nav



# Communication Rotation

By Staff Sgt. Michael Eaton  
Staff Writer

For the 17 members of the 403rd Communications Flight who performed their annual tour at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, it wasn't just their training that proved valuable. The group ended up saving the U.S. government tens of thousands of dollars.

Ramstein is home to U.S. Air Forces in Europe, an Air Force major command and the air component of the U.S. European Command.

Tech. Sgt. Greg Garcia, the unit's deployment manager, said a contractor quoted the base a cost of 140 Euros per land mobile radio for repair. Exchange rates vary from day-to-day, but at the exchange rate during the unit's AT, the cost per radio would amount to \$171.33.

Sergeant Garcia said the security forces squadron alone had more than 700 radios.

Comm flight technicians quickly proved their resourcefulness when they completed more than \$48,000 of radio reprogramming.

In addition, communications specialists broke into small teams when they arrived to support several work centers.

Sergeant Garcia said Airmen who are qualified in cryptographic work assisted in the Air Force's European command center.

Sergeant Garcia, a 10-year veteran of the Air Force, said he was intrigued by some of the things he saw and learned while at Ramstein.

"I had never seen it until I went there, but they actually had top secret computer terminals," he said.

The base also maintains 24-hour hotlines to the highest levels of government.

Sergeant Garcia said while at the command center, they actually worked on the red switch, the system the president uses to call the country to war.

While everyone on the team called on their expertise to help out during the

deployment, some also enhanced their skills.

They learned to program and encrypt two new pieces of equipment, according to Sergeant Garcia.

Senior Master Sgt. Jay Medina, network manager, said his team went through network control center training that covered both secure and nonsecure information processing. The training covered operational security, computer security and emissions security.

Senior Airman Jack Dunn and Airman 1st Class Brian Mitchell configured a shipment of switches that each had more than five pages of encoding to input manually.

"We had a site survey on infrastructure, which included servers, routers, firewalls, and server security," said Sergeant Medina.

"The main reason for us going over was to get everyone qualified in their unit type codes (job skills)," said Tech. Sgt. Rafael Gonzalez, client support administrator.

He said working at Ramstein was a great experience because the team was able to gain a broader perspective on communications.

Tech. Sgt. Boyd Huff, information management functional manager, said this was the first time the unit has deployed as a whole in six years.

*Comm flight technicians quickly proved their worth when they completed more than \$48,000 of radio reprogramming*



Photo Illustration By Staff Sgt. J. Justin Pearce

# Teen Warrior Week

By Staff Sgt. Michael Eaton  
Staff Writer

When Master Sgt. Glen Picard, the 403rd Wing historian, picked up his 13-year-old daughter Rachel from Teen Warrior Week, his 7-year-old daughter Julie made sure to remind him she only had five years until she could be a warrior.

There is a reason for Julie's anticipation. Her big sister rated Teen Warrior Week at the top of a lengthy list of other camps and church functions she had attended this summer.

"It was the best camp I've ever been to," she exclaimed on the final day of the camp, five days and countless new friends later. Rachel said she is already looking forward to next year.

Teen Warrior Week was Sergeant Picard's top pick too – it was the perfect way to teach his daughter about the military.

"Teen Warrior Week was designed with the goal of introducing teens to military life and showing them different aspects of being deployed through fun and activities," said Ms. Jeri Peterson, director of Youth Programs at Keesler. The program featured activities that were both challenging and educationally rewarding.

The week kicked off July 24 and lasted through July 29. There were 24 participants, all between the ages of 13 and 15.

Camp challenges included team building and leadership activities, such as kayaking, high-ropes courses, Frisbee golf, swimming, bowling and physical training.

Tours with the 81st Training Wing and tenant units showcased some of the facilities at Keesler.

The group stopped by the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron where they were greeted by the Hurricane Hunters. Lt. Col. Val Hendry, a weather reconnaissance officer, briefed the teens and coun-



Counselors give Matt Collins, 13, a white-water, rapid-like test during water skills training at the Keesler pool. At Teen Warrior Week the participants undergo this training prior to their real kayaking adventure 'round trip from Biloxi beach to Deer Island.

Photos By Staff Sgt. Michael Eaton



selsors about the critical mission of the unit and introduced them to its history.

The group toured the Keesler Medical Center, the air traffic control tower and the fire department.

They witnessed first-hand how the 81st Security Forces Squadron takes a bite out of crime from a military working dog demonstration, and also watched the Honor Guard perform.

Teen warriors also visited the Keesler Museum.

Teen Warrior Week is open to teens whose parents are active duty, Reserve, retired, or DOD employees.

During the week the youths and their counselors stayed in cabins at campgrounds in Biloxi, Ellisville and Hattiesburg and visited facilities at Keesler and Camp Shelby.

Campers had a chance to eat in the dining halls and swim at the base pools as well.

Peterson said Teen Warrior Week, in its third year, is a spinoff of a similar program at Wright-Patterson AFB.

There was even time to dine on some of the finer delicacies of the military. Peterson said warriors dined on Meals Ready to Eat for their final camp meal.

Sergeant Picard said while



his daughter was at camp, he had hoped she would learn individual responsibility and teamwork, and gain more confidence in her abilities.

She may have gained all of that and then some during one event in particular.

"The high ropes course was the best," said Rachel. "I had a small fear of heights and it helped me get over it."

Peer pressure in the context

of the camp was a positive thing for the young teen. Rachel said once she saw her close friend Stephanie McGaugh complete the course, she knew she could do it too.

"All she has done is talk about the camp," said Alex McGaugh, who recently retired from the Air Force. He said his daughter, Stephanie, has already expressed interest in attending the camp next year.

(Top) During Teen Warrior Week, youth are taught the values of camaraderie through group activities. To become true warriors, they learned to count on each other as their parents depend on their brothers and sisters in arms. (Above) From left, Garrett Plaza, Shawn Mosby, Charles Shoemake and Matt Collins tour the Keesler Medical Center laboratory.

# Dolphin Flies Home

By Tech. Sgt. James B. Pritchett  
Editor

No one knows how or why Noah, a rough-toothed dolphin, ended up near death on a Texas beach last August; however his journey home drew national media attention July 15 when he was loaded onto an Air Force Reserve Command C-130J-30 for a flight to Florida.

A crew from the 815th Airlift Squadron was already flying a Reserve Airlift Support mission, a week-long duty for the crew as they travel around the country hauling people, cargo and

equipment, when they were told they would be transporting a dolphin.

"We transport a lot of things for the Air Force and for other services, but this is definitely one of the more unusual missions I've ever supported," said Senior Master Sgt. Todd Patterson, loadmaster.

"I'm just glad we could help out with something like this," said Master Sgt. Steve Campanella, crew chief, 403rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. "This means something, not only to Noah and the people who have worked so

hard to get him healthy, but also to the community.

"Anytime we are able to help out with a humanitarian mission, whether it's carrying hurricane relief supplies in the states or air dropping food in foreign countries, I'm always proud to be a part of those missions," he said.

Lea Walker, regional director of the Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network, invited the crew out to meet Noah the day before the flight.

She explained that when Noah was first brought in he was so sick rescuers



Aircrew helped volunteers flying with Noah to keep him hydrated and comfortable, Senior Master Sgt. Todd Patterson, loadmaster, 815th Airlift Squadron, (left) ensured Lea Walker, (right) and her team of assistants were able to spend as much time as possible monitoring Noah's condition during the 3-hour flight.

Noah had several infections including ulcerations in his esophageal tract which prevented him from eating his normal diet. He also had an infection in his gums that caused them to swell up covering his teeth.



Noah swims in his tank at SeaLab the day before his flight to Florida. Rescuers said he was healthy and ready for the trip after more than 10 months recovery.



Aircrew from the 815th Airlift Squadron joined Gulf World workers and Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network volunteers to move Noah off the aircraft and into an awaiting van for transport to his temporary home. Noah will join other rough-toothed dolphins at Gulf World before they are all released back into the Gulf of Mexico.

didn't think he had a chance.

"He had so many problems," she said. "We just didn't want to get too attached."

Noah had several infections including ulcerations in his esophageal tract which prevented him from eating his normal diet. He also had an infection in his gums that caused them to swell up covering his teeth.

"That's how he got the name Noah," said Walker. "When we first saw him we thought he was very old and didn't have any teeth."

It turned out Noah was more middle-aged, she said, between 17 and 22 years old and showed a determination to live from the beginning. He was able to recover fully over the last 10-and-a-half months and is now physically strong enough and healthy enough to travel back to his native waters in Florida.

Walker and her team of 30-40 volunteers nursed Noah back to health in a warehouse at SeaLab provided by the Texas State Aquarium. In the warehouse in Corpus Christi, Texas, there is a large tank, 40 feet across and filled with 40,000 gallons of salt water where the team treats injured dolphins like Noah.

Walker has spent much of her time over the past 10 months searching for donations to keep the project going.

"We have to change the water in the tank every five days," she said. "When we do that we have to add salt because we are using fresh water. The salt alone costs about \$1,000 every time we change it out."

Walker said she is fortunate to have found donors for many needs such as fish to feed Noah and medicines he needed to recover.

She was also able to get Coastal America to help arrange the airlift necessary to bring Noah home. Walker said she never even considered transporting him over land because it would be too dangerous for his health and too traumatic.

In order to transport the more than 300-pound dolphin, Walker's team had to construct a transport box about 10 feet long and three feet wide. He was picked up in a harness and moved over into the box where he laid on air mattresses during the

trip.

"We can keep him comfortable in the transport for about a day," she said. "We really don't like to keep him out of the water that long."

When the team arrived at the aircraft, Walker brought along a small group of handlers who have worked with Noah and Dr. Tim Tristan, a veterinarian with the Texas State Aquarium.

Dr. Tristan kept Noah sedated during the transport and monitored his condition. The others kept him wet using sprayers filled with water and kept him calm by talking to him and touching him.

"We are very grateful to the Air Force Reserve for allowing this crew to come and help us move Noah," Walker said. "I don't know how we would have done it without them. Now I can relax, knowing that Noah is going to be okay."

"I'm glad we could work this out and that we were able to transport the whole team," said Maj. Erik Olson, pilot and aircraft commander. Major Olson and Capt. Todd Humphries, co-pilot, each took a few minutes to come into the cargo compartment to meet Noah during the flight.

The airlift mission was arranged through Coastal America headquartered in Washington, D.C., which is a partnership of several departments and agencies as well as the Office of the President, state and local governments and private organizations. The partners work together to protect, preserve and restore the nation's coastal resources. Coastal America works with the Department of Defense to link military missions and training requirements with coastal needs.

Noah's long journey now nears the end. When the aircrew said farewell to Walker and her team at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla. they loaded Noah up on a truck for one more ride to Gulf World Marine Park in Panama City, Fla. There he joined a female rough-toothed dolphin named Doris who was already there. Astro, a juvenile male also rescued in Texas, arrived the next day and Vixen, another female, arrived a few days later.

Rescuers are hoping the four form a small pod and stick together when they are released back into the Gulf of Mexico.



# It's a LOX

By Staff Sgt. J. Justin Pearce  
Staff Writer

On a day that turned Keesler's flightline into a giant barbeque pit, Senior Airman Michael Staten walked out of the 403rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron wearing a pair of cotton coveralls, helmet and gloves, and spotted his aircraft from the number tattooed on its tail. By the time he reached the vehicle, he had already turned into a human sprinkler. Undaunted, he went right to work helping the Hurricane Hunters and Flying Jennies breathe a little easier.

One of the duties on the crew chief's lengthy chore list during the July UTA was to pump liquid oxygen into tanks on a Hercules C-130H. The Liquid Oxygen, or LOX, is stored on board for aircrew to use in emergencies and for high altitude flying when the crew compartments cannot be pressurized.

"It's important to the Hurricane Hunters because they are gone on 12-15 hour missions and they need it for aircrew to breathe if they pass out . . . The first thing they always do is test it to make sure it's good to go," said Staff Sgt. Linda Adams, a veteran crew chief, as she supervised Airman Staten while he pumped LOX into a C-130J.

"This is his first time doing this solo - I'm just here to watch and make sure everything goes right," said Sergeant Adams.

As the flightline sizzled, Airman Staten continued pumping the LOX into the J-model's tank. Minutes vanished, but the heat didn't . . . still pumping. If only the miniature clouds of oxygen that sometimes puffed from the connection were cold, but it's the light blue, transparent cryogenic liquid form that packs the intense -300 degrees Fahrenheit temperatures that without the proper safety equipment would easily turn an Airman into a snowman.

Once the nozzle is connected to the aircraft, there is a little waiting involved, said Sergeant Adams. Airman Staten busied himself, frequently skimming through his crew chief's manual and checking dials on the external LOX tank.

About 15 minutes (or what seemed an hour on the flightline barbeque) crawled by and the job was complete.

Airman Staten disconnected the nozzle from the aircraft, gathered his equipment, and headed back to the maintenance squadron.

This time he hitched a ride.





# Crossing into the Blue again

Over the past few months, Tech. Sgt. Frederick Transburg's life seemed overwhelming at times. He recently changed career fields, bought a house, altered the lives of six people and had twins.

Although each of these challenges alone would cause stress attacks for some people, Sergeant Transburg still has a smile on his face, and not just because it was his wife who delivered the twins.

He's making people a part of what he believes in, one person at a time, as one of the newest recruiters for the 403rd Wing.

"Public service was my job and still is; it's just that in my job before a lot of the time I dealt with people who were not happy - and now it's all about helping people get what they want," he said. Until February, he worked in Security Forces both on active duty and as a Reservist.

"I fell in love with the Air Force Reserve," he said while visiting units to introduce himself on his first UTA in July. "I found myself selling people on the Reserve all the time, like the 'Get One' program, and recruiting just felt like a natural progression."

Sergeant Transburg first entered the Air Force on active duty in the law enforcement career field in 1993, and was stationed at Keesler with the 81st Security Forces Squadron. After his first enlistment, he moved over to the Reserve where he served as an Individual Mobilization Augmentee, a member assigned to an active duty unit to backfill forward deployed troops.

After 9/11, he was mobilized for two years as an IMA at Keesler in the same building he worked in when on active duty. During that period, he helped several friends cross into the Reserve, and eventually decided that he was fit to recruit.

Although the line of work has changed, the fast pace of the job hasn't.

"Fortunately, it's been very busy - that's one reason I came into recruiting; it's a challenging, fast-paced job and you're always working," he said.

Although he is only months into the job, Sergeant Transburg is already making his way into schools throughout his district, and hopes to turn his customers into Airmen. He has already enlisted six.

The recruiter said his strategy is simple - he plans to be up front and honest with people because "the Reserve sells itself."

Sergeant Transburg said he enjoys his new home on the Gulf Coast. After growing up on a farm in Northfield, Minn., he wanted to see more of the world, but is glad he settled in the first spot he landed.

Tech. Sgt. Frederick Transburg, a former military police officer at Keesler, crossed trained into recruiting and joined the 403rd Wing's team to help people find their place in the Reserve. Even before he changed careers, he was telling the Reserve story and convincing people to sign up through the "Get One" Program. When he's not busy helping turn recruits into Airman, he spends time with his wife Jill and newborn twins Teal and Karlee, duck hunts or rig fishes in his boat.

By Staff Sgt. J. Justin Pearce  
Staff Writer



Photo by Staff Sgt. J. Justin Pearce



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Eaton

Aircraft 5300 touches down on a quiet runway at Keesler marking the return of aviation to the base after months of repair and improvement on the flightline. Aircraft from the 403rd Wing parked temporarily at the Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center and at Maxwell AFB, Ala. during the work.

# Weather Bird Returns to Nest

By Staff Sgt. Michael Eaton  
Staff Writer

Like a bird returning to its nest, a single WC-130J with the words Hurricane Hunters tattooed on its tail, touched down on the Keesler runway and taxied toward the empty apron.

This landing, June 13, marked the return of aircraft to the base.

Carrying maintenance personnel and a J-model propeller aircraft 5300 was the first to land since the flightline officially closed March 14 for repairs.

The aircraft was also the last to return from hurricane evacuation at Ellington Field, Texas.

Aircraft from the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron and the 815th Airlift Squadron flew in and out of the Gulfport Combat Readiness

Training Center flightline since the closing of Keesler's runway.

"We appreciate being able to put planes at Gulfport," said Lt. Col. Roger Gardner of the 53rd, "but we're happy to be home."

The flightline's upgrades and repairs drew immediate attention from the crew who flew the hour-and-a-half flight from Ellington.

The three-person crew from the 53rd WRS were Maj. Brit Woods, pilot, Lt. Col. Douglas Niolet, co-pilot and Tech. Sgt. Ed Scherzer, dropsonde operator.

Upgrades to the flightline were noticed immediately by the crew. Colonel Niolet said, "I've been here

since 81, and this is the biggest improvement to the runway since I've been here."

"The approach was outstanding," said Major Woods. "The runway markings are very visible."

Colonel Gardner said the flightline now has white markings on black asphalt, as opposed to white on gray.

Flightline improvements also included a new drainage system that was installed beneath the tarmac.

Aside from being the first to return, Woods said aircraft 5300 was special to members of the 53rd. It was the first J-model aircraft built for the 403rd and the first one emblazoned with the new Hurricane Hunters paint scheme.

## ARPC Website Geared For Reservists

Air Reserve Personnel Center officials recently released the Virtual Personnel Center Guard Reserve, a Web-based personnel service portal program. The new service is already getting some valuable use from Air Force reservists and Air National Guardsmen.

"Being able to have your records updated with a simple click of a button was impressive," said Master Sgt. Scott Davis, deployed to Baghdad from Dyess Air Force Base, Texas. "I was honestly expecting the records update to take weeks, but my records were updated within a matter of hours."

The portal has been online since April, but was recently given a new look. Sergeant Davis accessed the site to request an update to his decorations. Within hours, the changes were made to the sergeant's records and his questions answered.

Web Link: [arpc.afrc.af.mil](http://arpc.afrc.af.mil)

"This system saved me valuable time trying to match my schedule here with the time change back at ARPC," Sergeant Davis said. "It was important for me to have my records correct -- just in case."

"We make every effort to handle customers' requests the same day they're received," said Tech. Sgt. Jennifer Bye of an ARPC contact center. "I answer a lot within five or 10 minutes."

Whether it is day or night, at work, home or on the battlefield, ARPC is only a mouse click or phone call away and has a staff that is willing to help out and get the job done.

"Personnel services (are) 24/7, no matter where you are," said Dave Aldrich, director of the directorate of personnel services. "If you can get on the Web, it's available."

## Reserve Seeking AGRs

The Air Force Reserve is looking for officers and enlisted people to fill full-time Active Guard and Reserve positions.

In the past 15 years, the number of AGR slots has increased from 400 to more than 1,900 authorizations.

"We have opportunities in many specialties but a larger concentration in career fields such security forces, combat rescue, intelligence, maintenance, space, pilot and personnel," said Maj. Dawn M. Sutor, deputy director of the AGR Management Office in the Pentagon's Office of Air Force Reserve. "Currently, Air Force Reserve Command's hard-to-fill positions are in security forces, intelligence and combat rescue. We are actively seeking volunteers for these programs."

Reservists in the AGR program serve under the authority of Title 10 of the U.S. Code and receive most of the benefits afforded to the active force. They qualify for an active-duty retirement, provided they attain career status and can serve 20 years active federal military service.

The program offers tours of duty on the Air Staff; at Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, Robins Air Force Base, Ga.; at Headquarters Air Reserve Personnel Center in Denver; in AFRC units; and with other major commands.

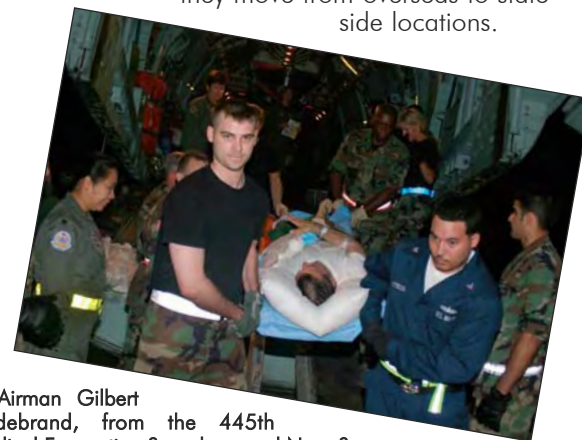
Information about vacancies and application procedures, as well as more details on the program is available on the AGR Management Office's restricted website. [www.re.hq.af.mil/agr/agrhome2.html](http://www.re.hq.af.mil/agr/agrhome2.html).

AFRC News Service

Web Link: [www.re.hq.af.mil/agr/agrhome2.html](http://www.re.hq.af.mil/agr/agrhome2.html)

## Team Effort Brings Wounded Troops Home from War

It takes a total force effort to care for and move wounded American servicemembers from the frontlines in Southwest Asia to hospitals in the United States. The tasks includes everything from treating patients in forward operating locations to airlifting and caring for them as they move from overseas to state-side locations.



Senior Airman Gilbert K. Hildebrand, from the 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, and Navy Seaman Patterson, transfer a litter patient from an Air Force Reserve Command C-141 at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., after the flight from Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

# Holy Cow! Batman

## Even Superheros Realize Value of Learning

By Col. Michael Underkoffler  
Commander, 403rd Operations Group

This week my two little boys, Jake and Will, head back to school. They'll face the challenges of second and first grade, respectively, after a summer of swimming lessons, camps, and a family vacation. They stayed incredibly busy this summer and told me the other night that they had a lot of fun.

The younger son, although happy about soon seeing his regular friends, was a little nervous about returning to school because he'll have homework for the first time. He asked, "how many grades and how much homework do I have to do before I get a job and make money?" I quickly told him he had to get through graduate, medical, or law school before he could go out and get a job.

My response, however, wasn't the "approved" household answer and his mother followed up by telling both boys that school and learning are forever. She got them to talk about how much fun they had this summer learning new things. She ran through a list of new words they learned without even having to take a weekly spelling test.

To bring home the idea that learning is fun and forever, my wife talked about some of the neighbors. One neighbor in his spare time reads the work of war theorists like Clausewitz and studies great battles. She also told the boys about another neighbor who recently needed to put in long hours to pass his medical specialty board exam. Incorporating fun while considering career paths seemed to satisfy one son.

But our younger son adamantly stated his desire to join The Justice League, the fictional crime-fighting team of superheroes. He said he's never seen Batman or any other superhero studying in any cartoon or comic book. Holy cow! I might have my hands full with him.

I sat on a recent Promotion Enhancement Program board where my belief that education and training are life-long and key to career success was reinforced, yet again. Along with AFSC-specific training, the mid and senior enlisted members meeting this board had impressive records of continuing education. Most had worked in several careers fields, each requiring its own



Col. Michael Underkoffler

course of study and credentialing process. Most also had undergraduate or graduate degrees. These Airmen — members of our Justice League — had indeed spent a lot of time in the classroom. Classroom time went hand-in-hand with their careers.

Continuing education and training are hallmarks of the profession of arms. Simply said, we won't defeat the enemy if we don't have a well-trained and well-educated fighting force. This doesn't translate to a force of highly capable "techies." Knowing how to manipulate a computer program, for example, is great but in the words of Shakespeare, is not the "be-all and end-all." I believe we need warriors who possess analytical thinking and sound writing skills gained through the study of many disciplines. Each field of study can bring different skills and strengths to the fight.

Besides the personal joy of learning something new, formal continuing education has been shown to improve one's quality of life by reducing stress, delaying the onset of dementia, and improving longevity. Other personal benefits are readily apparent. Well-trained and well-educated Airmen consistently rise to the top of an organization. Both in an out of

uniform, promotions and earnings are closely tied to learning. Recent studies show the earnings gap between high school and college graduates is widening even further. Additionally, the educational requirements for entry into many professions are also increasing.

Given that learning is fun, healthy, and profitable, why not answer the school bell this fall? At great expense the nation, and in particular the military, has built an extremely respected, flexible, and responsive post-secondary education system. Even if the area you live in doesn't have the program or field of study you are interested in pursuing, the web is full of cyber classrooms and resources once never imagined. Online courses make learning fit into your schedule. No matter your age or previous educational experience, opportunities abound.

Where do you first turn to return to the classroom? I'd suggest your unit's Training Manager and the Wing Education Office. They are well-suited to explain many of the training opportunities within your career field and advanced military and civilian education programs. They can also provide suggestions for ways to cover the expenses of courses. Civilian and military-sponsored student aid programs constantly change. For example, reservists activated for 90 days or more are now authorized greater benefits than those available to new non-activated reservists. There are also many new student loan forgiveness programs for those entering government service or critically-understaffed civilian professions. It is entirely possible to take courses for little or nothing.

It might seem impossible now, but follow the lead of the many Airmen who continue to work and learn. You'll be surprised that you can juggle work, family, and school. Follow one course with another. I've seen it repeated many times. A couple of courses turn into a new hobby, career opportunity, or degree. You'll be intellectually stimulated and will bring a new set of combat tools to your unit.

Now, if I can only get a couple of comic strips showing Batman cracking the books, I know I'd get my future Justice Leaguer convinced that learning is forever.



Photo by Staff Sgt. J. Justin Pearce

## Shades of Gray

Rather than raincoats, C-130s wear paint for protection against rough weather. Christopher Mayfield and (reflection) Ron Balius are sheet metal painters from the 403rd Wing Fabrication Shop who in July applied routine touchups to an aircraft's paint job to ensure its overall protection. Every six years, the C-130 gets a new paint job at Warner Robbins Air Reserve Station, Ga. Mayfield is a staff sergeant and Balius is a master sergeant with the 403rd Wing.

## Gulf Wing Go-Getter



Each month Gulf Wing is printed for people of the 403rd Wing, like Senior Airman Jason Rocker of the 403rd Maintenance Squadron.

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