

Heartland

Warrior

Vol.13 No.7

July 2008

Serving the men and women of the 434th Air Refueling Wing, Grissom ARB, Ind.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Patrick Kuminecz

Senior Master Sgt. Brian Mackey, a quality inspector with the 434th Maintenance Group, marshals a KC-135R Stratotanker as it departs from Incirlik AB, Turkey back to Grissom. Airmen from Grissom are completing the deployment in rotations to Turkey to maximize training opportunities.

Airmen maximize training in Turkey

By SSgt. Ben Mota
Public Affairs staff

Members of the 434th Air Refueling Wing are operating out of Incirlik Air Base, Turkey in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

The unit is rotating personnel and KC-135 Stratotankers, through a number of swap outs.

“The pace was set from the beginning,” said Lt. Col. Laen August, 72nd Air Refueling Squadron commander

and acting commander for the second rotation of the deployment. “The personnel folks did an incredible job with the processing of troops. This has been without a doubt the smoothest deployment processing I’ve seen during my 14 years at Grissom.”

Upon arrival, Grissom had to establish operations because the runway had been closed for renovations.

“We had to set up the operation from the bare bones,”

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I may not believe in God, but I believe in chaplains

Tech. Sgt. Eric Petosky
100th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

I have never really had much in the way of faith. My dog tags say “agnostic” on them. I don’t attend a church, synagogue or mosque. I live my life the best way I know how.

I’m not anti-religion; far from it. I have just never felt the need to express my spirituality through worship. There’s no shame in my choice. In fact, I hardly ever think about it.

I do get a touch uncomfortable in religious discussions with the devout though, not because I don’t believe, but because I do not want to alienate anyone by asking a question or making a statement that could be construed as offensive.

With that in mind, most of my conversations are “Do you prefer ‘Star Wars’ or ‘Lord of the Rings?’” and not, “Are you Baptist or Catholic?” This philosophy of avoiding religious topics has worked well for me in my circle of friends.

In March, I deployed to Romania for three weeks. It was a short deployment, but we were still sleeping in a tent city and eating out of a field kitchen. The night I arrived, I got a tent assignment and proceeded to drag my bags through the mud so I could get some sleep.

The next morning, I met my new roommates. All three were captains: a bioenvironmental engineer, a physician’s assistant and a protestant chaplain. So here is where my careful choice of conversation topics be-

comes important. I tactfully avoid the topic of religion in my circle of friends, but here I am living with a full-fledged chaplain! I was instantly on my guard.

What if I accidentally curse? What if I tell him I don’t believe in God? Am I going to make him mad? Or worse yet, am I going to make a juicy target for conversion? All these questions and

“Not only did I drop my guard, but I thought, if he wasn't a captain, I could be friends with this guy.”

many more ran through my head.

A day went by, then two, then four, then a week. The wall I had built was slowly crumbling the more and more I spoke with the chaplain.

I felt a little foolish for entertaining my previous reservations. Here is a man, eager to help others through what he called “ministry of presence” - nothing more than making others feel comfortable going to him with problems by mingling with the masses. He wasn’t preaching. He wasn’t trying to add me to the flock.

By the second week, we talked almost every day. Not only did I drop my guard, but I thought, “If he wasn’t a captain, I could be friends with this guy.” I went with him to take photos of a field trip to a city called Kluj..

Near the end of the second week, I was starting to feel the stress levels build. It didn’t take much to raise my blood pressure. I hadn’t talked to my

wife for 10 days; the cot was making my back hurt; there was constant a drizzle; the tent stunk like the farm field it rested upon; and I was just generally in a foul mood.

One particularly bad afternoon, I stalked angrily into to the tent wringing my hands in frustration. The chaplain was there and simply asked, “What’s wrong?” That was the catalyst for a deluge of my ranting. This isn’t fair. That’s messed up. What were they thinking? And through it all, the chaplain just let me vent.

An hour later, I apologized for “being a baby” and drowning him in my woes. He said it wasn’t a problem, and I felt better having gotten some of my gripes off my chest.

It didn’t dawn on me that I had just had my first chaplain counseling session until a week later.

I was shocked. I had always heard that anyone could visit a chaplain, religious or not, but I always harbored a secret suspicion, they would write me off the moment I said I didn’t believe.

The thought of discussing my issues with a chaplain never crossed my mind.

Doing so opened my eyes wider. I had fallen victim to lumping almost everyone of faith into a self-created paradigm of religious zealotry. That risk I took paid big dividends to my well-being.

Thank you for listening Chaplain Boyer. I still may not believe in God, but I believe in chaplains.

Heartland Warrior

Vol. 13, No. 7
July 2008

This funded Air Force Reserve Command newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military services.

Contents of the Heartland

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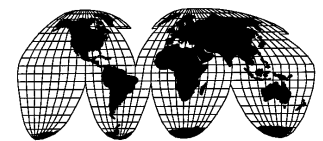
The editorial content is edited, and prepared by the Public Affairs Office of the 434th Air Refueling Wing, Grissom ARB, IN, 46971-5000.

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New health assessment begins in July

By SSgt. Chris Bolen
Public Affairs staff

Grissom personnel who are familiar with the online health assessment online website may be surprised to learn the system is on the way out.

Replacing it is a system close to and more aligned with the current active duty operations.

The Preventive Health Assessment-Individual Medical Readiness system — or PIMR — provides single point access for a reservist's physicals, vision, immunizations, occupational health, dental and other items. The system also provides global access to an individual's records even when on temporary duty or deployed.

PIMR was originally scheduled to go online in November, but due to changing requirements and the desire to speed the transition to the more centralized system the date was moved up to July.

"The PIMR has a number of advantages," explains Master Sgt. Lisa Keller, non-commissioned officer in charge of physical exams, 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron. "All components of physical exams are fed into one computer system."

"This provides a snapshot and total record on the computer screen that can be viewed at one place," she continued.

The system is also utilized by active duty Air Force and provides complete access to an individual's history.

Grissom is the second test base to transition to this new system.

"Grissom is the only stand alone reserve base selected to date to go online with this system," Sergeant Keller said. "The fact that we were chosen to be a test site speaks well for us."

Among the changes with the new system is the timing of yearly physicals.

Previously tied to a person's birth month, the new system restarts the clock from the actual date of the last physical.

"It will now be a 12 month to the



Photo by Staff Sgt. Chris Bolen

Maj. Dr. Craig Wisler, chief of dental services for Grissom's 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron, reviews the dental X-rays of Maj. Stephen McManus, staff judge advocate, during his long physical. A reservist's dental health is a critical component of mobility readiness. A full dental exam by a military doctor is required during the long physical at three year intervals. Prior to all physicals each reservist is required to fill out a health assessment.

day cycle," she states. "Birth month no longer matters."

The open period to fill in the online questionnaire has been cut in half from 180 days to 90 days prior to the physical.

Fasting lab work is no longer required for most reservists. The exception being occupations which specifically require it, such as firefighters. HIV blood drawings however, will still be required every two years.

"This change will help simplify

many actions," says Tech. Sgt. Tina Hoover, chief of personnel relocations. "The reports that can be pulled from the system are really nice, even awesome," she continued.

"These reports can organize information into multiple forms like groups, or squadrons," she noted.

"Another big advantage," notes Sergeant Keller "is that an individual is not going to get things they really do not need, this should provide much better patient care."

Turkey, from page 1

said the colonel. The first rotation of Grissom Airmen set up communication systems, transportation, and billeting before missions began. In addition, maintenance had to put an entire maintenance supply package in position in order to support the mission.

Despite all of those hurdles Grissom personnel began flying operational combat support missions within days of

arrival.

“Lt. Col. [Paul] Wietbrock, [74th Air Refueling Squadron commander] was the commander during the first rotation and he and his staff did a great job getting us off to a good start,” Colonel August said. “The preparations they made for the mid-point enabled us to pick up and keep operating smoothly. We managed to transition more than 200

personnel in and out of the theater within 72 hours and continue to fly our full slate of missions. That takes planning and seasoned teamwork!”

During the deployment Grissom’s KC-135R Stratotankers are refueling a variety of aircraft.

The KC-135R is able to provide mid-air refueling, making long flights safer and more efficient because the aircraft are able to get

to their destination without having to land.

“It does not get more real than this,” said Colonel August. “All of our sorties have been considered high priority missions needed to refuel aircraft going in and out of Northern Iraq and Afghanistan.”

All missions have been completed successfully, without any cancellations due to mechanical issues.

“Grissom’s maintenance team has done a fantastic job



Tech. Sgt. Mark Wilson, 434th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron avionics guidance and control specialist, performs a check to ensure the friend or foe features on the KC-135R Stratotanker are operating correctly. This inspection is mandatory before the aircraft can depart.



Tech. Sgt. Brian Achenback, a crew chief with the 434th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, completes a pre-flight cockpit check as he readies his aircraft to fly on a refueling mission.

keeping the planes ready for their sorties,” he added.

“As soon as we got here we began to work,” said Staff Sgt. David Gorski, a crew chief with the 434 Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. “We keep busy,” he added while performing a general safety inspection a tanker.

During the deployment crew chiefs

work 12 hour shifts.

Crew chiefs are required to inspect and perform various functional checks of the aircraft as well as ensure that the aircraft has been properly serviced with fuel, hydraulic fluid, and liquid oxygen.

While crew chiefs work long hours into the night, members of the 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron stay at the ready to ensure that the flight crew is in good physical and mental health to accomplish the

mission.

“Medical personnel are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to ensure that mission essential personnel are able to fly safely,” said Colonel August.

The unit has experienced issues such as sleep deprivation, due to the time zone differences and dehydration due to the hot and humid weather, he added.

Turkey’s summers can get as hot as 113 F degrees dur-

ing the day and as low as 23 F degrees at night.

Members of the 434th AMDS are there to look for symptoms before such conditions get worse, and to give advice to cure problems before they lead to medical emergencies.

Rotations to Turkey will continue through mid-summer.



Photos by Tech Sgt. Patrick Kuminecz

Master Sgt. John Bond, right, a KC-135R Stratotanker mechanic, shows Senior Airman Adam Dyer, a KC-135R crew chief, the brake accumulator and other items on the Stratotanker prior to the aircrew arriving for a mission. The deployment to Incirlik is a valuable training opportunity for many younger members of the unit.

Civil engineers training helps Native Americans

Members of the 434th Civil Engineers Squadron know good training when they get it.

They got that and the added bonus of helping Navajo families by constructing homes in Gallup, N.M.

The training done is part of an innovative readiness program that allows military members to use their skills to benefit others. In this case, they're helping the Southwest Indian Foundation.

Military members have been making their way to Gallup since 1998 turning piles of wood and nails into modern homes.

The homes are built in a warehouse and transported to a site for final set up.

"With the hectic tempo of a unit training assembly, its hard to get time slots where members can work uninterrupted within the engineer career fields," said Senior Master Sgt. Chuck Gill, 434th CES operation superintendent. "This is a rare opportunity for us to apply our diverse skills in a team effort."

One hundred Grissom engineers have been working on the houses since late May. The last rotation will pack their tool boxes and head back to Grissom on July 20.

They are working of a construction warehouse capable of holding three houses. By working on three separate structures in various stages of construction, the engineers have a valuable training scenario, he said.

"When you are working on one structure and look over your shoulder to see how it will all fit together, it really adds meat to the training," said Chief Master Sgt. Michael Bowden, 434th CES manager.

In addition, members from different career fields get the chance to work side by side helping each other accomplish common goals.

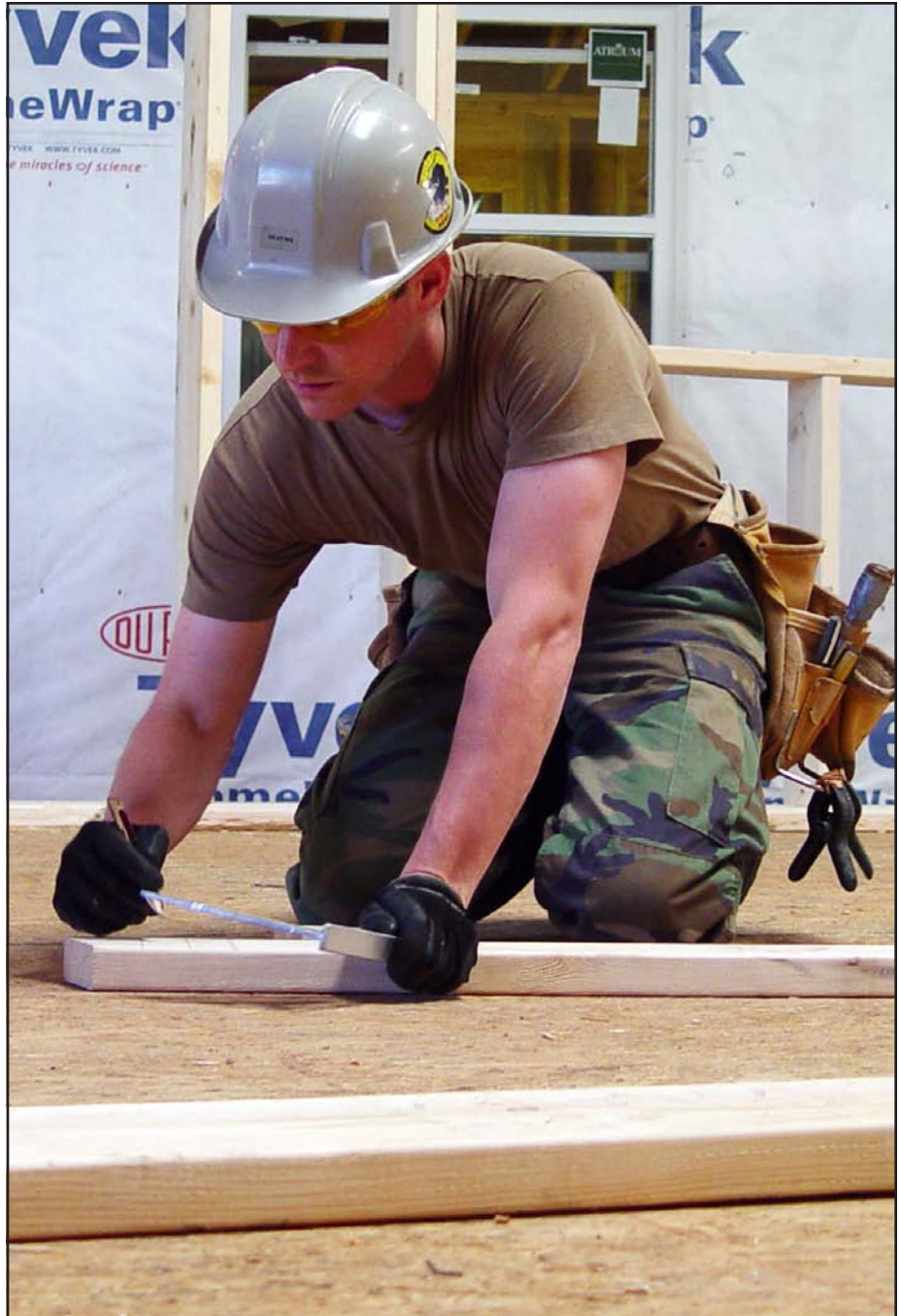


Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Chuck Gill

Staff Sgt. Ritchey Moore, a structural journeyman with the 434th Civil Engineer Squadron, marks the angle of a cut during the construction of a house. Sergeant Moore and other engineers from Grissom are currently working in New Mexico with the Southwest Indian Foundation building homes for Native Americans.

"Team building and multi-skill training are benefits quickly realized during these type of deployments," Sergeant Gill said.

"It's heartwarming to hear the pride in a young Airman's voice as he or she explains to another member how the plumbing works or why the breaker box is wired that way."

The engineers deployed to Gallup in 2005 for similar training.

"Without the military's help, we would be forced to hire more people and we don't have money to pay for that kind of manpower," said Joe Esparza, director of SWIF. "By coming here they get the training they need and we meet the needs of families in the Navajo community."



Photo by Tech Sgt. Patrick Kuminecz

Shopping spree

Master Sgt. Mark Copp, 434th Operational Support Squadron, and his wife Shannon grab some of the good deals they found at the Grissom commissary/BX sale. The event was held June 7th during the unit training assembly.

Travel card changes

Citibank will succeed Bank of America Nov. 30 as provider of Air Force government travel card services.

Air Force members and civilian employees don't need to take any action other than ensuring their mailing address with Bank of America is accurate.

Citibank will use that information for its card distribution, which starts in mid-August.

Some cardholders have been told they need to stop using the Bank of America card on Nov. 1, this is not the case.

The Bank of America card will be used until 11:59 p.m. on Nov. 29, 2008. The Citibank card will be used beginning at 12:01 a.m. on Nov. 30, 2008.

Additional information on the transition to Citibank will be provided as it becomes available.

Bioenvironmental move

The bioenvironmental office has relocated from Bldg. 669 to Bldg. 233.

To get to the new location, turn left on Foreman Drive, as you exit the Main Gate, and then turn right onto Mustang Avenue. Bldg. 233 is the first building on the right.

All bioenvironmental services functions will be performed from the new location, including gas mask fit testing.

In the limelight

Promotions

To master sergeant – William Archer, 434th Logistics Readiness Squadron; Randall Harris, 434th LRS; and Billy Goldsberry, 434th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

To technical sergeant – David Gorski, 434th AMXS; Jason Haselhoff, 434th AMXS; Gary Moore, 434th AMXS; Ritchey Moore, 434th Civil Engineers Squadron; Bridget Smith, 434th Air Refueling Wing; Kevin Connelly, 49th Aerial Port Flight; and Darren Hegyi, 434th AMXS.

To staff sergeant – Jonathan Christmas, 434th LRS; Wesley Carlile, 434th AMXS; David Motycka, 434th CES; Megan Bound, 434th LRS; Kris Schleinkofer, 434th Maintenance Squadron; Franklin Willis, 434th MXS; Jennifer Boye, 434th MXS; Joshua Carter, 434th MXS; Christopher Bolen, 434th ARW; Benjamin Mota, 434th ARW; Tanisha Timmons, 434th Services Flight; and Nishant Patel, 434th Communications Squadron.



Medic uses training to save life

By Senior Airman Carl Berry
Public Affairs staff

Attention, attention we have a code blue in the parking lot; we have a code blue in the parking lot...

For many a code blue does not mean anything, but for medical professionals this means someone has stopped breathing.

Staff Sgt. Jimi Szczesny, 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron medical technician, recently experienced a code blue not on an Air Force installation, but at his civilian occupation, a methadone treatment center in Indiana.

According to Sergeant Szczesny, he arrived to work on a Thursday morning during May and began preparing for the day as usual. He had been at work all of five minutes, when security came to the front door and said that there was a code blue in the parking lot, he said.

Without panicking, Sergeant Szczesny explained he followed the treatment centers protocol and contacted a nurse. From there he and the nurse and the clinical supervisor proceeded to the parking lot where they found a male still in his vehicle not breathing, he added.

"The clinical supervisor checked the patients pulse and could tell his pulse was weakening," said the sergeant. "Realizing the patient was near death I suggested to the nurse that we should begin performing CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation)."

Not wanting to move the patient, who was still in the driver seat of his vehicle, Sergeant Szczesny said they lowered the seat until the patient was completely horizontal.

"The nurse administered two breaths and I followed with 30 compressions, he stated. "We continued to perform this procedure for about five minutes before the fire department arrived.

"When the fire department arrived the patient was still not breathing," he said. "We then decided to remove the patient from his vehicle and place



Photo by Senior Airman Carl Berry

Training is an essential part of being in the Air Force Reserve. Reservists are constantly encouraged to strengthen their training, mainly for wartime situations. However, Staff Sgt. James Szczesny, a 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron medical technician, was able to use the training he received from being in the Reserves to save a person's life at his civilian job. Here Sergeant James Szczesny, checks the blood pressure of Senior Airman Kalena Everhart, a 434th AMDS medical technician, during the primary unit training assembly in June.

him on a backboard, so that the rescue crew would have more room to work."

Upon removing the patient the rescue crew applied a bag valve mask, and within seconds the patient was revived, stated the sergeant. You could actually see the victim's skin color

"It was through my constant training with the Air Force that I was able to perform the tasks correctly."

change from blue to his natural complexion, he added.

"The patient was then rushed to a hospital for follow-up examinations," reported Sergeant Szczesny. "I am happy to say that the patient has had a full recovery and is doing well."

The sergeant credits his training from 434th AMDS to the success of this incident.

"It was through my constant training with the Air Force that I was able to perform the tasks correctly," said Sergeant Szczesny. "I had no hesitation; I knew exactly what to do and when to do it."

"All members of the 434th AMDS are required to maintain a valid American Heart Association CPR card," said Maj. Rita Mullen, 434th AMDS staff development officer. "Air Force policy states that all medical service members must be re-certified once every two years."

Although saving lives is not a norm for the sergeant, he said his training allowed him the ability and aptitude to do so.

Never underestimate the training you receive, because you never know when you will be called upon to use your acquired skills, said Major Mullen. Whether it is for wartime situations or for circumstances aforementioned, as Airmen we should always be prepared, she added.