

Heartland

Warrior

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

Home!

*Deployments end;
Airmen return safely*

By Senior Airman Ryan Whitney
36th Wing Public Affairs

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE, Guam -- More than 100 Airmen and four KC-135 Stratotankers from Grissom Air Reserve Base, Ind., recently completed a four-month deployment to Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, as the 506th Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron, in support of Pacific Refueling Operations.

Grissom's tankers provided refueling support to units throughout the Pacific, primarily to the deployed continuous bomber presence and theater security packages.

While deployed here, the 434th supported more than 10 exercises, including Cope North, a bilateral exercise between U.S. and Japan, and Jungle Shield, a homeland defense exercise the 434th supported by simulating a Sept. 11 type threat to Guam.

"The operations tempo here was very high, with lots of higher headquarters directed missions, but the unit really pulled together to make this one of the best deployments to Andersen that I have been on," said Lt. Col. Laen August, 506th EARS commander. "One of our biggest keys to success that I would pass on to the next unit is to integrate as deeply as you can into the various units you support and get the face-to-face time with the next (continuous bomber presence and

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Photo by Tech. Sgt. Patrick Kuminecz

Lizzie and Madesyn Oswald, daughters of Staff Sgt. Adam Oswald, avionics specialist, 434th Maintenance Squadron, wait with anticipation for the arrival of their father from a recent deployment.

101 Critical Days -- be smart, play it safe

By Lt. Col. Randall Honke
48th Aerial Port Squadron

HICKAM AFB, Hawaii -- It has begun. Those 101 critical days of summer. It's a safety campaign that which runs now through Labor Day.

Historically, this period has seen an increase in the number of fatalities associated with sports, recreation and motor vehicle travel.

Last summer was the safest in the last decade for the Air Force, with 16 fatalities. This is down from a previous low of 17 deaths in 2007.

The average for the last decade was 24 deaths during the summer.

So, the awareness campaign is working, but any loss of life is too many. Whether traveling at excessive speeds, driving while fatigued, failing to fasten seatbelts, drinking then driving, or not using personal flotation devices, the sad news is that all of these were preventable.

The summer season is known for vacations, and recreational activities .

The longer days provide the opportunity to

enjoy more recreational activities during the day, but the increase in temperature makes it a necessity to keep hydrated.

The longer summer days also allow us to spend more time doing the outdoor activities we love.

Death by drowning or boating ac-



Colonel Honke

idents occurs when we mix alcohol, horsepower and the water.

Graduations, weddings and other celebratory events often go hand in hand with the consumption of alcohol.

"...statistics show that more Air Force personnel will suffer injuries and deaths from motor vehicle accidents than from combat."

Drink responsibly. Drinking and driving don't mix; so if you drink, don't drive.

I know that this may sound like the same old rhetoric, but statistics show that more Air Force personnel will suffer injuries and deaths from motor vehicle accidents than from combat.

We all have to make choices, the key to the 101 critical days of summer campaign is that we make responsible choices and use sound judgment when making these choices.

It is taking operational risk management to our daily lives.

Issues such as responsibility, common sense and the proper respect for conditions must be considered.

Lastly, we must look out for our fellow Airman by being a good wingman. If your buddy has had too much to drink, by all means, don't let him or her get behind the wheel. Also, look out for whether your fellow Airmen or those around you exhibit reckless or dangerous behavior.

Our nation's economic crisis has added additional stress to the lives of most Americans; behavioral changes may be a cry for help.

As General Charles Stenner stated in his e-mail to all Air Force Reserve Command members, "Know the indicators of a potential suicide and be involved. It is equally important that every member realize that it is fully acceptable and appropriate to seek help."

The wingman culture has played a key role in the improvement in the 101 critical days of summer program. By being responsible, using common sense, making sound decisions and looking out for our fellow Airmen, we can enjoy our summer without losing any of our Airmen or family members.

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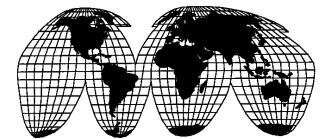
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Photos by Tech. Sgt. Patrick Kuminecz

Cynthia Oswald, helps her daughter Madesyn, find the KC-135R her father Staff Sgt. Adam Oswald is on as he returns to Grissom from a deployment recently. Sergeant Oswald is an avionics specialist with the 434th Maintenance Squadron. Below, Master Sgt. Gerry Schumacher, a boom operator with the 74th Air Refueling Squadron, is greeted by his wife and daughter upon his return from a recent deployment. Personnel and aircraft from Grissom participated in deployments to Southwest Asia and the Pacific region.

theater security package units)."

The colonel has deployed here a total of four times since 2001. This was the first time, though, that he was here for more than three weeks. This was also the first time that a reserve unit had supported Pacific refueling since 2006.

During the deployment, two self-sustaining teams of more than 100 Airmen deployed for 60 days each, to provide deployed units a level of continuity they don't get with other tanker units that deploy new teams every two weeks, he said.

"The support we received from the (434th) during our deployment was phenomenal. They really helped the 90th (Expeditionary Fighter Squadron's) deployment a success," said

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Lt. Col. Orlando Sanchez, 90th EFS commander. The 90th EFS is a Raptor squadron that was deployed here for 3 months.

More than 100 Airmen and four KC-135 Stratotankers from the 452nd Air Mobility Wing, March Air Reserve Base, Calif., are scheduled to

assume Pacific Refueling Operations in support of the regions continuous bomber presence and theater security packages.

"The 434th have set the bar high for future units with the exceptional work they have done in the past four months, but based on the integration I've had with the new March team, they are off to a good start on filling the gap left by the 434th," said Col. Tod Fingal, 36th Operations Group commander.

(Editor's note: The deployment to Guam was just one of the deployments members from the 434th ARW were involved in. Last month a story on the other tasking to Southwest Asia was covered. Specifics on the location and deployment details are not releasable.)

After hours at Grissom's fire house



Pat Bernotas, assistant fire chief, stretches for a shot against firefighter Matt Burton while playing a game during the evening shift at the fire house. Firefighters work a shift of 48 hours on and 72 hours off and have various ways to pass the time between runs in the evenings. Their days are filled with training activities between runs.



Firefighter Bill Ralstin grills cheeseburgers for supper recently at the Grissom firehouse. Captain Bill Dixon assists taking the burgers once they are done. The long shifts require that the firemen cook and eat together often.



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Patrick Kuminecz

Captain Tim McMahon, firefighter, uses his computer to pass the time while working the evening shift at the Grissom fire house.

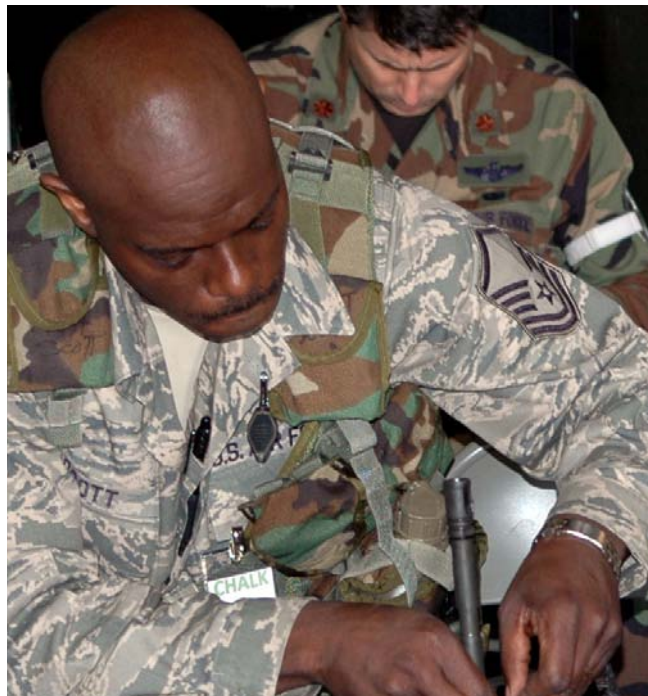
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Snapshots from deployment training



Staff Sgt. Mark Orders-Woempner, a public affairs craftsman with the 434th Air Reufeling Wing, hardens a facility during deployment training.

Master Sgt. Steven Scott, a fireteam leader with the 434th Security Forces Squadron, adjusts the sling on his rifle while waiting in the deployment control center. Sergeant Scott and other unit members deployed for a week-long off-station training event and exercise.



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Patrick Kuminecz

Chief Master Sgt. Diana Rogers, 434th Maintenance Group, helps a Data Monitoring System, Inc., employee unload bags from returning Airmen.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Patrick Kuminecz

Clearing to enter

Tech. Sgt. Mark Jasek, a fire team leader with the 434th Security Forces Squadron, conducts a vehicle inspection of a lift truck entering the base. The 434th SFS carries out an average of 12 - 20 vehicle inspections daily. Two-man teams work together to provide not only a physical inspection of the vehicle, but also specific information about every commercial vehicle that has business on base.

Critical Days of Summer

The Air Force's top two leaders cited the start of the 2009 Critical Days of Summer campaign and called for everyone to be proactive in saving lives during this high-risk season in a letter to Airmen.

Air Force Secretary Michael Donley and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz said this year's 109-day campaign focuses on four areas: traffic safety, alcohol awareness, fatigue and drowning prevention.

"During the last 11 summer campaigns, we lost an average of 24 Airmen, and even though last year we experienced one of our safest summers ever, we still lost 17 Airmen," Secretary Donley and General Schwartz said. They emphasized the importance of weaving alcohol awareness into

risk management. "Slightly more than one-third of our automobile fatalities include alcohol as a factor," the leaders wrote. "Personal accountability and wingman intervention are our best tools to reduce drinking and driving."

New CMSAF

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz and Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Rodney McKinley have announced the Airman selected to be the service's next enlisted leader.

Chief Master Sgt. James. Roy will become the 16th chief master sergeant of the Air Force during an appointment ceremony June 30 which will coincide with Chief McKinley's retirement.

Chief Roy and his wife, Paula, will come to the Pentagon from Camp Smith, Hawaii, where the chief cur-

rently serves as the senior enlisted leader and advisor to the U.S. Pacific Command combatant commander.

PT uniform streamlined

After extensive prototype design testing, the following changes are on track for fielding new PT uniforms in September:

-- The improved PT running suit redesign includes a thinner, more flexible fabric to address common complaints about fabric "noise" and streamlines the design by removing the collar hood and shoulder vents. The improved design also reduces bulk by decreasing the amount of fabric in the running jacket mid-section and pants lower leg. Additionally, a new liner includes antimicrobial properties and will shed moisture at a

faster rate than the current version.

-- Improved PT shorts to be introduced this year feature a softer, more flexible fabric, side-pockets, increased inseam length and redesigned liner.

-- An improved PT shirt resembles the current short-sleeve shirt but will feature a lighter-weight, higher-performance fabric with moisture wicking properties and odor reduction.

-- The Air Force has also authorized optional PT gear for wear. A new long-sleeve T-shirt and sweatshirt are now available for purchase through the Army and Air Force Exchange Service.

Marathon volunteers

The 2009 U.S. Air Force Marathon may not be until Sept. 19 at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, but officials are already seeking volunteers to help plan and execute the race's many aspects.

Individuals interested in volunteering can go online to www.usafmarathon.com.

Uniform update

The Air Force chief of staff met with Uniform Program Office personnel recently for an update on clothing issues Airmen face as they support global mission requirements.

Gen. Norton Schwartz said addressing current and near-term uniform needs takes precedence over introducing long-range new initiatives.

"It is paramount that we provide fully functional and appropriate uniforms for our Airmen as they carry out our worldwide, joint mission," General Schwartz said. "It's critical that we respond to Air Force uniform needs since they affect every Airman, every day – so we need to get it right."

Changes are also in the works for the airman battle uniform. "Too hot" is how many Airmen describe the current ABU. After working with other services and industry textile experts, Air Force officials will field a lighter-weight fabric for the ABU coat. Called the improved airman battle uniform, the ABU coat will be updated with a durable, lighter-weight and more comfortable fabric.

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Photo by Tech. Sgt. Patrick Kuminecz

Life saving training

Phil Cruea, an airfield systems technician with the 434th Communications Squadron, practices giving the 'Breath of Life' during a Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation, (CPR) training class given recently by the base Fire Department.

Chief Airey laid to rest at Arlington Cemetery

by Staff Sgt. J.G. Buzanowski
Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, Va. -- Surrounded by family and friends, colleagues and fellow Airmen, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Paul Airey was laid to rest here May 28.

More than 400 people came to Ft. Myer, Va., for his funeral service and then on to Arlington for his grave site ceremony. Located in section 34, Chief Airey's marker is close to fellow Airmen, and towering nearby are the spires of the Air Force Memorial.

The Air Force's top enlisted leader, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Rodney McKinley, offered a eulogy on behalf of all Airmen, saying, "Paul Wesley Airey is an icon in the lives of Airmen -- he was a constant friend, true patriot, faithful public servant, dutiful husband and a loving father.

"I can clearly recall standing in the dining facility waiting line during basic training and reading in the basic military training study guide about Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Paul W. Airey," Chief McKinley said. "I remember learning about him being the first Airman selected for this important position. I remember thinking, 'He must have been pretty special to have been picked as the first.'"

Seven former Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force joined Chief McKinley as well as Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz at the ceremony.

"Chief Airey has always been such a huge part of our heritage," said the 13th Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Jim Finch. "Not only was he a mentor to all Airmen, but he especially made a point of spending time with all the Chiefs who followed him in the position. He's the father of our enlisted corps."

Chief Airey's influence is felt by every Airman. During World War II, he spent time as a prisoner of war after his B-24 Liberator was shot down over Europe. Upon his repatriation, he



Photo by Master Sgt. Stan Parker

U.S. Air Force Honor Guard members pause with the remains of Shirley Airey during the memorial service for Chief Master Sgt. Paul W. Airey at Arlington National Cemetery, Va., May 28. Chief Airey and his wife Shirley's remains were buried together at Arlington National Cemetery.

made it a point to return to active duty.

He spent the majority of his 27-year career as a first sergeant. He led a team that developed the weighted Airman promotion system. He advocated heavily for a senior non-commissioned officer academy and was a huge proponent of professional military education.

After his retirement, he was active in professional military organizations, including the Air Force Memorial Foundation and Air Force Sergeants Association, where he provided his guidance, mentorship and opinions.

For Airmen who had the chance to meet Chief Airey, the experience was one that stayed with them, like it did for Tech. Sgt. Shawanda Randolph, a recruiter in nearby Alexandria.

"The first time I met Chief Airey was at Airmen Leadership School, and we were all completely in awe of him," Sergeant Randolph said. "It's because of him that I would one day like to follow in his footsteps and maybe even be a Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force."

For newer Airmen, it was just an honor to be at his funeral service. Airman 1st Class Deborah Vives arrived at Bolling Air Force Base, Washington, D.C., just six days ago, and it was a senior NCO in her office who invited her to come along.

"Getting to be here to honor Chief Airey is an experience I'll always remember," said Airman Vives, a finance specialist with the 11th Comptroller Squadron. "To be in a room with so many chiefs and to see how respectful they all are of Chief Airey is absolutely inspiring to me. I'm new to the Air Force and it makes me look forward to a career with my fellow Airmen."

Chief Airey made every Airman feel valued.

"I counted Paul as a dear friend, but he was more than that to me and many others," Chief McKinley said. "Paul Wesley Airey was an understanding and effective first sergeant. He was an engaged and charismatic leader with a ready smile and a go-to attitude that compelled others to want to follow him.

"Paul was an outstanding colleague, a loyal patriot and a helpful mentor," the chief continued. "He was a great man, but more than a great man, he was an Airman, and our first Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force."

Chief Airey died March 11 at his home in Panama City, Fla. In lieu of flowers, the family has asked people to consider donations to the Air Force Memorial Fund, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Scholarship Fund or the American Cancer Society. (AFNS)