

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

## Civil Engineers deploy for Silver Flag

By Senior Airman Carl Berry  
Public Affairs staff

Training at home is one thing...realistic training in a deployed environment, well, that's even better.

This was the mindset of the 434th Civil Engineer Squadron during their most recent training exercise.

Recently, the 434th CES participated in a training exercise at the Silver Flag exercise site, located at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., where they were placed in a simulated warzone and performed mission essential tasks alongside regular Air Force members in a joint force mission.

"I was approached by a (regular Air Force) member who shared with me 'Grissom Reservists are top shelf and the best I have ever worked with,'" said Chief Master Sgt. Michael Bowden, 434th CES manager.

The Silver Flag training facility provides combat support training to regular Air Force, the Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps and allied nations. More than 5,600 people are trained each year at the site.

During the five and one-half day primary course civil engineer personnel learn how to build and maintain bare-base operations at forward-deployed locations.

For the Grissom reservists, their training began at Dobbins Air Force Base, Ga., where they participated in the Expeditionary Combat School. Here Grissom civil engineers were provided the opportunity to work on war readiness equipment.

"The school provided a 60/40 for-



U.S. Air Force photo

Chief Master Sgt. Glen Johnson, 434th Civil Engineer Squadron superintendent, left, and Capt. William Swanson, 434th CES training officer, drill a well during training at Tyndall AFB, Fla. Grissom engineers participated in Silver Flag training, to demonstrate their proficiency in building and maintaining bare-base operations at forward-deployed locations.

mat; 60 percent of the time was hands on and 40 percent was classroom training," said Chief Bowden. "This was a really good school for our folks to get their hands on equipment that is not readily available here at Grissom."

Throughout the week Grissom was graded on how well they performed, and the outcome was met with lots of praise from the cadre at Dobbins, said Chief Bowden.

Please see 'Engineers', page 6

# Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits you, dependents

By Lt. Gen. Charles Stenner Jr.  
AFRC commander

PENTAGON -- In a climate of increased economic uncertainty and mounting security challenges, I am thankful for the ability to serve in such an important time in our history and thankful I am able to do so alongside such dedicated Citizen Airmen. Your continued service through these trying times has been truly remarkable.

I am not alone in recognizing your contributions.

Apart from their many praises, members of Congress and presidents, both past and present, have enacted or improved many benefits in recognition of your sacrifices. These underscore the importance of your service to our nation. I would like to address one of these benefits: the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill dramatically expands the scope of education benefits. Reservists have always been eligible for education benefits, but not since World War II have these benefits been as great or as readily accessible as they are about to be.

Let me point out some of the highlights. The Post-9/11 GI Bill provides for:

\* Up to full tuition at the highest public institution rate in the state of attendance. Those who have served at least 36 months of cumulative active-duty service since 9/11 are eligible for 100 percent of the payable benefit; the benefit is stepped down in 10 percent increments for each six months of active-duty service less than 36 months. Those serving at least 90 days



General Stenner

cumulatively since 9/11 are eligible for 40 percent of the maximum benefit.

Members who have served at least 30 days continuously and have been discharged or released from active duty for a service-connected disability may be eligible for up to 100 percent of the payable benefit. The tuition benefit is paid to the educational institution.

\* A monthly housing stipend equivalent to the Basic Allowance for Housing rate of E-5 with dependents in the military housing area in which the ZIP code of the education institution resides. The housing stipend is paid to the individual.

\* Up to \$1,000 for books, supplies, equipment and other costs -- paid to the individual.

\* Transferability of the benefit to dependent spouse or children. Military members must have completed six

years in the armed forces and agree to four more years of service. The Department of Defense is considering provisions to permit transfer of benefits by members whose continued service of four years would not be in the best interests of the military service. The spouse cannot use the benefit until the member has completed at least six years of service; children cannot use it until the member has completed 10 years of service and the children have completed high school or equivalent, or reached 18 years of age.

The Department of Veterans Affairs plans to begin accepting applications of veterans and service members for certification for this program May 1, with the objective of determining their eligibility amount and notifying them within an average of 24 days. VA will announce later when dependents with transferred entitlement may apply. The VA will begin paying benefits for education pursued under this program Aug 1. The DOD hopes to have a Web site available in June for members to certify eligibility for transfer of their Post-9/11 GI Benefits.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill does not replace other education programs available to Reservists; the Montgomery GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve and Reserve Education Assistance Program are still available. You must determine which program is right for you. To help you do that, visit the Web site [www.GIBILL.va.gov](http://www.GIBILL.va.gov).

This Web site gives you side-by-side comparisons of the benefits available to you depending upon a variety of

Please see 'GI Bill', page 3

## Heartland Warrior

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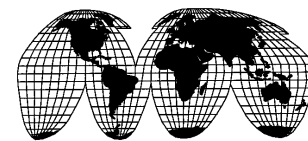
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# New CE commander is also a scientist

By SrA. Ben Mota  
Public Affairs staff

Grissom's top military civil engineer swaps Airmen's Battle Dress uniforms for a lab coat when he leaves the base. Maj. Paul Brenner, the new 434<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineer Squadron commander is a high performance computing scientist from the University of Notre Dame.

Major Brenner was an engineering, mobility and training officer for the 445<sup>th</sup> Air Wing Civil Engineering Squadron at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. After serving the Air Force Reserve for eleven years he was selected to join Grissom with plans to use his technical, teaching and leadership skills to lead the 434<sup>th</sup> CES Airmen.

"I always wanted to be a commander and lead Airmen, and I saw this as an opportunity to lead some of the country's best," he said.

Major Brenner recently returned from a nine month mobilization centered by a six month deployment to Afghanistan. The education, training and experience received from that deployment will greatly enhance his ability to enhance the 434<sup>th</sup> CES, he said.

"One of my primary goals is to increase the level of readiness and number of quality Airmen in the unit," he said.

## GI Bill, from page 1

circumstances. It also provides the answers to many other questions you may have about VA education benefits. Knowing your circumstances and educational goals will help you determine which benefit is best for you.

Many Americans may now be wondering whether they will be able to retire, or afford health insurance or to pay for college. You may be among them.

You should know that a grateful nation -- in recognition of your sacrifices and contributions to military service -- has dramatically improved the benefits you are eligible to receive.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Ben Mota

**Maj. Paul Brenner, 434<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineer Squadron commander, greets Senior Airmen Zack Loich, a heavy equipment operator, that was processing into the unit.**

The commander has spent a lot of time preparing for the administrative portion of his new job but also took an opportunity during the July unit training assembly to get to know some of his new airmen better. He has dedicated time, early in his tenure, to

meet and mentor the Airmen of the 434<sup>th</sup> CES.

"I look forward to meeting all of the members of the unit," said the major with a smile on his face. "From what I have seen so far it appears to be a tight family here," he added.

In the past year, Reserve Airmen have become eligible to receive retirement pay before age 60; indeed, some may become eligible for retirement pay well below age 60. Moreover, Reservists now have the opportunity to purchase Tricare health coverage at dramatically reduced rates for themselves and their families.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill can help you achieve your educational goals -- whether for you or your dependents.

The nation continuously has been able to rely upon you for your service. In this climate of increased uncertainty, these are benefits you can count on to

prepare you and your dependents for the future.

Only you can decide whether continued receipt of these benefits is worth your continued sacrifice. I, for one, can think of nothing more relevant -- your service is and has been the difference. I thank you for your continued dedication; I highly encourage you to continue to serve and to begin exploring this program by visiting your wing training office.

To the degree you are able, I urge you to take advantage of this new and wonderful benefit you have so rightly earned.

August 2009

# Come on in...the water is fine

## *Aircrew take to the lake for survival training*



Staff Sgt. Jason Bireley, a boom operator with the 72nd Air Refueling Squadron, relaxes in the water as he makes his way to shore during water survival training held on the July unit training assembly.



Maj. Billy Werth, a KC-135R Stratotanker pilot with the 72nd Air Refueling Squadron, learns the correct way to ignite a signal canister during combat/water survival training held during the July unit training assembly. The training was held at a remote lake in nearby Cass County.



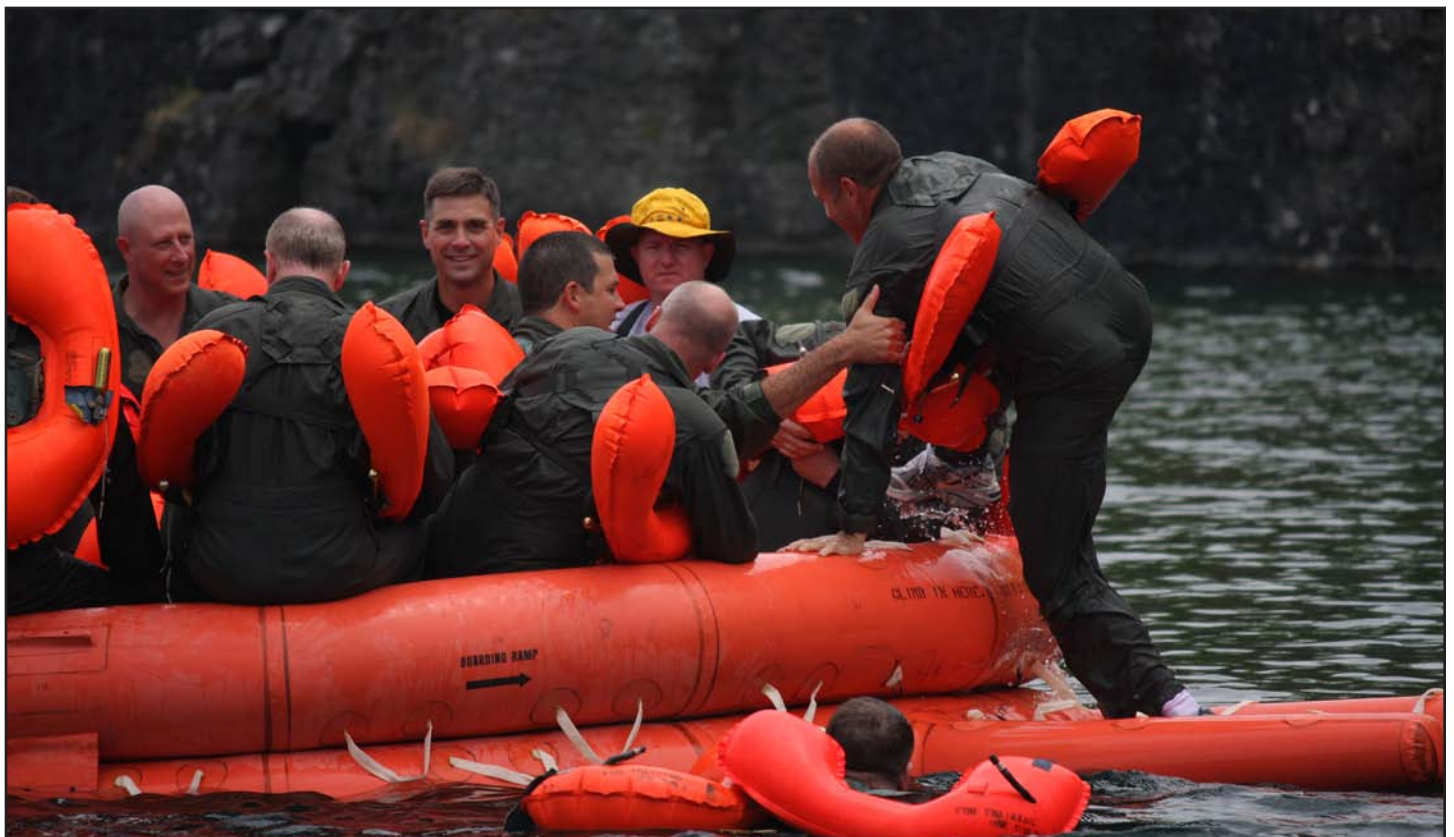
Lt. Col. Tom Riedel, 74th Air Refueling Squadron, left, is assisted with his flotation device by Tech. Sgt. Shane Taylor, from the aircrew flight equipment office.



Master Sgt. John English, a boom operator with the 74th Air Refueling Squadron shoots off a flare during training.



Tech. Sgt. Darren Wilson, a life support technician with aircrew flight equipment, explains tactics and equipment in combat survival during a training session held during the July unit training assembly. He's assisted by Staff Sgt. Josh Minnick, also of the aircrew flight equipment section.



*Photos by Staff Sgt. Mark Orders-Woempner*

Grissom aircrew members huddle on a raft during water survival training conducted by the 434th Operations Support Squadron's aircrew flight equipment section during the July unit training assembly. Aircrews are required to have refresher combat and water survival training every three years.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Chris Bolen

**Tech Sgt. Charles Ruisard, 434th Maintenance Squadron structural repair journeyman, begins the process of applying several layers of protective coating to a KC-135R Stratotanker nose steering cover, during the July unit training assembly. After the cover receives its final coat it will be shipped to an aviation depot for evaluation and repair.**

## Engineers, from page 1

“Some of our Airmen were asked to come back and be instructors, and by the end of the week some were asked to teach parts of the classes because of the expertise they showed throughout the week,” said Chief Bowden.

The following week the civil engineers flew down to Tyndall, to participate in the Silver Flag training. The training they received at Dobbins was specific to Grissom, but Silver Flag was total force with active duty, reserve and guard Airmen working together.

The Silver Flag training included more hands on and classroom training on wartime equipment, with a build up to an exercise at the end of week.

Some of the hands on training that was received were putting up tents, setting up a water system and field

kitchen, runway damage assessment and repair, airfield lighting, aircraft arresting system, fire protection and chemical warfare operations.

“The purpose of Silver Flag is to identify things that need to be improved, and it did just that,” said the chief. “We were able to identify trouble areas, so that we can improve mission capability in CE.”

Some of the things that came out of the training that need to be improved on was first-aid buddy care and prioritizing the initial process of getting teams to perform tasks, said Tech. Sgt. Antonio Acevedo, 434th CES engineer assistant.

These courses are a mandatory training every 30 months for all Air Force civil engineers to complete.

One of the tasks that needed to be

completed was repairing a 6,000-foot runway in an limited allotted amount of time.

This is done by setting up an arrest system, similar to what would be found on a Navy aircraft carrier.

“Out of all the training that we receive this (Silver Flag) is by far the most beneficial,” said Tech. Sgt. Ritchey Moore, 434th CES structures craftsman.

During the next couple of months the 434th CES will continue to train on those areas addressed at Silver Flag, said Sergeant Moore.

“All in all it was a successful annual tour that enhanced civil engineering skills set, and identified areas that need improvement, which will enhance our mission capabilities,” said Chief Bowden.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Chris Bolen

Chaplain (Capt.) Josh Stoley, a Protestant chaplain going on an extended active duty tour, is assisted during out processing by Master Sgt. Lisa Fitzgerald, assistant chief of base education and training. Sergeant Fitzgerald and the staff of the base education and training office have moved into wing headquarters after a portion of the building was renovated.

## Education office relocates to Bldg. 596

By Staff Sgt. Chris Bolen  
Public Affairs Staff

With books in place and tests at the ready, the base education and training office opened the doors to their new offices in Bldg. 596 recently.

“The move has provided us a lot more office and classroom space,” said Senior Master Sgt. Darlene Cornelius, chief of the base education and training office.

There are more classrooms for training and testing.

“In a typical unit training assembly we may service anywhere from 40 to 50 Airmen,” states Staff Sgt. Josh Huggins one of Grissom’s education technicians. And this service may  
**August 2009**

involve any number of education matters.

We assist airmen in pursuing their professional military education, Community College of the Air Force, college level examination programs, tuition assistance, G.I. Bill benefits, as well as processing formal school requests, notes Master Sgt. Lisa Fitzgerald, assistant chief.

“Additionally, we oversee the base on the job training program” the sergeant continued. The squadron training managers work with our office to schedule their personnel for training and to schedule schools when needed, she noted. The office stays very busy.

All Airmen should stop by the office at least yearly regarding their edu-

cation and training plans, Sergeant Fitzgerald advises. “They should discuss their Community College of the Air Force requirements for their associates in applied science,” she continued. Recent changes to the G.I. Bill can also be explained by our technicians she noted.

Sergeant Cornelius advises all Grissom personnel to utilize the Virtual Education link on the Air Force Portal to research or gather information on their education and training needs prior to contacting the education office. “There is a lot of useful information,” she noted. By doing so the Airmen will be better prepared when they visit and this will help speed up the process when they stop by.

# Summer brings fun, fitness together



Terry Drowlings, a pitcher for the 434th Seasonal Training Flight, flips the ball to David Schnieder, 434th STF first baseman, in an attempt to throw out Melody Ayers, DOD Police 3rd baseman. The DOD Police won the game 12-7. Intramural sports are great for physical training and building camaraderie



Airman 1st Class Aubrey Able, a 434th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron guidance and control technician, stretches after the completing a physical training session. The 434th Seasoning Training Flight is a designed to help new airmen coming from their technical training schools to adapt to Grissom.



*Photos by SrA. Carl Berry*

Brian Thompson, 434th Operations Support Group, right, defends an opponent during a game of ultimate Frisbee.