

# Heartland WARRIOR

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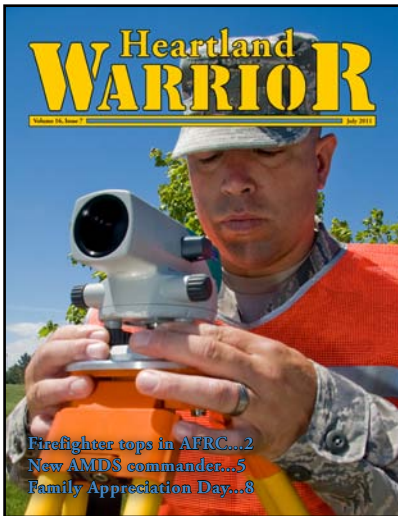
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Air Force Reserve Home Page

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## On the cover...

Senior Airman David Kessen, 434<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineer Squadron engineering apprentice, sets up surveying equipment on a tripod before he and other 434<sup>th</sup> CES Airmen begin surveying the base to determine the height of a point on a fitness train here. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Mark Orders-Woempner)

# Firefighters tops in AFRC

Staff Sgt. Carl Berry

Public Affairs staff

Grissom Fire Department's motto of "always ready, always capable" has helped them receive the Air Force Reserve Command Medium Fire Department of the Year award.

Departments highlights for 2010 include successfully providing airway and rescue breathing to a 6-year-old girl who was injured in a two-car collision and responding to an overturned semi-truck that had a hazardous material spill.

"Everyone is really proud of the award; they feel they are one of the premier fire departments within Air Force Reserve Com-

mand," said John Ireland, Grissom Fire Department chief. "I am really proud of the guys -- they have done a lot of work and are deserving of the award."

The fire department will now compete for the Department of Defense award for the medium-unit fire department of the year in August.

The DOD award is a competition between all branches of the military and is intended to recognize a unit's heroism, devotion to service and skill.

"The base should be proud, because this award is the result of good senior leadership and the support of the Grissom community," said Chief Ireland.



Jason Cahill, left, shows Amn. David Culhane how to inspect the jaws of life tool carried on a first responder vehicle at the Grissom Fire Department June 23. The Grissom Fire Department recently received the Air Force Reserve Command Medium Fire Department of the Year award. One of the interesting things about the fire department is that it employs both civilian firefighters who respond on and off base as well as military traditional reservist firefighters who train to deploy around the world in support of Air Force and Department of Defense missions. Mr. Cahill is a civilian firefighter and Airman Culhane is a military firefighter. Both firemen are new to the Grissom Fire Department, with Airman Culhane participating in the seasoning training program to help him become upgraded and fully trained as fast as possible. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Doug Hays)

# President Obama announces troop reductions, way forward in Afghanistan

**Jim Garamone**

*American Forces Press Service*

Thanks to the tremendous progress U.S., coalition and Afghan troops have made, the United States will draw down the number of troops in Afghanistan by 10,000 this year and 33,000 by the end of summer 2012, President Barack Obama said here June 22.

"The tide of war is receding," the president said during an address to the nation from the White House. "Fewer of our sons and daughters are serving in harm's way."

In a statement released by the Pentagon following the president's announcement, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said the president's decision capitalizes on the security successes.

"Over the past 18 months, our troops have made tremendous progress degrading the capability of the Taliban while enhancing the Afghan security forces," Secretary Gates said. "It is critical that we continue to aggressively prosecute that strategy. I support the President's decision because it provides our commanders with enough resources, time and, perhaps most importantly, flexibility to bring the surge to a successful conclusion."

When completed in September 2012, the drawdown will remove the last of the plus-up of forces in Afghanistan that Obama ordered in December 2009.

In that same speech, the president announced the new Afghan strategy, which was to focus on al-Qaida, reverse the Taliban's momentum and to train Afghan security forces. He also announced that the drawdown would begin in July 2011.

President Obama said his announcement is proof that the strategy is working.

"Thanks to our men and women in uniform, our civilian personnel, and our many coalition partners, we are meeting our goals," he said. When the first stage of the draw-



President Barack Obama addresses the nation about the way forward in Afghanistan and his plan to remove 10,000 American troops from the country by the end of this year June 22. (White House photo/Chuck Kennedy)

down is complete in September 2012, the surge will be over.

U.S. troops will continue to drawdown as Afghan security forces take the lead for protecting their own country. As this continues, the U.S. mission will switch from combat to support.

"By 2014, this process of transition will be complete, and the Afghan people will be responsible for their own security," President Obama said.

The United States ended its combat role in Iraq last year and there are now about 45,000 U.S. troops in Iraq providing training and support to Iraqi security forces. The reduction of 33,000 troops by the end of summer 2012 will mean about 65,000 Americans in Afghanistan.

"Even as there will be dark days ahead in Afghanistan, the light of a secure peace can be seen in the distance," President Obama said. "These long wars will come to a responsible end."

In a background briefing before

the speech, senior administration officials said the president's decision had the full support of the national security team. Army Gen. David Petraeus, the commander of NATO's International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, presented the president with a range of options and the risks associated with each.

"I think there's a broad understanding among the national security team that there's an imperative to both consolidate the gains that have been made and continue our efforts to train Afghan security forces and partner with them in going after the Taliban, while also being very serious about the process of transition and the drawdown of our forces," the official said.

"The goal that we seek is achievable, and can be expressed simply: no safe-haven from which al-Qaida or its affiliates can launch attacks against our homeland, or our allies," the president said.

# Wing vice commander retires after 30 years



Col. Tim Cox speaks to a group of family, friends and coworkers shortly after retiring as the 434th Air Refueling Wing's vice commander. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Mark Orders-Woempner)

**Tech. Sgt. Mark Orders-Woempner**  
*Public Affairs staff*

For a man who made it a point to remember everyone's name, his retirement ceremony was packed with what

seemed like everyone who remembered him.

Col. Timothy Cox was surrounded by family, friends, coworkers and those he influenced throughout his career as he retired as the 434th Air Refueling Wing vice commander in a heart-warming ceremony at Grissom recently.

Colonel Cox began his 30-year Air Force career in 1981 after receiving his commission through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Indiana University, Bloomington, Ind.

After graduating from undergraduate pilot training at Vance Air Force Base, Okla., he attended KC-135 Combat Crew Training at Castle Air Force Base, Calif. In 1983 he was assigned to the 909th Air Refueling Squadron, Kadena Air Base, Japan, where he served as a KC-135 co-pilot and aircraft commander.

The then Captain Cox

transferred to the 64th Flying Training Wing at Reese Air Force Base, Texas, in 1986 where he was a T-38 Talon instructor pilot, academic instructor, class commander and wing safety officer.

In 1989, he transferred to the Air Force Reserve and became a KC-135 aircraft commander, instructor pilot and evaluator pilot before being named as the 74th Air Refueling Squadron Commander in 2005.

It was in 2007 that Col. Cox became the 434th ARW vice commander where he was responsible for assisting the wing commander in the management, training, and command and control of one of the key aerial refueling wings in the Air Force Reserve Command.

During the retirement ceremony, Col. William T. "Tim" Cahoon, 434th ARW commander, presented Colonel Cox

with a Meritorious Service Medal as well as a certificate of retirement and a certificate of appreciation from President Barack Obama.

And though Colonel Cox was showered with praises and thanks as speakers took their turns remembering his Air Force career, perhaps the biggest sense of appreciation was felt as Colonel Cox brought his wife and three sons on stage separately to thank each one of them for their support of his career. Mrs. Cox also received a certificate of appreciation along with the Military Spouse Medal.

While the colonel retired from his military career, he said he still plans on continuing his civilian career for the next few years as an airline pilot flying the Boeing 777.

Col. Bryan Reinhart succeeds Colonel Cox as the 434th ARW vice commander.

## New season, new Seasoning Training Flight NCO

**SrA Damon Kasberg**  
*Public Affairs staff*

As the summer season approaches changes will no doubt come to Grissom, but one such change, which may not be expected as the 434th Seasoning Training Flight will get a new course director.

After more than three years of being the 434th STF course director, Master Sgt. Paul Tomlinson will step down May 25. Replacing him is Master Sgt. Melanie Curtis, 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron education and training manager.

"I was most impressed with the respect and admiration she had

with her co-workers," said Sergeant Tomlinson. "The Airmen and NCOs [Noncommissioned Officers] I spoke to in AMDS not only liked her, but spoke highly of what she does for the people and the squadron."

"I'm ecstatic about being the new course director," said Sergeant Curtis. "I'm looking forward to molding the new generation; I want to help give them direction in whatever they want to do with their careers."

The 434th STF is part of the Air Force Reserve Command's Seasoning Training Program, which is designed to build a ready force by allowing recent technical training



Master Sgt. Melanie Curtis took over as the new 434th Seasoning Training Flight course director recently. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Damon Kasberg)

school graduates to voluntarily remain on active duty for on-the-job training.

# New 434th AMDS commander returns to Grissom

**Tech. Sgt. Mark Orders-Woempner**  
*Public Affairs staff*

It's been said "home is where the heart is," and for the new 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron commander, a return home to Grissom is exactly where his heart is.

Col. Thomas Collins took command of the 434th AMDS during a special ceremony held here recently.

Surrounded by family and friends, Colonel Collins accepted command and responsibility for the unit as Col. William T. "Tim" Cahoon, 434th Air Refueling Wing commander, ceremoniously handed him the unit's guidon during the ceremony held in the auditorium of Bldg. 663, just a stone's throw away from the 434th AMDS building.

But, this is not the Chicago native's first duty assignment at Grissom.

A then Airman Collins served his first regular Air Force tour at Grissom as a radiology technician with the 305th Air Refueling Wing from 1977 to 1979.

"I got my orders to Wright-Patterson [Air Force Base, Ohio], but I swapped with another Airman so I could be closer to my family in Chicago," reminisced Colonel Collins. "I even bought a house on 13th street."

Prior to assuming command of the 434th AMDS, the colonel visited the base and stopped in at his old 13th Street house. The current owners even allowed him to take a tour.

"They let me walk all through the house, and I thought to myself, 'is



**Col. Thomas Collins speaks to friends, family members and fellow servicemembers shortly after taking command of the 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron recently. For Colonel Collins, this assignment is a return trip as his first duty assignment as an enlisted radiology technician was at the Grissom. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Mark Orders-Woempner)**

the work bench still in the garage? Yeah, I built that work bench," he explained. "I was 22 years old buying a house for \$22,000, and I get to come back some 30 years later; it's pretty cool to go back into time."

And just like that work bench in the garage, other things have remained the same throughout the years for the colonel.

"I remember how intimate the base was because it was small," said Colonel Collins.

After his tour at Grissom, the colonel left the regular Air Force and joined the Air Force Reserve. He went on to make the rank of master sergeant and earned his bachelor's degree before being given a direct commission as an officer in the Medical Service Corps in 1987.

Colonel Collins then

transferred to the 440th Medical Squadron at General Mitchell Air Reserve Station, Wisc., where he spent the majority of his Air Force career.

During that time the colonel deployed twice in support of Operations Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom.

When the 440th Airlift Wing and its subordinate unit, the 440th MDS, moved to Pope Air Force Base, N.C., so did Colonel Collins to help stand up the unit at its new location in 2007.

Since that time he volunteered and deployed twice on 13-month tours to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

And, while the colonel has great memories of his past accomplishments, perhaps this last year will be his most memorable.

"This year the stars

aligned; I put on colonel, I was selected as a commander at Grissom, and my I'm going to have my third grandchild," said Colonel Collins. "What else could a guy as for? I've won the lottery."

Now that his career has come full-circle, the colonel said he's excited to get to work.

"I'm looking forward to taking 35 years of experience to help bring the unit to an outstanding," said Colonel Collins. "You know, I'm a Bears fan, and I remember when [Mike] Ditka took over as coach, you know what the players said, we never had a coach to come in and say I want to win the Super Bowl...and I want the win to win the Super Bowl, I want an outstanding."

"We're going to do good business, and we're going to make Colonel Cahoon proud," he concluded.

# Communicator's get new commander

**Staff Sgt. Carl Berry**

*Public Affairs staff*

What do triathlons, the Air Force cycling team, the 507th Civil Engineer Squadron and Air Refueling Wing, a high school football and wrestling coach, and a high school math teacher have in common?

The answer is Maj. Robert Atkins the new commander of the 434th Communications Squadron at Grissom Air Reserve Base, Ind.

Prior to reporting for duty as the 434th CS commander, Major Atkins served as the wing executive officer for the 507th Air Refueling Wing, located at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla.

One of the first goals the new commander has is to recruit and hire motivated Airmen to fill air reserve technician and civilian job vacancies within the squadron. After filling the positions he plans on focusing on leadership development.

"Not only is this my first command, but we have a lot of new supervisors in the squadron and my goal is that we all embrace and successfully grow in our personal and group leadership," said Major Atkins. "The squadron has a lot of potential to grow and excel through any challenge that the wing or Air Force Reserve Command presents us."

Although Major Atkins has been a reservist his entire Air Force career and served in many different reserve units, he said he has never seen the facilities that Grissom has or the level of support offered here on other reserve bases.

"The facilities here are amazing; they are better than any other reserve unit that I have visited," said Major Atkins. "What I enjoy the most about Grissom is the friendliness of all the people that I have met, and although I am still meeting and getting to know everyone in the squadron, I have been very pleased with how the Airmen and support staff come ready to work and tackle new opportunities."



**Col. Betty Bown, 434th Mission Support Group commander, presents the 434th Communications Squadron guidon to Maj. Robert Atkins as he takes command of the unit during an assumption of command ceremony held in the 434th CS building here June 12. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Carl Berry)**

The only thing that worries the major is the winter season, so he will reserve any additional comments until after he and his family survive their first Midwest winter, he said with a smile.

Major Atkins began his Air Force career in 1997 as an enlisted Airman with the 507th Civil Engineer Squadron at Tinker. He was commissioned in 2001 through the Deserving Airman Program.

# Grissom's Army unit gets new commander

Members of the 316th Psychological Operations Company, an Army Reserve unit based at Grissom, gathered to witness a change in leadership recently.

The ceremony, held in the manicured lawn out front of the Army's training facility, saw the unit flag officially passed to Capt. Gregory Baugh, as the company's new commander.

Captain Baugh replaces Maj. Scott Thomson, who will attend the command and general staff college at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

The 316th PSYOP Co. provides world-wide psychological operations support to conventional and special operations units, both in peace and war.



Capt. Gregory Baugh addresses members of the 316th Psychological Operations Company, here June 5 after taking command from Maj. Scott Thomson.



Capt. Gregory Baugh, left, receives the 316th Psychological Operations Company flag from Lt. Col. Greg Elpers, 16th Psychological Operations Battalion, Fort Sheridan, Ill., as the captain takes command of the unit here June 5. (U.S. Air Force photos/Tech. Sgt. Doug Hays)



Soldiers assigned to the 316th Psychological Operations company stand in formation during a change of command ceremony held here June 5. Capt. Gregory Baugh, took command of the unit from Maj. Scott Thomson.

# Annual family day picnic slated for July

**Staff Sgt. Carl Berry**  
*Public Affairs staff*

Grissom's annual Family Appreciation Day picnic is scheduled for July 9, and this year Airmen and their families will be able to enjoy new activities such as laser tag, a mechanical bull ride, and a live magic show.

The picnic is scheduled to begin at 11 a.m. at Dock 6 and the area around Bldg. 431.

"The most important message is for Airmen planning to bring family members, is that they must make their lodging reservations, by calling the front desk before noon June 24," said Chief Master Sgt. William Somers, 434<sup>th</sup> Force Support

Squadron superintendent. "Off base lodging will be available for families with children over 18 months; however it is limited to one room per military member and additional rooms will be at the members expense."

The Airman and Family Readiness Center with help from Purdue University's Military Family Research Institute will have a build a passport program that focuses on building resiliency between the parents and children.

"We will have a circus theme for the program, and we will have activities that children and parents will be able to enjoy together such as carnival body boppers, a jump rope game, and Frisbee golf," said

Jill Marconi, Airman and Family Readiness Center director.

"We put a lot of work into trying to make Family Day memorable and every year we try to add something new," said Chief Somers. "This year will be one of the biggest Family Day's we have had at Grissom. We really want Airmen and their families to enjoy themselves."

The following is the schedule for the Commander's Challenge: kids fun run and adult run from 1-1:30 p.m.; commanders tricycle race from 1-1:30 p.m.; sphere race from 1-2 p.m.; pie eating contest from 2-2:30 p.m.; seed spitting contest from 2-2:30 p.m.; egg toss contest from 2:30-3 p.m.; and tug-of-war from 3:30-4 p.m.



## Survey says...

Staff Sgt. Matthew Hall, left, and Senior Airman David Kessen survey points around Grissom in order to determine the height of a fitness trail here June 12. Sergeant Hall is an engineering journeyman with the 434th CES and Airman Kessen is an engineering apprentice with the same unit. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Mark Orders-Woempner)