

# Heartland WARRIOR

Volume 16, Issue 11

November 2011

**SMOKE DETECTORS SAVE LIVES**

Dial 911

**Saving grandpa...2**  
**GFD prison rescue...3**  
**STF dominates gridiron...10**

# Heartland WARRIOR

Vol. 16, No. 11  
November 2011

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

Contents of the Heartland Warrior are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Air Force.

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

Any questions regarding any content should be directed to the editor at (765) 688-3348.

## Staff

Col. William T. "Tim" Cahoon.....commander  
Lt. Col. Gary Lockard.....chief, public affairs  
Maj. Kelly Howard.....public affairs officer  
Tech. Sgt. Doug Hays.....editor  
Tech. Sgt. Mark Orders-Woempner.....assistant editor  
Staff Sgt. Carl Berry.....staff writer  
Senior Airman Andrew McLaughlin.....staff writer  
Senior Airman Damon Kasberg.....staff writer  
Senior Airman Jami Lancette.....staff writer

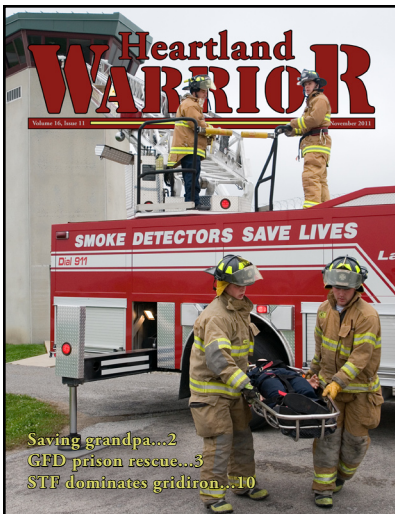
## World Wide Web

Air Force Reserve Home Page

<http://www.afrc.af.mil>

Grissom Home Page

<http://www.grissom.af.mil>



## On the cover...

Two volunteer firefighters carry away a simulated injured guard that was rescued from a tower by Grissom firefighters at the Miami Correctional Facility. The Grissom Fire Department took part in an emergency response exercise scenario where an airplane crashed at the prison. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Andrew McLaughlin)

# Firefighter saves grandfather



Senior Airman Thomas M. Lennon Jr. saved his grandfather, Thomas T. Lennon, who suddenly collapsed due to a severe drop in blood pressure Sept. 21. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Andrew McLaughlin)

By Senior Airman  
Andrew McLaughlin  
*Public Affairs staff*

Senior Airman Thomas M. Lennon Jr. was enjoying an evening with his grandfather, Thomas T. Lennon, when he was faced with a life or death situation.

On Sept. 21, the younger Lennon, who is an Air Force Reserve firefighter with the 434<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineer Squadron, was at a restaurant in Peru, Ind., when his grandfather suddenly collapsed and fell to the ground hitting his head on the floor.

"I need to do something," the grandson said he thought as the crisis began to unfold before him.

He rushed over to help his grandfather and checked for a pulse, but there was none so he immediately began CPR.

Fortunately, after about five minutes of life-saving efforts, Lennon was able to revive his grandfather just before the ambulance arrived.

In the hospital, the younger Lennon said they learned his grandfather collapsed due to a severe loss of blood pressure and had suffered head trauma from his fall.

"The doctor said most family members would have buckled under the pressure, but I didn't think

twice," said the Grissom firefighter, who had just completed emergency medical technician school in May. He credited that training to saving his grandfather's life.

"If I hadn't done the CPR class, I probably wouldn't have been able to do what I did," he added.

The EMT school, which all firefighters must attend, is held at Grissom over the course of four months. During the training, the firefighters also practice the EMT skills they learn in ambulances and hospitals in the local area.

Lennon's father, Master Sgt. Thomas Lennon Sr., was meeting his family at the restaurant that day and arrived to find his son saving his father's life.

"I was startled to see my father lifeless and my son doing CPR," he recalled as he described his son performing CPR "like a machine."

"It was an eye opener," he added. "I will definitely pay close attention during the next CPR class."

The Lennons have a long history with Grissom. The grandfather was a long-time lodging manager on base, the father is a reservist with the Grissom Airman and Family Readiness center and the son recently joined the team as a firefighter.

# Grissom Fire Department goes to prison...to train

By Senior Airman Andrew McLaughlin  
Public Affairs staff

The reach of the Grissom Fire Department extends well beyond the confines of the base, recently it took the firefighters inside a state prison to participate in a joint emergency response exercise.

Grissom firefighters rushed to the Miami Correctional Facility, located adjacent to the base, to respond to an exercise scenario where a plane crashed in the outer perimeter of the prison damaging the facility and injuring staff and inmates.

The firefighters arrived at the scene to simulate providing medical care to the wounded and rescue trapped guards in a tower.

With prison guards, emergency response teams and K-9 units out in force to secure the area, the firefighters practiced carrying out their duties in what would be a chaotic and dangerous environment in real life.

Although this situation may seem unlikely, the firefighters must train and be prepared for everything.

The fire department has mutual aid agreements with the local community to respond to emergencies in the area.

"It's important to exercise our mutual aid agreements," said William Dixon, GFD assistant chief of training, who was observing the exercise and has over 33 years experience working in the firefighting career field.

During the exercise, the firefighters along with prison medical staff set up a mock triage center to gather, evaluate and tend to the wounded before their transfer to a local hospital.

The fire department assists with medical emergencies in the local community by acting as first responders if needed.

"We can sustain life until the ambulance arrives," said Dixon, who added Grissom firefighters have first responder basic training, but many have obtained emergency medical technician certification on their own.

Besides administering medical attention, another focus of the training was rescuing wounded personnel. In this exercise, firefighters were forced to extract wounded people through a guard tower window by use of a ladder truck because the tower door was inaccessible due to the crash.

Capt. Dana Witt, a MCF guard, explained the importance of Grissom's availability to the prison because the facility doesn't have the capability to extract someone from a guard tower if the door or stairwell was blocked.

The Grissom firefighters joined with the Pipe Creek Volunteer Fire Department and the prison medical staff for the exercise.

Capt. Aaron Dehner, a GFD crew chief who was overseeing the mock triage center, said the exercise was important because it gave them the opportunity to work in a joint environment. With the different agencies training together, Dehner explained how seeing each other operate helps them improve teamwork and efficiency.

When it comes to different agencies working together in an emergency situation, there's a big difference between actually practicing it and just talking about it, he concluded.



Timothy McMahon, a lead firefighter with the Grissom Fire Department, climbs to rescue a simulated injured guard from a tower at the Miami Correctional Facility Sept. 28. The Grissom Fire Department took part in an emergency response exercise scenario where an airplane crashed on the perimeter of the prison. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Andrew McLaughlin) November 2011

# Honorary commanders visit 434th MSG

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

Taking down targets in a virtual firing range or blasting away with a huge water cannon at a raging aircraft fire is not something most people get to do in a single day, unless they're an honorary commander.

Four of Grissom's five honorary commanders came to the base to fire away as they learned more about the Grissom's mission and impact on the community during a special tour showcasing the 434th Mission Support Group Oct. 14.

The 434th MSG is part of the 434th Air Refueling Wing, the largest KC-135R Stratotanker unit in the Air Force Reserve Command. Because of this, Grissom Airmen are frequently called upon to provide aerial refueling around the world to U.S. and allied fighter, bomber and cargo aircraft.

But, Grissom's impact



Grissom's honorary commanders shoot M-9 pistols during a special firearms simulator demonstration here Oct. 14. From left to right are Hal Job, Rocky Walls, John Gilpin and John Stackhouse. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Mark Orders-Woempner)

also hits close to home as the Grissom's fire department, part of the 434th MSG, provides critical support to the local community, averaging six life saving events each year.

During their tour John Gilpin, Hal Job, Rocky

Walls and John Stackhouse were able to witness first-hand what the 434th MSG Airmen do each day.

The group first ventured to the firearms training simulator where they were able to put their

hands on everything from an M-9 pistol to an M-240B machine gun.

After a brief instruction from Staff Sgt. Timothy Boggs, 434th Security Forces Squadron fire team member, the honorary commanders put their shooting skills to the test, taking down one target after another.

"It was neat because one I felt safer, but yet it was still a real gun," said Walls. "I was competing with the other honorary commanders, and that competitive spirit added to the fun."

Job, a Navy veteran, even learned a better method of lining up pistol sights during the demonstration.

"That was really one of the best things I've seen in how to handle the



Grissom's honorary commanders put out a simulated aircraft fire here Oct. 14. The honorary commanders visited the base to learn more about the 434th Mission Support Group. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Jami Lancette)

# U.S. forces in Iraq prepare for transition

WASHINGTON -- The military is using an old camping adage as U.S. Forces Iraq continues to move service members out of Iraq and transfer control to the Iraqi government: "Leave the site in better shape than you found it."

"Eight years of continuous conflict has resulted in a substantial amount of equipment, supplies, property and personnel still in Iraq, and we'll withdraw with the constant threat of enemy attack and the potential for bad weather, and we're doing so in a deliberate, measured manner, ensuring we protect service members, civilians, contractors, equipment and property, and we intended turnover bases, and we have been, better than we found them," Army Maj. Gen. Thomas W. Spoehr said during an Oct. 13 "DODLive" bloggers roundtable.

Spoehr - deputy commanding general of U.S. Forces Iraq -- said the transition is of unparalleled magnitude. In 2008, U.S. forces numbered 165,000, residing on 505 bases, he said. Today, U.S. forces are 41,000 strong, living on 22 bases. On average, his mission still requires him to withdraw 520

people each day, he added.

The general said plans under the 2008 bilateral security agreement, which states that all U.S. forces will withdraw from Iraq by Dec. 31, are on track. U.S. Forces Iraq is making the withdrawal with budgets in mind, Spoehr said, selling a large amount of equipment, infrastructure and recyclable waste to the Iraqi military and government agencies.

"We sold 6.8 million pounds of scrap just (this month), and since Sept. 1, 2010, we have sold more than 142 million pounds of unserviceable material through scrap sales," he said. He added that the sale of equipment has saved American taxpayers \$600 million in shipping and transport costs alone.

The ultimate choice to sell or relocate equipment is being made as deliberately as possible, the general said.

"We have about 788,000 pieces of equipment," he said. "Each one of these kind of gets a scrutiny in terms of cost benefit and what's the best disposition of that equipment. Obviously, our first priority would be to satisfy any kind of in-theater

requirements. So if there was a piece of equipment that was needed in Afghanistan to prosecute a war there, or for another military need, we would utilize that first."

Spoehr said the transition hasn't been simply a military-to-military transfer. Iraqi government agencies have their eyes on soon-to-be former American facilities.

"One of these bases, I think it was Warhorse, was signed for by the ministry of youth and sports, and so they intend to make that base a kind of a sports camp for Iraqi youth, where they can maybe spend a week or so and learn to play soccer or things like that," he said. "The government of Iraq in some cases has kind of gone different directions and plans to give some of these bases to some of their other ministries."

Spoehr explained that in the end, cleaning up bases and equipment is more than a matter of dollars and logistics. For him, it's a matter of respect.

"As we turn over each base, it's kind of our point of pride that we're turning it over better than we found it," he said. (AFNS)

## Grissom to hold civilian, military health fairs

Staying fit and keeping healthy are more than just pushing out a few crunches once-in-awhile; it's a way of life.

And, in order to help Grissom's civilian and military personnel live healthy lives, the base will host two health fairs back-to-back in early November.

A health fair for Grissom's civilian employees is scheduled for Nov. 4 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Grissom dining facility, and will focus on health insurance

and benefit education. There will also be a body-mass index session, CPR training and blood pressure readings.

Rounding off the civil-

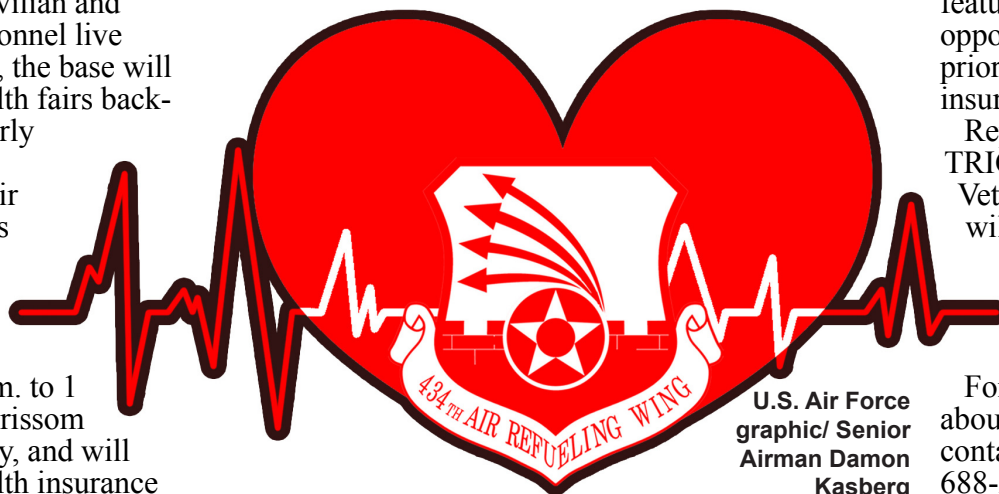
ian event will be nutritional information provided by a local wellness center, and in that same respect, the dining facility will be preparing a heart-

healthy meal.

For Grissom's military members, the health fair will be the following day, Nov. 5 from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. This event will feature many of the same opportunities from the day prior without the civilian insurance agencies.

Representatives from TRICARE as well as the Veteran's Administration will also be in attendance Nov. 5 to answer questions military personnel may have.

For more information about the health fairs, contact Juli Phelps at 688-2987.



# Grissom Airman faces fire, saves dog



Damon Spradlin, 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron bioenvironmental engineering craftsman, stands in front of a mobile home that was recently engulfed by a fire. Spradlin ran into the home to look for anyone trapped inside and found a dog, he was able to save from the raging fire. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Mark Orders-Woempner)

**By Senior Airman  
Jami Lancette**  
*Public Affairs staff*

When an explosion happens most people run the opposite direction, but one Grissom Airman ran straight toward it.

On a quiet Sunday night recently, Damon Spradlin, 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron bioenvironmental engineering craftsman, said he was home when he heard a loud explosion nearby.

Knowing that something was seriously wrong, Spradlin said he went outside, saw a large plume of smoke and asked his friend to call 911 before springing into action.

"Everyone was standing around the neighborhood gawking at the burning house," Spradlin explained. "I've never been one to stand around and gawk during an emergency, so I ran to where the smoke was."

As Spradlin ran toward the home to make sure no one was trapped inside, a friend of the trailer's owner rushed out.

"As the friend ran out of the house I asked him if there was anyone inside, and he wouldn't answer me," Spradlin recalled. "So I ran in to look for myself."

As he looked around inside the home, he saw the owner throwing buckets of water on the fire.

"I asked him what happened, and the guy told me not to worry about it," he said. "Eventually the guy told me if I wanted to help (I should) grab something to start throwing water."

While Spradlin was working tirelessly to extinguish the fire, he heard police and fire truck sirens in the background. At that time the owner ran, leaving Spradlin behind to fight the fire himself.

"Yeah I was scared, I could actually see the fire coming out of the

walls," Spradlin said.

After 5-10 minutes of fighting the fire, Spradlin decided to leave for his own safety.

Taking one last look around to make sure there was no one left behind, Spradlin noticed a dog curled up on the kitchen floor.

"I quickly scooped up the dog and ran out of the burning trailer," he said.

By the time he got outside Spradlin said he noticed the Grissom Fire Department was there as well as the Indiana State Police.

Although his heroic efforts saved a life, it did take its toll on the bioenvironmental engineer.

"I had a lot of smoke inhalation and had to spend hours in the emergency room being treated," said Spradlin.

Despite this, his ability to face danger and having a 'leave no one behind mentality', gave him the courage to save a life.

# Grissom teaches students to say 'no' to drugs



More than 300 students from North Miami Elementary, Denver, Ind., watch an anti-drug video during a presentation in support of Red Ribbon Week at the school Oct. 25. (U.S. Air Force photos/Senior Airman Damon Kasberg)

**By Senior Airman  
Damon Kasberg**  
*Public Affairs staff*

Grissom personnel went to school, not to learn, but to teach children an important message.

Gary Flook, Grissom's drug demand reduction specialist and his team, reached over 1,000 local children with their anti drug, alcohol and tobacco message as they spoke to students at North Miami Elementary and Pike Creek Elementary schools, during Red Ribbon Week Oct. 24-28.

Red Ribbon Week is the largest and oldest drug prevention program reaching millions of Americans during the last week of October every year.

"If we can make kids understand that drugs are wrong at an early age and teach them to say

November 2011



Gary Flook, Grissom's drug demand reduction specialist, asks for volunteers for a game during a Red Ribbon Week presentation at North Miami Elementary, Denver, Ind., Oct. 25.

no, this will carry on into middle school and high school," said Flook.

During the anti-drug presentation, Flook and his team talked to the children, played educa-

tion games to encourage them to make the right decisions and gave out anti-drug goodie bags.

"For kindergarteners through second graders planting the seeds of

awareness to stay away from drugs is important," said Becky Saddlemire, North Miami Elementary principal, "We really appreciate Grissom sharing this important message."

# Grissom represents at Air Force marathon



Thousands of runners leave the starting line at the U.S. Air Force Marathon Sept. 17 at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. A record breaking 13,000 runners registered for the events held on Sept. 16-17. (U.S. Air Force photo/Ben Strasser)

Don't let the name "mini marathon" fool you; running 13.1 miles is no walk in the park.

Ten 434th Air Refueling Wing members, including six 434th Security Forces Squadron Airmen and one 434th SFS spouse, jumped at the opportunity to represent their unit and Grissom in the 15th Annual Air Force Marathon Sept. 17 at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

While most of the Grissom team ran the half marathon, some ran a 10K race while others stuck it out for the entire 26.2 mile marathon.

The 434th SFS members who ran included James Benvenuto, Thomas Siegel, Catherine Devine, Dustin Devine, Kasey Potts, Timothy Potts and Nathan Salvagni.

In addition to the 434th SFS participation, there were four other Grissom Airmen who ran the event.

Michael Hoke, 74th Air Refueling Squadron, and Michael Schaefer, 49th Aerial Port Flight, ran the half marathon; James Carter, 434th Maintenance Squadron, ran the 10K; and James Malloy, 434th Communications Squadron, ran the full marathon.

Many people train well in advance for such a race and Grissom's team did just that.

The 434th SFS members trained for the majority of the summer in preparation for the race, said Dustin

Devine.

Potts and his wife Kasey got the opportunity to share their first mini marathon together.

"My wife Kasey and I spent most of the summer running together and looking forward to the half marathon," said Potts. "This was our first

half marathon and it was really rewarding being able to run together along with our friends and teammates."

Devine also enjoyed her first mini marathon experience.

"Running my first half marathon was an amazing experience and I will definitely be back next year to run again," she said.

Potts and Devine weren't the only ones that enjoyed their experience of the race.

"What an awesome experience having the opportunity to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Air Force Marathon," said Benvenuto. "It was a well organized event."

In all, more than 900 military members ran in the events.

The next Air Force Marathon is scheduled to take place Sept. 15, 2012.

*(Editor's note: Staff Sgt. Dustin Devine, 434th SFS, and Senior Airman Jami Lancette, 434th ARW, contributed to this article.)*



Nathan Salvagni snapped this photo of his 434th Security Forces Squadron teammates after they finished running in the 15th Annual Air Force Marathon held at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, Sept. 17. Not only did the 434th SFS participate, but so did several other Grissom Airmen. Pictured from left to right are James Benvenuto, Thomas Siegel, Catherine Devine, Dustin Devine, Kasey Potts and Timothy Potts. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Nathan Salvagni)



# 434th Security Forces light up range

By Senior Airman  
**Damon Kasberg**  
*Public Affairs staff*

Airmen from the 434th Security Forces Squadron deploy throughout the world in support of the Air Force mission and must be ready to face a variety of obstacles and challenges, even in the dark of night.

During a recent unit training assembly, 434th SFS Airmen took part in a night firing exercise where they shot their M-4 carbine rifles at targets that were 25 meters away.

Giving the edge to the Airmen over their darkened targets were night vision sights mounted on their weapons and special tracer rounds, which help them place their shots down range.

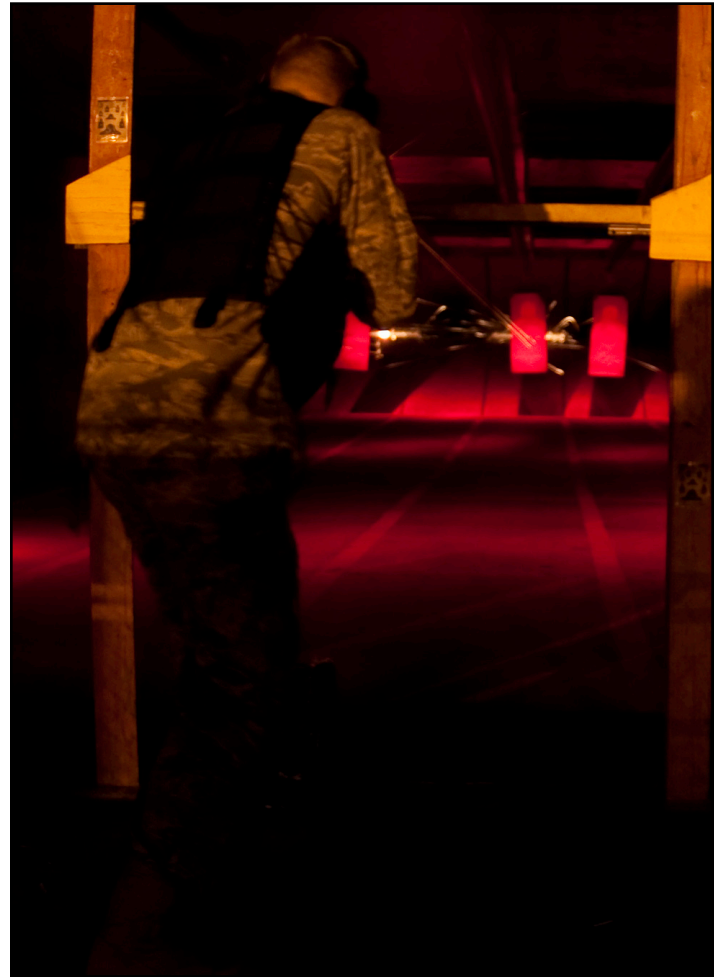
“Training gets increasingly technical for Airmen because the enemies around the world adapt to these wartime environments,” said Tech. Sgt. Richard Rinella, 434th

SFS combat arms apprentice. “We have to make sure we are the number one fighting force.”

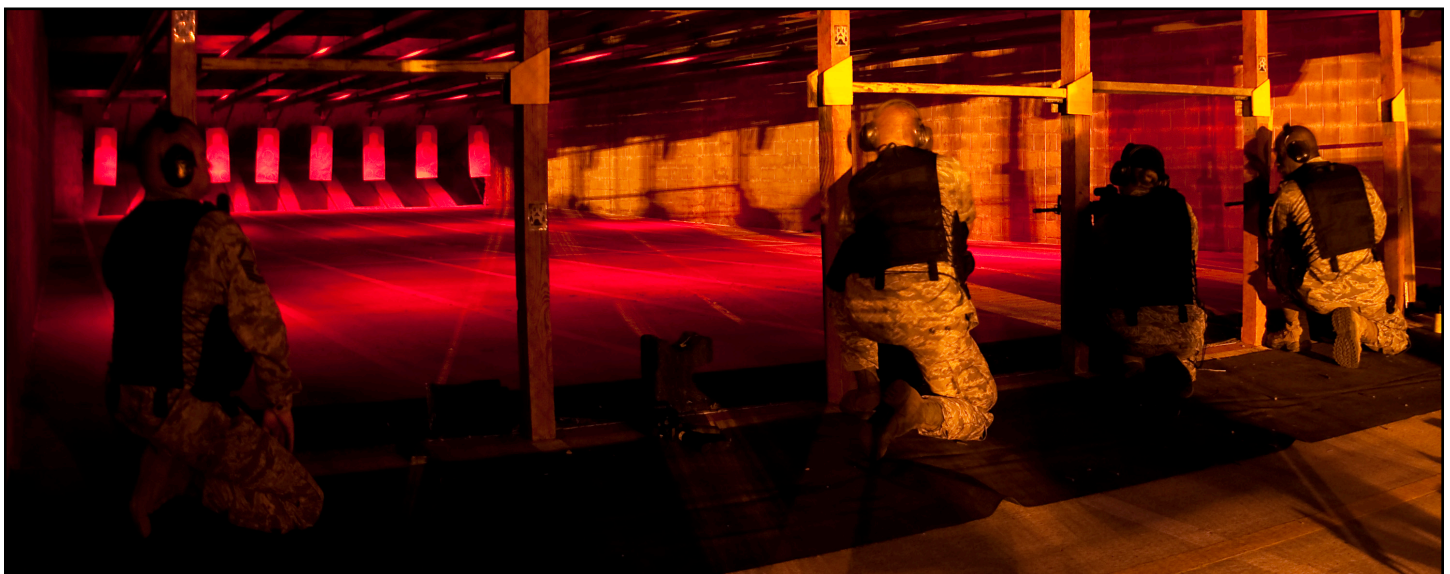
Prior to going to the range the Airmen attended a classroom portion of the training, where they learned the ins and outs of their rifle’s bullets, and sights. The training went into detail about the functions of the rifle, what to do in case of malfunctions and how to carry and reload the rifle.

They also performed dry firing, which is firing the weapon without a bullet in the chamber, to practice trigger control, which is the art of keeping one’s body still through breathing techniques and discipline skills to avoid anticipation of recoil.

Each year the 434th SFS Airmen qualify twice at the range, but also undergo a myriad of combat skills training to keep their skills sharp; skills that may one day save their lives or the lives of others.



Tracers rounds can be seen as Staff Sgt. Thomas Engelhardt, 434th Security Forces Squadron fire team member, shoots his M-4 carbine rifle during a night firing training exercise during a recent unit training assembly here recently.



Airmen from the 434th Security Forces Squadron prepare to shoot down range during a night fire training exercise during a recent unit training assembly here. The Airmen shot M-4 rifles in the barricade supported and kneeling supported positions, using both single shot and three round burst settings on their rifles. (U.S. Air Force photos/Senior Airman Damon Kasberg) November 2011

# Seasoning Training Flight dominates gridiron

By Senior Airman  
**Jami Lancette**  
*Public Affairs staff*

This year members from the 434th Seasoning Training Flight here tackled the competition during a flag football tournament.

The maintainers were scheduled to go head-to-head with the 434th STF in the championship Oct. 5, but because they didn't show, the seasoning trainees won the tournament.

Despite the no-show, the 434th STF split into two teams, picked up a couple other players and scrimmaged with one another for the love of the

game and fitness.

The teams that played in this year's competition were the 434th STF, Security Forces, Civil Engineering and Maintenance.

Flag football is just one of the many intramural sports that take place here, as every year Grissom keeps the fitness wheel rolling by hosting a number of base intramural sports programs.

The next event is scheduled for Nov. 15. and will be an intramural dodge ball tournament to take place at the fitness center on base. Teams must be signed up no later than Nov. 1.



Tony Garcia looks down in disappointment as his opponents score a touchdown during a flag football scrimmage Oct. 5. (U.S. Air Force photos/Senior Airman Jami Lancette)



Greg Demaio tries to dart past Patrick Marchman to score a touchdown during a flag football scrimmage Oct. 5. This year members from the 434th Seasoning Training Flight took home the championship when the 434th Maintenance Group didn't show for the last game of the tournament. Every year the Grissom fitness center keeps the fitness wheel rolling by hosting a number of intramurals for some off-duty fun.



Steven Bartee leaps for the ball as Patrick Marchman looks for the interception during a flag football scrimmage Oct. 5.



John Stackhouse, right, is all smiles as he sits onboard one of Grissom's firetrucks after helping extinguish a simulated aircraft fire here Oct. 14. Stackhouse is the 434th Air Refueling Wing honorary command chief. Four of the five honorary commanders visited the base that day to learn more about how the 434th Mission Support Group here not only supports the Air Force mission globally but also how it supports the local area. At the controls of the fire truck is Grissom Fire Department firefighter Chris Pribbernow. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Jami Lancette)

(sighting),” explained Job, who added he surprised himself with how well he shot. “I kept thinking ‘they’ve got this thing rigged.’”

Not only was the firearms training not rigged, nothing else was either as the honorary commanders got their chance to experience what 434th MSG Airmen get to experience each and every day, especially when they got their shot at Grissom's aircraft fire simulator.

“It brings it all down to how real it really is,” said Job about being inside one of Grissom's large fire trucks, putting out a simulated aircraft fire with a top-mounted water cannon. “You could feel the heat right away, and we were inside the cab, so you know how hot it was outside.”

Walls was particularly fond of the aircraft fire simulator as it gave him family bragging rights.

“One of my nephews, who's a firefighter, was totally jealous because he's never even seen one of those before,” he explained.

But the day wasn't just about having fun, it was about the learning and sharing of Grissom's importance to the Air Force Reserve mission and to the local community.

“It was totally beyond what I expected,” said Walls.

## In the limelight

### Medals

#### Meritorious Service Medal--

Lt. Col. Charles Good, 434th Air Refueling Wing; Lt. Col. Richard Heaslip, 72nd Air Refueling Squadron; Lt. Col. Gary Lockard 434th ARW; Lt. Col. Gregory Schultz, 434th Operations Group; Lt. Col. David Smith, 72nd ARS; Capt. Ann Trowbridge, 434th OG; Chief Master Sgt. Michael

Fornal, 434th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron; Master Sgt. Randy Hamilton, 434th Maintenance Squadron; Master Sgt. William Miller, 434th Security Forces Squadron; Master Sgt. David Perryman 434th Civil Engineer Squadron; and Tech. Sgt. Jeffery Baker, 434th AMXS;

#### Commendation Medal --

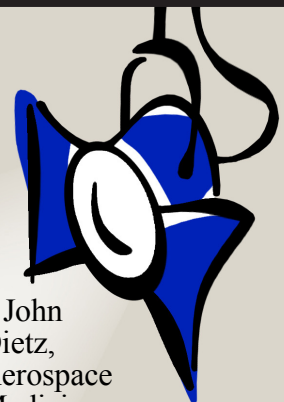
Master Sgt. William Mezel, 434th SFS; Tech.

Sgt. Catherine Devine, 434th SFS; Tech. Sgt. Mark Orders-Woempner, 434th ARW; and Staff Sgt. Dustin Devine, 434th SFS.

#### Promotions

**Master Sergeant.** -- Christopher Brill, 434th CES; Zachary Gaumer, Logistics Readiness Squadron; Marion Wesley, 434th ARW; Deborah Melton, 74th Air Refueling Squadron.

**Technical Sergeant --**



John Dietz, Aerospace Medicine Squadron; Brandon Toth, 74th ARS; and Debra Wilson-Strong, 434th Force Support Squadron.

# CES seamstresses sew to make a difference

By Maj. Kelly Howard  
Public Affairs staff

September was Childhood Cancer Awareness Month and Alice Vail and Sue Phillips discovered their opportunity to brighten a sick child's day via the Internet - one pillowcase at a time.

Both are federal civil service employees with the 434th Civil Engineer Squadron here.

"I'm a quilter, and I ran across the need on one of my quilting sites; it was all downhill from there," Vail said smiling.

A nonprofit organization challenged its chapters to sew and deliver 44,000 pillowcases during the month of September - one for each child currently battling cancer across North America. A challenge that if met would equal nearly 21 miles of pillowcases.

"This is an act of love that Alice and I just decided to do about a month ago," said Phillips, a 39-year civil service veteran. "We're both lucky to have grandchildren that have been healthy. We just have a lot of love for what we do and the wild colors we put into the pillowcases. The white ones are so sterile."

The seamstresses made one delivery of 28 pillowcases with the help of Chief Master Sgt. Mike Bowden, 434th CES civil engineer manager.

"The nearest collection point is Noblesville, (Ind.) so thankfully, Mike lives near there and offered to help out," explained Phillips.

Both Vail and Phillips said they intend to con-

tinue the project long after the month-long challenge ends; however, they think it would be great to have others involved too.

They said it's a simple process, but the process is generally a two to three day process since both work fulltime - purchasing the material, laundering, cutting, sewing, ironing and packaging the pillowcases in "baggies."

"If we had a couple of cutters, a couple of sewers and someone to launder and package that would be nice and we could get

a lot more done," said Vail, an office automatic assistant who has been a civil servant for 10 years. "We're always on the hunt for the best, happy materials hopefully on sale because, like everything else, the cost just keeps rising."

Despite the time, money and effort, both Vail and Phillips are happy to be a part of the project.

"You know you're helping someone though, so it's worth it," said Vail.

Phillips seconded that notion.

"I volunteered both of us to go down to Riley this winter to let the kids pick out their fabric and help sew their own pillowcases, but I might be a weepy mess," said Phillips. "It's a fun project with a reward at the end."

"The pillowcases will be sent to Riley and Peyton Manning Children's Hospitals and any sick child, whether it is cancer or some other illness, picks out their own pillowcase, and hopefully makes them feel more at home," Phillips added.



Sue Phillips, left, and Alice Vail, both members of the 434th Civil Engineer Squadron, display pillowcases they're working on for children with cancer. The two seamstresses made nearly 30 pillowcases in September for donation to Riley Children's Hospital and Peyton Manning Children's Hospitals. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Master Sgt. John Somsel)

# Maintenance chief retires after 34 years

By Senior Airman Jami Lancette  
Public Affairs staff

With a KC-135R Stratotanker setting the backdrop, the doors of Dock 1 opened as a hush fell over a crowd gathered together to wish their best to a retiring fellow Airman, boss, mentor and friend.

After 34 years of serving his country, Chief Master Sgt. Michael Fornal, 434th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron superintendent, retired in front of family and friends here Oct. 15.

Maj. Timothy Bartlett, 434th AMXS commander, presided over the ceremony.

“Chief Fornal can be serious when warranted, and he can make us laugh and help reduce the pressure when needed,” said Bartlett. “But through it all, he’s a true professional who will be missed.

“What has impressed me most is that he exemplifies one of my favorite leadership attributes and that’s earned authority,” he added. “Earned authority is treating people with mutual respect.”

Helping the chief earn that authority was his diversified and illustrious career during his time in the Air Force.

The chief has served in the Stra-



Chief Master Sgt. Michael Fornal, 434th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron superintendant, receives his certificate of retirement from Maj. Timothy Bartlett, 434th AMXS commander, during his retirement ceremony Oct. 15. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Jami Lancette)

tegic Air Command, Air Mobility Command, U.S. Central Command, U.S. Pacific Command and the Air Force Reserve Command.

Most recently the chief lead a work force of over 300 aircraft maintenance technicians and support personnel here and the role they have in the worldwide mission.

In a fitting conclusion, Fornal gave a heartfelt speech and ended it with one last salute to the crowd of Airmen that have worked alongside with him throughout the years.

But, this is not the end for the chief here at Grissom as he will be working as a transient alert supervisor for a base contractor.



## Making full-bird

Lise Van Houten pins colonel eagles on her husband, Arthur L. Van Houten III, during his promotion ceremony Oct. 23. Van Houten served as the 434th Maintenance Group deputy commander until his promotion. He will now serve as the senior individual mobilization augmentee for the 402nd Maintenance Wing commander at Robins Air Force Base, Ga. The 402nd MXW provides depot maintenance, engineering support and software development to major weapon systems including F-15s, C-5s, C-130s, C-17s and special operations aircraft. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Mark Orders-Woempner)



---

★

# NOMINATE YOUR SUPPORTIVE EMPLOYER

---

★

## 2012 SECRETARY OF DEFENSE EMPLOYER SUPPORT FREEDOM AWARD

---

★

Attention Guard and Reserve Service Members

Nominate your supportive employer for the  
*Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award*,  
the highest award given by the U.S. Government to employers  
for exceptional support of Guard and Reserve employees.

---

★

**ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS**  
**NOVEMBER 1, 2011 - JANUARY 16, 2012**  
**[WWW.FREEDOMAWARD.MIL](http://WWW.FREEDOMAWARD.MIL)**

ESGR DEVELOPS AND PROMOTES A CULTURE IN  
WHICH ALL AMERICAN EMPLOYERS

**SUPPORT AND VALUE**

**THE MILITARY SERVICE OF THEIR EMPLOYEES.**

[www.ESGR.mil](http://www.ESGR.mil) ★ 1-800-336-4590