



Heartland **WARRIOR**

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Grissom's 2011 year in review...3

Snow brings snowy owl, danger...4

Fit-to-fight success stories, tips...7

Heartland WARRIOR

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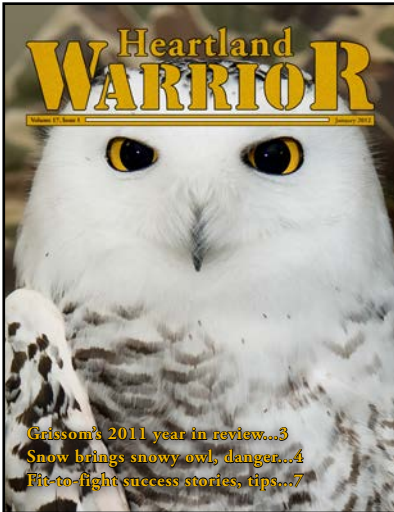
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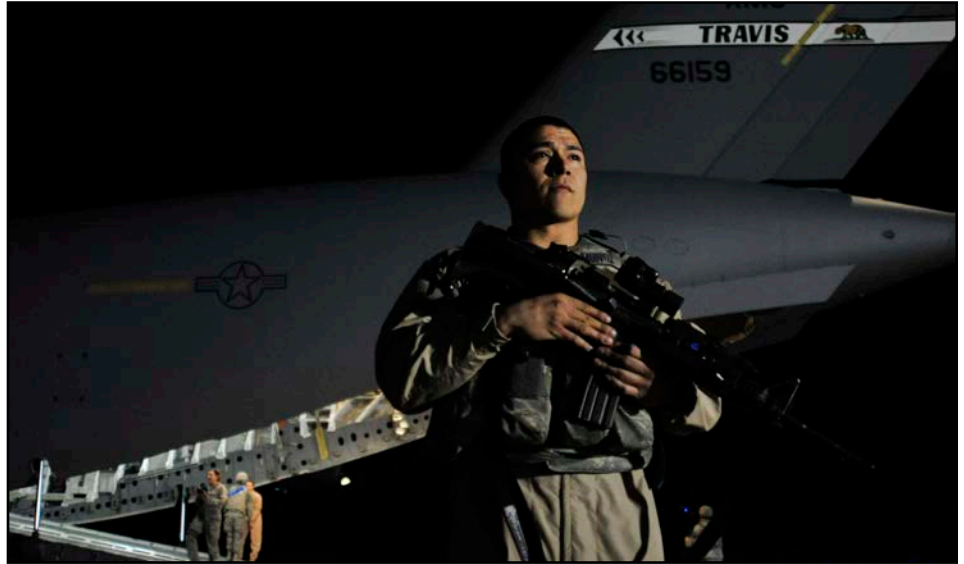
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On the cover...

Hedwig, a snowy owl, was recently caught after leading Grissom's safety and airfield management personnel on a week-long chase. The owl, who was named after famed literary character Harry Potter's owl, and other large birds pose a danger to Grissom's KC-135R Stratotankers. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Mark Orders-Woempner)

Last Airmen depart Iraq



Staff Sgt. Gerardo Munoz guards a C-17 that will transport the last Airmen from Iraq on Dec. 18, 2011, at Ali Air Base, Iraq. Munoz is a 385th Air Expeditionary Group security forces member. (U.S. Air Force photo/Master Sgt. Cecilio Ricardo)

By Tech. Sgt. Mareshah Haynes *Defense Media Activity*

BALTIMORE -- America welcomed home from Iraq more than 200 of her Air Force sons and daughters Dec. 20 at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport.

The Airmen were the last of the Air Force contingent in Iraq and were home in time for the winter holidays as stated by the president.

Among the senior Air Force leaders on hand to celebrate the return of Airmen from Iraq and welcome them was Lt. Gen. Richard Newton, the assistant vice chief of staff of the Air Force.

"We've been a part of a terrific joint team," Newton said. "We've made great strides in lifting up the Iraqi people so that they can now support and defend their nation, and now they can look forward to enjoying the freedoms they richly deserve. Our United States Air Force has made great contributions toward making that happen. It's been a worthy cause and it's great to bring them home now."

Maj. Gen. Anthony Rock, the director of Iraqi Training and Advisory Mission - Air Force, U.S. Forces - Iraq, U.S. Central Com-

mand, also returned home on the flight with Airmen who were under his command in Iraq.

"This represents the final chapter in Operation New Dawn, but I think the important thing to remember is this is not just the end of eight years of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn," Rock said. "This is the end of 21 years of Air Force and U.S. military involvement in and around Iraq."

A crowd of family members, USO volunteers, co-workers and well-wishers greeted the Airmen as they made their way through customs and into the lobby of the airport.

"It just makes your heart soar," Rock said of the outpouring of support from the community. "It really makes it all worthwhile."

The return home was the perfect Christmas present for the returning Airmen this holiday season, some after being away from their loved ones for up to a year.

Staff Sgt. Jerry Whitehurst was one of those eagerly awaiting the arrival of the Airmen at the airport. Whitehurst, who is stationed at Dover Air Force Base, Del., was

See 'Home' page 6

Heartland Warrior

GRISSOM'S 2012

2011 YEAR IN REVIEW

2011 GRISSOM LEADERSHIP CHANGES



⇐ **Dec. 1-8:** Hedwig, a snowy owl, caused quite a stir as he kept safety officials on the run for over a week.

Dec. 3: Airmen gathered outside the new Grissom Airman and Family Readiness building for a Christmas tree lighting ceremony. ⇨



Nov. 10: The U.S. Air Force Band of Flight held a special veterans concert at the Honeywell Center in Wabash, Ind. ⇨



⇐ **October:** Gary Flook and other 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron Airmen supported Red Ribbon Week by talking to students about the dangers of drugs.



⇐ **Sept. 30:** Fifty years after his first space flight, Lt. Col. Virgil "Gus" Grissom's family visited the base for a special rededication ceremony.



Sept. 16-17: Soldiers from the 316th Psychological Operations Company, an Army Reserve unit at Grissom, held their annual PSYOP Stakes. ⇨



Aug. 13: The 'Red Tags' toppled the 'Dark Side' in the 2011 Jovanovich Cup Aug. 13. The game is held in honor of the late Lt. Col. George Jovanovich. ⇨



⇐ **July 19-20:** The Indiana Army National Guard's 38th Sustainment Brigade setup and ran a state-of-the-art tactical operation center at Grissom.



⇐ **July 9:** In one of the biggest celebrations Grissom holds each year, the base celebrated families during Family Day.



April 18: Lt. Gen. Charles Stenner, Air Force Reserve chief, visited Grissom to discuss the Air Force Reserve's future. ⇨



May 11: 434th Security Forces Airmen teamed up with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to teach local students about law enforcement careers. ⇨



⇐ **March 6:** Grissom Airmen participated in a Wingman Day to focus on building resiliency and preventing suicide.



⇐ **March 15:** With the Ides of March came a groundbreaking for a new air traffic control tower.



Jan. 21: The base began 2011 with a State of Grissom address. The 2011 honorary commanders assumed their roles during the event. ⇨



⇐ **February:** Throughout the month, Grissom's base gym was modernized by the 434th Civil Engineer Squadron here.



Nov. 6: Col. Christopher Amend, took command of the 434th Operations Group.



Aug. 13: Lt. Col. Lewis Poore Jr. took command of the 72nd Air Refueling Squadron.



Aug. 1: Chief Master Sgt. Karen Perkins became the 434th Air Refueling Wing command chief.



June 5: Maj. Robert Atkins assumed command of the 434th Communications Squadron.



June 5: Capt. Gregory Baugh took command of the 316th Psychological Operations Company.



June 1: Col. Bryan Reinhart became the 434th ARW vice commander.



May 14: Col. Thomas Collins assumed command of the 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron.



March 5: Lt. Col. Larry Shaw, took over the 434th Operations Support Squadron.



- Grissom had an annual economic impact of \$135.8 million for 2011.
- The base increased it's civilian, commercial and military air traffic control area by 5,000 square miles and broke ground on a new \$7.4 million ATC tower.
 - Grissom Airmen, Soldiers and Marines deployed around the world.
 - The Grissom Inn was named best in the Air Force Reserve.
 - The Grissom Fire Department was named the Air Force Reserve Command Medium Fire Department of the Year.
 - Chaplain (Maj.) Obadiah Smith Jr., 434th Air Refueling Wing chaplain, was named AFRC Chaplain of the Year.
 - Maj. Matt Coakley, 951st Reserve Support Squadron, was awarded the AFRC Albert M. Kuhfeld Award

GARB
2011
IMPACT



Snow brings snowy owl to Grissom

Determination, teamwork give rare bird second chance



Adam Speicher, left, and Maj. Douglas Perry pose with Hedwig, a snowy owl, after capturing the bird Dec. 8. Speicher is a local falconer and Perry is the chief of safety. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Mark Orders-Woempner)

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

As the first snow fell on Grissom this December, it brought with it a rare snowy owl and week-long chase that could've ended tragically.

The owl first made his appearance at Grissom Dec. 1, said Maj. Douglas Perry, 434th Air Refueling Wing chief of safety.

At the recommendation of Col. Christopher Amend, the 434th Operations Group commander, the white owl, with a 4 foot wingspan, was dubbed Hedwig after famed literary character Harry Potter's snowy owl.

Despite the white owl's whimsical nickname, large birds like him pose a major danger to the aircraft flying out of Grissom every day.

It wasn't too long ago the dangers of bird strikes on aircraft became front-page news as Air Force Academy graduate Capt. Chelsey "Sully" Sullenberger landed U.S. Airways Flight 1549 on the Hudson River after his aircraft hit a flock of birds. That event was one Grissom person-

nel did not want to repeat with their new winged resident.

According to Perry, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has recently seen an abundance of births of snowy owls, which reside in the cooler climates of the Arctic.

"They normally don't come this far south," said Perry. "The biologists think the older more mature birds are running the younger ones out and forcing them south."

While Hedwig had been flying around Grissom for a few days, he didn't affect airfield operations until Dec. 5 when safety and airfield personnel were informed of a large white owl on the taxi way.

"The safety team immediately went out to shoot scare rounds and pyrotechnics," explained Perry. "They're designed to make loud noises that scare birds away."

Many times these scare tactics stress the bird and force it to move off the airfield for good. However, that wasn't the case for Hedwig, as the situation grew more and more dangerous for both Airmen and bird.

"On Dec. 6, I went out with Steve (Bailey) from airfield management to try our scare rounds again," said Perry. "You could tell we were stressing it, but it was starting to get used to them, so we made the bird condition moderate."

Bird condition levels are a way of letting aircrew and airfield personnel know about bird-strike risks to flights. When a bird condition level is raised to moderate, flight operations are significantly impacted as

local pattern operations, such as approaches and touch-and-goes, are no longer authorized

"You get one takeoff and one landing per mission," said Perry, who is also a KC-135 pilot. "That could significantly affect your ability to train."

Wanting guidance on how to proceed, Jerry Skiles, 434th ARW weapons safety manager, placed a call with the Air Force Safety Center's biology department for advice.

"AFSC bio said that based on Hedwig's behavior he might be making the base a home instead of just using it as hunting grounds for a few days," said the major. "I also placed calls with the USDA wildlife division and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to get a better understanding of what our options were.

"Our goal at this point was to learn about his behavior to be able to get rid of him without taking him," he added.

The word taking is used to describe the last resort of ending a bird's life to protect aircraft and human life.

"When it comes down to it, the mission has to continue and we have to protect human lives," elaborated Perry.

The danger was made all the more apparent after one very close call with a KC-135 returning from a night mission Dec. 7. As the aircraft was clearing the runway, Hedwig flew right past the cockpit.

"Our suspicion was he was more active at night, and that confirmed



Hedwig, a snowy owl that had made Grissom's airfield his new home, sits on one of his favorite perching spots Dec. 6. (U.S. Air Force photo/Steven Bailey)

it,” said Perry. “It also told us that he’s not afraid of airplanes.”

The situation went from bad to worse, but Grissom’s personnel continued to have hope.

“When I talked to the USDA state director, she said the longer we waited to get rid of it, the harder it would be, but she gave me more aggressive techniques to use,” said Perry, who then called an emergency bird-wildlife aircraft strike hazard, or BASH, team meeting.

The BASH team decided to implement the new techniques, which included increased constant pressure with airfield personnel assigned to follow the bird 24 hours-a-day and switching from screamers, a scare round that whistles through the air, to bangers, a scare round fired from a shotgun like a missile that explodes after hitting the ground.

The BASH team also decided to eliminate Hedwig’s favorite places to perch.

“We were able to determine his known perching locations, one on a dirt mound and one on an electrical box,” recalled Perry. “Airfield management put in work orders to get the dirt mound removed and to put spikes on the box.”

Despite all of these efforts, the BASH team was told by the USDA if the owl didn’t leave in four or five days, they would probably have to take the animal.

Not wanting to accept that as an option, Perry placed a call Dec. 8 with a raptor rehab facility in Rochester, Ind., which referred him to Adam Speicher, a local falconer, who told Perry he thought he might be able to trap the bird. They arranged for him to come out Dec. 9.

Shortly after his conversation with Speicher, Perry got a call saying the bird was flying around Grissom’s aircraft hangars. Wanting to seize the opportunity, Perry called the falconer back who agreed to come out that day.

“He said he could be there in 45 min, so we had (Bailey) follow it for an hour, until it ended up at the peak of Dock 1,” recalled the major. “The falconer unloaded his trap with two rats as bait, and you could tell (Hedwig) was getting pretty excited



Adam Speicher, left, and Maj. Douglas Perry show Col. Chris Amend a snowy owl captured at Grissom Dec. 8. Amend, the 434th Operations Group commander, named the bird Hedwig. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Mark Orders-Woempner)

about the potential food.”

The trap was a wire cage device about four inches tall, six inches deep and one foot wide, which holds a rat inside and has microfilament nooses on top designed to snag the talons of a raptor on the hunt.

“The falconer told us ‘If this birds hungry he’ll be down in a minute or two,’” recalled Perry.

They first put the trap on the Bldg. 592 ramp, but their operation was almost compromised.

“An aircrew was getting ready to head out for a flight and saw us out there, so they started to drive our way in their van,” said Perry. “What they didn’t know was this was a sting operation, but I eventually got them to move away from the trap.”

While the unassuming aircrew didn’t spook the bird, the first attempt at the operation was far from a success.

The owl swooped down on top of the trap, and in a state of panic, the rat was able to wiggle himself free of the device but not from the owl’s sight or grasp.

Much to the team’s dismay, Hedwig nabbed his prey and flew off. As the falconer prepared to leave, they spotted their second chance as Hedwig appeared to still be hungry.

Wanting to seize the opportunity without repeating the mistakes of the first episode, Perry rushed the falconer over to aircrew flight

equipment where they got parachute chord to secure the bait inside the trap. They headed back out with one last chance and one final hope.

“The falconer setup the trap on top of a snow mound, and we only had to wait a minute before he swooped down next to the trap,” Perry explained. “All of the sudden you saw him flinch, and the falconer said we got him.”

“One noose snagged only one-quarter inch of one talon; that’s how close it was,” he added.

The falconer then rushed out to Hedwig to secure him and make sure he didn’t injure himself.

After the bird was determined to be in good health, they took the owl to Amend, the man who named him.

The next day Hedwig was taken to a vet at the Fort Wayne, Ind., falcon rehab center, where he was given a clean bill of health.

Perry also said the falconer has since put Hedwig on his falconer’s license and will take care of him until the spring, when he will be released back into the wild, far away from Grissom’s flightline.

In the end of a week-long journey, the mission continued, an airfield was made safe and a rare bird’s life was spared.

“This was really a good example of everyone working together,” concluded Perry. “It was a win for flight safety and a win Hedwig.”

AFRC names new command chief

Chief Master Sgt. Kathleen Buckner was selected for the Air Force Reserve Command's top enlisted position.

Lt. Gen. Charles Stenner Jr., chief of the Air Force Reserve and AFRC commander, made the selection Dec. 23.

"We're looking forward to Chief Buckner coming on board and sharing her distinctive wealth of experience," said Stenner. "She'll play a crucial leadership role through a historical period in this Command."

Before being selected, Buckner served as the command chief master sergeant for the 349th Air Mobility Wing, Travis Air Force Base, Calif.

She replaces Chief Master Sgt. Dwight Badgett, who was recently selected as the senior enlisted advisor for Joint Task Force North, Fort Bliss, Texas.

Stenner said Badgett's new assignment at Joint Task Force North is "a resounding testament to his service and leadership."

Buckner will advise Stenner on readiness, training, utilization, morale, professional development and quality of life for all enlisted members in the Air Force Reserve.

She will also be the functional manager for all Air Force Reserve first sergeants, the senior noncommissioned officers responsible for the morale, welfare and conduct of enlisted members at the squadron level throughout the command.

She has been the command chief for the Travis reserve wing since May of 2009.

A native of Gary, Ind., she enlisted in the Air Force in 1987. While on active duty, she served at various levels in the operations resource management field and was an Airman Leadership School instructor.

Her assignments included positions in California, Utah, Spain and the Netherlands.

Since leaving active duty in 1997, she has served as both a traditional reservist and a full-time air reserve



Buckner

technician.

In 2007 she deployed to Southwest Asia in support of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

(Story courtesy Air Force Reserve Command public affairs)

Home, from page 2

serving in South Korea five of the six months his wife, Lt. Col. Pamela Howard-Whitehurst, who is assigned to Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., was deployed to Iraq. Whitehurst arrived back in the U.S. just two days before his wife.

While the couple was away from home serving their country, their two children stayed in Maryland and were cared for by an aunt and their nanny.

"This would've been our first missed Christmas, but we're flexible," Whitehurst said. "We're military, so we adapt easily and the kids would've been OK with it."

Whitehurst said his children were



Airmen assigned to the 407th Air Expeditionary Group prepare to take off on a C-17 Globemaster III Dec. 18, 2011, at Ali Air Base, Iraq. (U.S. Air Force photo/Master Sgt. Cecilio Ricardo)

hoping their mother would be home in time to celebrate with them, but they weren't sure. He said he didn't tell the children the day their mother was arriving, and they plan to pick them up from their piano

lessons after school to surprise them.

"They're going to go crazy," Whitehurst said. "I Skyped them every day, sometimes even two times a day while I was gone, but Mommy wasn't able to do that, so they miss her a lot more."

Whitehurst said there was one more gift his family received through his wife being deployed in support of the newly completed Operation New Dawn.

"We realized that life is a lot shorter than most people think, so we're planning a lot more vacations and spending more time together," he said. "We have to enjoy each other while we can." (AFNS)

Heartland Warrior

Fit to Fight: Security Forces NCO loses weight, feels great

By Senior Airman Jami Lancette
Public Affairs staff

Diet and exercise for some can lead to not only improved health, but also a better sense of well being, and this was true of one Grissom Airman who succeeded in his quest for weight-loss success.

Master Sgt. Michael Kamp, 434th Security Forces Squadron unit deployment manager, overcame his own odds and beat the scale, losing a total of 45 pounds in a matter of months.

Kamp said his formula for success was exercising three times a week.

"I started out running short distances and over time worked up to a two mile run" said Kamp.

He discovered his recipe for melting fat and improved fitness test scores that worked best for his lifestyle and what he wanted to achieve.



Master Sgt. Michael Kamp works out at Grissom's fitness center. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Jami Lancette)

"I watched what I ate, limiting the number of calories per day and totally eliminated soda pops," he said. "A balanced meal is always

best, with equal portions from every food group."

Losing that much weight not only had its confidence boosting effects, but was physically rewarding as well.

"Overall I feel better," he said. "I have more energy throughout the entire day."

"My PT has dramatically increased from having trouble with pushups and sit-ups and a run failure to the end result of a passing score," Kamp added.

Kamp said his philosophy for himself and others that are marching down a road to a healthier life is straightforward.

"Never stop exercising and watch what you eat," he said. "Physical fitness is truly a lifestyle change, which is a change for the better."

(Editor's note: This is the third in a four-part series detailing the fitness journey of four Grissom Airmen in their quest to be fit to fight.)

Fit to fight: KC-135R Stratotanker pilot trains hard, makes cut

By Senior Airman
Jami Lancette
Public Affairs staff

Losing extra pounds can be challenging, rewarding and necessary, and for one Grissom pilot it was everything.

"About three to four years ago I failed Fit to Fight," said Lt. Col. Todd Moody, 74 Air Refueling Squadron operations officer. "The big motivator for me to lose weight was that I weighed ten pounds heavier than I had originally thought."

Fit to Fight is the Air Force's fitness program that encourages combat readiness by means of personal fitness.

"When I deployed last year, I went on a real strict diet," said Moody. "I was taking in about 1,200-1,600 calories a day and I

tried to avoid high starch foods."

Moody followed up his strict diet with a rigorous exercise program.

"I also worked out a lot, lifting, running and

my deployment) I was getting up at 5 a.m. to run.

"By the end of my deployment I could run a loop around our base, which is eight miles non-stop," Moody added.

"By the end of my deployment I could run a loop around our base, which is eight miles non-stop."

- Lt. Col. Todd Moody

(participating in a muscle confusion based exercise program)," he said. "I was burning about 1,000 calories a day."

Being deployed gave Moody the push he needed to improve and change his diet and exercise habits.

"Before (deploying) I couldn't even run a half mile," he said. "(During

Proper nutrition in correlation with exercise was what he said was his key to melting the fat.

"Keep in mind to limit your intake of breads and sugar to the bare minimum," he said. "Try not to eat heavily processed foods."

"I ate a lot of grilled chicken, salad, eggs, and lean protein," he added.

With his regimented diet and exercise schedule Moody shed the pounds.

"I lost about 15 pounds while during my deployment," he said.

And, the weight kept coming off.

"When I got back home I went ahead and did my physical training test early, and I scored a 97," he exclaimed.

Moody set a goal for himself to achieve, and it was something that he took to heart.

"You really have to take it seriously to make your goal," he said. "My goal was to get below 170 pounds; I actually got to 165 pounds."

(Editor's note: This is the fourth in a four-part series detailing the fitness journey of four Grissom Airmen in their quest to be fit to fight.)

Grissom DDRP sweeps the competition

By Senior Airman Jami Lancette
Public Affairs staff

Drug testing accuracy is important for both those being tested and those administering the test, and at Grissom the program in place is award winning.

The 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron's drug demand reduction team recently won two Air Force Reserve Command-level awards.

"We were very excited," exclaimed Gary Flook, 434th AMDS drug demand reduction specialist. "The commander presented the awards to us at our staff meeting."

To be eligible for an award, base medical units must be actively participating in the AFRC DDR program. Awards were given to three units based on unit population size large, medium and small.

Flook and his team swept the competition in the medium category, securing the two awards for the base.

There are specific qualifications that each base must attain in order to compete. The bases medical unit non-testable drug testing specimen should be under 1 percent or less, annual percentage tested must meet or exceed the random drug testing percentage, and unit will provide documented evidence of accomplishments concerning the annual requirement for substance abuse education and prevention event.

All of which the 434th has exceedingly surpassed within fiscal year 2010.

To name a few of the many accomplishments that Flook and his team were recognized and awarded for included collecting 561 specimens from personnel



Gary Flook, Grissom's drug demand reduction specialist, speaks to local elementary school students about drug dangers during an educational presentation. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Damon Kasberg)

with no untestable samples, meticulous attention to detail and training, percentage testing of 108 percent, constantly innovating and improving an entire DDR program to ensure success and interfaced with units to ensure there were zero no shows for 2010.

Not only was their testing rate impeccable, Flook and his team participated in a number of outreach events to promote a drug free life.

"We were involved with the yellow ribbon program, deployment lines, red ribbon week and family day picnics," said Flook.

These accomplishments contributed to winning the awards at the 2011 Air Force and Air Force Reserve Command Alcohol Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment Drug Demand Education Worldwide Conference.

In the limelight

Medals

Meritorious Service Medal: Master Sgt. Clarence Brookins, 434th Maintenance Squadron.

Commendation Medal: Capt. Ronald Mills, 434th MXS; Master Sgt. Jeffrey Larkin, 434th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron; Master Sgt. Eric Saddlemire, 434th AMXS; Master Sgt. Daniel Pabon, 434th Operations Group; Tech. Sgt. Richard Filip, 434th MXS; Tech. Sgt. Wesley Fletcher, 434th AMXS; Tech. Sgt. Andy Henderson, 434th AMXS; and Tech. Sgt. Edward Platt, 434th AMXS.

Air Force Achievement Medal: Tech. Sgt. Angeli-que Hall, 434th Maintenance Operations Flight; Staff Sgt. Michael Meyer, 434th Air Refueling Wing; and Senior Airman Stephen Pemberton, 434th AMXS.

Promotions

To master sergeant: Daniel Helms, 434th AMXS; Donald Yoakem, 434th Civil Engineer Squadron; and Joseph Tysinger, 434th CES.

To technical sergeant: Ranier Tuzon, 49th Aerial Port Flight; Melisa Lopez, 434th CES; and Robert

Botham, 434th MXS.

To staff sergeant: Adrienne Beard, 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron; Logan Call, 49th APF.

To senior airman: Krystal Colier, 434th Security Forces Squadron; Corey Mason, 434th AMXS; Michael Santiago, 434th Logistics Readiness Squadron.

To airman 1st class: Cole Agnlemyer, 434th MXS; Barbara Bitner, 434th AMXS; Daniel Garcia, 434th SFS; Ashley Helland, 434th AMXS; Jessica Hunt, 434th AMDS; Amy Richmond, 434th AMXS; Cameron Yoder, 434th CES.

To airman: Arieon Clayton, 434th Force Support Squadron; Derecka Guest, 434th FSS; Justin Lindstrom, 434th LRS; Mayzin Naing, 434th MXS; David Smart, 434th AMXS.





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