

Cajun Courier



926th Fighter Wing
Air Force Reserve Command
NAS JRB New Orleans, Louisiana
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Back from Bagram

Welcome home Cajuns

Story and photos by Tammy Prine

After more than four months in the dusty-fine sand and blustery winds of Afghanistan, members of the 926th Fighter Wing are finally home.

The 100-plus team of Cajuns, enough required to support and fly the deploying A-10 Thunderbolt aircraft, left in early September 2004 for Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan.

The majority of the deploying members stayed for the entire 120-day deployment while some stayed for less.

“That was the best deployment I’ve had with the 926th,” said Tech. Sgt. Danny Troxclair, weapons load crew member. “I’ve been at the 926th for 20 years and on many deployments including Operation Desert Storm. Everyone worked well together. We had reservists and active-duty Air Force people mixed in.”

This wasn’t the first deployment to Bagram for the Cajuns. They were there in April 2002 as part of Operation Enduring Freedom when they spent several months deployed in very poor living conditions.

“We couldn’t believe how different the base was this time,” said Tech. Sgt. Randy Dandry, crewchief. “We had buildings instead of tents, air conditioning and heating and real showers instead of a sink and sprayer.”

During the past couple of years, the Army has made many improvements to the base including the addition of a dining facility, fast food trailers and an improved base exchange, he said.



Master Sgt. Kevin Alleman, weapons load crew member, gets a big welcome home kiss from his wife Deborah as their daughter, Shelby looks on from dad’s shoulders.

Even with upgrades to the base, there were still many challenges for everyone. One of the challenges the pilots and maintainers dealt with once again was the chalky-fine dust.

“Visibility for flying was poor on days when the wind was blowing,” said Lt. Col. Bruce Miller, 706th Fighter Squadron com-

mander. “The dust particles would sometimes obscure vision up to 20,000 feet. Since the terrain in some areas was up to 17,000 feet, attention to position was critical for pilots.”

See homecoming on page 4.

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Keep up the great work

By Col. Steve Arthur
926th Fighter Wing commander

Just like a rubber band that has been stretched too far for too long, people can end up feeling slack after long periods of operating at maximum capacity.

You have been involved in some of the most labor-intensive and emotionally-draining events possible in the five months I have been your wing commander. Starting with the long hours of preparation and deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom to the redeployment back home, you have given everything to make this wing excellent.

In each and every case, you proved you are the finest of professionals. Simply put, you got it done.

Now that we are getting into a “normal” routine, something is missing. It may be hard to get excited about the paperwork or other routine tasks that make up a significant part of our jobs.

What you do every day or every drill weekend for this wing is vitally important. One way to get a different perspective on the value of the job at hand is to see it valued by someone else. The Air Force can acknowledge your accomplishments officially. Various awards for the outstanding accomplishments at Bagram will be coming soon. But some folks who

gave a huge amount of time and compassion during this deployment won’t receive official acknowledgment.

Nonetheless, they worked quietly behind the scenes and contributed to your success.

I can’t emphasize enough how important it is for each of us to understand that every member of this wing played a critical role in that success. I thank all of you for your dedication, initiative, and commitment to the highest standards.

We are at a critical time for the 926th. There are a lot of things to get excited about. The work I do – you do – each day will determine how successfully we meet the challenges ahead. I’m looking forward to taking on that challenge with all of you.



Col. Steve Arthur

Break out of that rut; the UCI is coming

By Tammy Prine

How often do you get home from work and feel as though your day was spent doing the same thing you’ve done every day for the past year? Are you in a rut? The dictionary definition of a rut is a track worn or made in something from habitual use or a usual or fixed practice.

Sometimes you’re so deep in a rut that you don’t have the energy to climb out of it. You may not even be able to see the way out. Many people blame others for creating the rut.

It takes energy to climb out of a hole. Getting out of a rut or leaving your comfort zone takes more energy than staying in it.

Some of the signals that you’re stuck in a rut are the feelings of helplessness, loss

of mobility and a general sense of boredom. If you’ve been doing the same job day-after-day for 10 or even 20 years you might have lost your desire to excel and yes, you’re in a rut. But it’s not too late to seek a way out.

Think about your situation. If you see your rut try to motivate yourself. Try a new, different, creative way of thinking. Maybe adjust your after work schedule and add in something different. Look around your shop. Are there ways to be more creative at your job? Are there ways to help your coworkers to do the same?

Don’t say or let others around you say “that’s how we’ve always done it.” That in itself says you’re in a rut.

Try reading a good book on management, leadership or a

hero of yours. Start a fitness regimen, plant a garden or volunteer. By trying something new, you’ll avoid falling into the ruts that others might have left behind.

Ruts form when everyone goes in the same direction all the time. Until you force yourself to move up, you aren’t going anywhere, except wherever the rut is going, and if you don’t like that road, then you’d better find a new track.

Our Unit Compliance Inspection in just a few months away. If you’re in a rut get busy and get out. Take a look around your shop. Are there ways to do the job more efficiently, keep the shop cleaner or to keep your records up-to-date?

It’s not too late to change. You still have time to get in that UCI mindset.

Don’t let your motto be “We never did it that way before,” but rather “Excellence in all we do.”

Traditional Reservist commands 10th Air Force

By Master Sgt. Bill Goben

10th Air Force Public Affairs

FORT WORTH, Texas – Maj. Gen. Allan R. Poulin assumed command of 10th Air Force during a change-of-command ceremony at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth Jan. 20.

Lt. Gen. John A. Bradley, chief of Air Force Reserve and commander of Air Force Reserve Command, officiated the ceremony. General Poulin replaced Maj. Gen. David E. Tanzi, who became the AFRC vice commander Jan 21.

Before assuming command of 10th Air Force as a traditional reservist, General Poulin was the mobilization assistant to the commander of Air Combat Command, Langley Air Force Base, Va., from March 2000 to January 2005.

Prior to that he served as MA to the commander of U.S. Air Forces Europe, Ramstein Air Base, Germany and MA to the commander of 12th Air Force and U.S. Southern Command Air Forces, Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz..

General Poulin has also served at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla., as vice commander of the 482nd Fighter Wing, commander of the wing's operations support squadron from October 1989 to August 1993 and commander of the 93rd Tactical Fighter Squadron.

As 10th Air Force commander, General Poulin oversees the operation of all AFRC fighter, bomber, rescue, airborne warning and control, special operations, flying training, combat air operations battle staff, and space units.

When mobilized, these units are gained by Air Combat Command, Air Force Special Operations Command, Air Education and Training Command, Pacific Air Forces, Air Force Space Command, and Air Force Materiel Command.

In his civilian occupation he is an airline pilot flying international routes for a major U.S. carrier.

Col. Jimmy Mills, 10th Air Force assistant vice commander, runs the day-to-day operation of the numbered air force when General Poulin is not on duty. (AFRC News Service)



Lt. Gen. John A. Bradley, chief of Air Force Reserve and commander Air Force Reserve Command (left), presents the 10th Air Force flag to Maj. Gen. Allan R. Poulin upon his assumption as the numbered Air Force commander at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Texas, Jan. 20. (U.S. Air Force Photo by Master Sgt. Bill Goben)



A little rain didn't stop the family and friends as they rushed to greet the enroute support team members upon their return to NAS JRB New Orleans.

Homecoming continued from page 1

"The dust was horrible. It was more like brown baby powder," said Master Sgt. Misty Jackson, NCO in charge of non-destructive inspection. "It got into the equipment, technical orders, food, showers and everything else. You couldn't escape it."

Members of the 926th didn't let any problems like dust or anything else keep them from successfully completing their mission.

"The dust and austere conditions presented unique challenges; however, our Airmen adapted extremely well and guaranteed mission success every day," said Col. Reginald Stroud, maintenance group commander. "It was extremely impressive to see and experience the high level of dedica-

tion, commitment, and esprit de corps.

"Our maintainers provided an around-the-clock aircraft maintenance capability by working 12-hour shifts with one day off

per week. It was very common for members not to take their day off and come in and work well beyond their assigned shift. The workload was steady. Supply and parts admittedly

worked better than home station, but still was somewhat logistically challenging. The fleet fully mission capable rate averaged a resounding 86 percent, 15 percentage points above our command standard."

This fully mission capable rate led to the Cajuns' ability to fly a varied list of sorties.

"Among the more than 1,900 sorties flown during the deployment were close air support, combat search and rescue, convoy escort and a first ever tasking for an A-10 unit, counter improvised explosive device," said Colonel Miller. "Another combat first was that all (Cajun A-10) missions incorporated the Litening II targeting pod on all aircraft."

The Litening II targeting pod is a precision targeting system designed to detect and identify targets on the ground.



Ms. Jennifer Huntley, morning news reporter from WWL-TV provides a live broadcast from the flightline with the family of Senior Master Sgt. Stephen Ford. Family and friends of deployed 926th FW members braved the cold while waiting for the first group of wing members to return home from Afghanistan.

In addition to combat support missions, the pilots also flew non-combat missions in support of the first-ever freely held democratic elections in Afghanistan. These missions included presidential protection details, shows of force, and ballot convoy escorts.

This deployment accentuated the Total Force in action as it was a complete assimilation of Reserve and Active Duty units seamlessly integrated into one fighting element.

“The units did not work side-by-side; we worked and flew as integrated combat teams,” said Colonel Miller.

The unit’s accomplishments couldn’t have been achieved without the ongoing support of wing members and family who were nearly 8,000 miles away.

“The one thing I don’t want to forget is to say ‘thank you’ to all the people who supported us from back here and kept things running while we were gone,” said Sergeant Jackson. “We couldn’t do what we did if they weren’t here doing the job back home.”



Chief Master Sgt. Garry Horton, maintenance superintendent, is the first to welcome home Lt. Col. Ozzie Gorbitz in his A-10 Thunderbolt II. Lieutenant Colonel Gorbitz and fellow pilots spent more than 35 hours in the cockpit flying the aircraft home.



Above: The first A-10 thunderbolt II to arrive from Afghanistan brings about flag-waving and cheers from family and friends waiting on the 926th FW flightline.

Right: At base operations Kayla Carpenter watches through the window waiting to catch a glimpse of the aircraft bringing home her dad, Tech. Sgt. Robert Carpenter, egress craftsman, from Afghanistan.



Two plus two equals six for CE squadron

Story and photos by Tammy Prine

Two UTAs together provided just the right amount of time for members of the 926th Civil Engineer Squadron to accomplish their annual required training. The bivouac was four days of training at the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport, Miss.

"We don't have all the equipment we need for training at the 926th," said Lt. Col. Frank Fromherz, CES commander, "but we can come here and everything is in place. We just have to sign out the equipment we need."

The CE squadron didn't go alone this year. A few members of the 926th Security Forces Squadron including combat arms training and maintenance specialists along with a few members of the 926th Communications Flight were at the CRTC. They helped out during the day dedicated to a Phase II

exercise of an operational readiness exercise.

Chemical warfare training wouldn't be complete without convoy training and wartime convoy training wouldn't be complete without potential terrorist threats.

"After our class on conducting a proper convoy and dealing with terrorists along the way we gave them a taste of it," said Master Sgt. Darrell Devenny, NCO in charge of training for the security squadron.

"We dressed up in garb that might be worn in a desert terrain and positioned ourselves along their convoy route," he said. "At certain points we would position road blocks and run up to the vehicles taunting the CE members. I think they all got a taste of what could potentially happen in that kind of situation."

When the convoy reached the exercise's deployed location the squadron needed a communications network.

"We set up a network between the buildings so that the different areas of the squadron could communicate," said Tech. Sgt. Steve Bryan, communications equipment repairman. "There were a few problems

with interfacing the different programs but we've offered some solutions for improving that area."

A first for the CES members was the new implementation of wearing the MCU-2A/P series protective mask while live-firing at the range.

"This is a new requirement that everyone will have to do," said Tech. Sgt. Jose Guajardo, readiness NCO. "It makes sense because in a potential chemical environment during combat people will need to keep their masks on while using weapons."

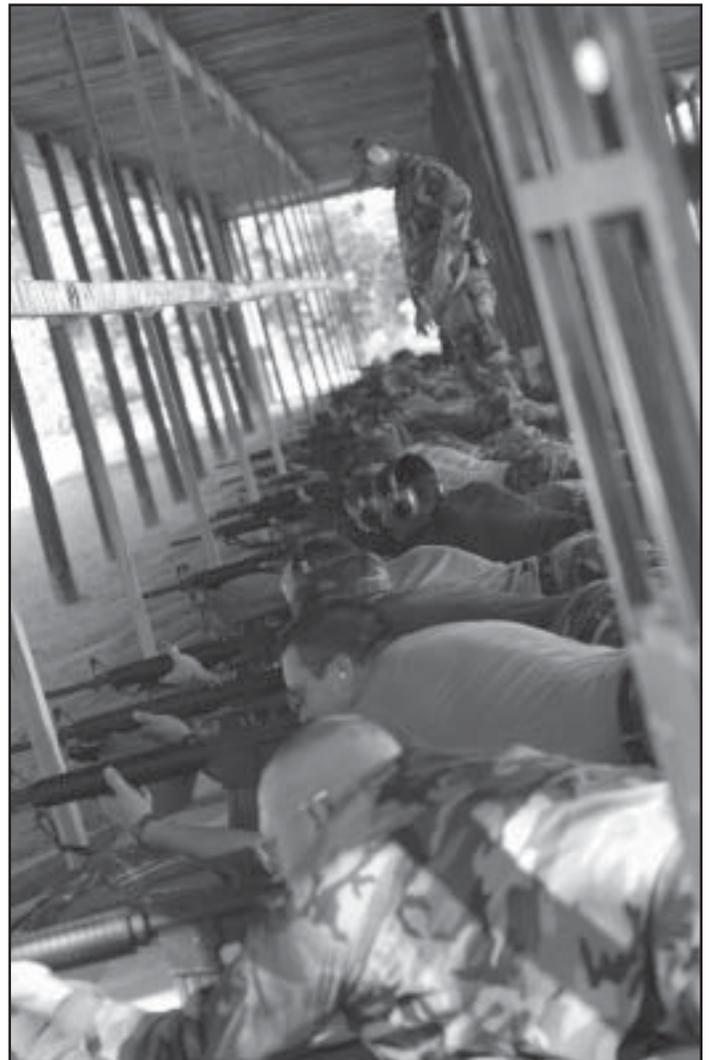
"It has been a great bivouac for the squadron," said Lieutenant Colonel Fromherz. "We were able to get out fitness testing complete along with the usual training. Heavy equipment training is something we can't do back at the unit but the CRTC has everything we need."

"Two UTAs here allow us to accomplish three UTAs worth of training at home station," said Senior Master Sgt. Gerald Prine, electrical superintendent.

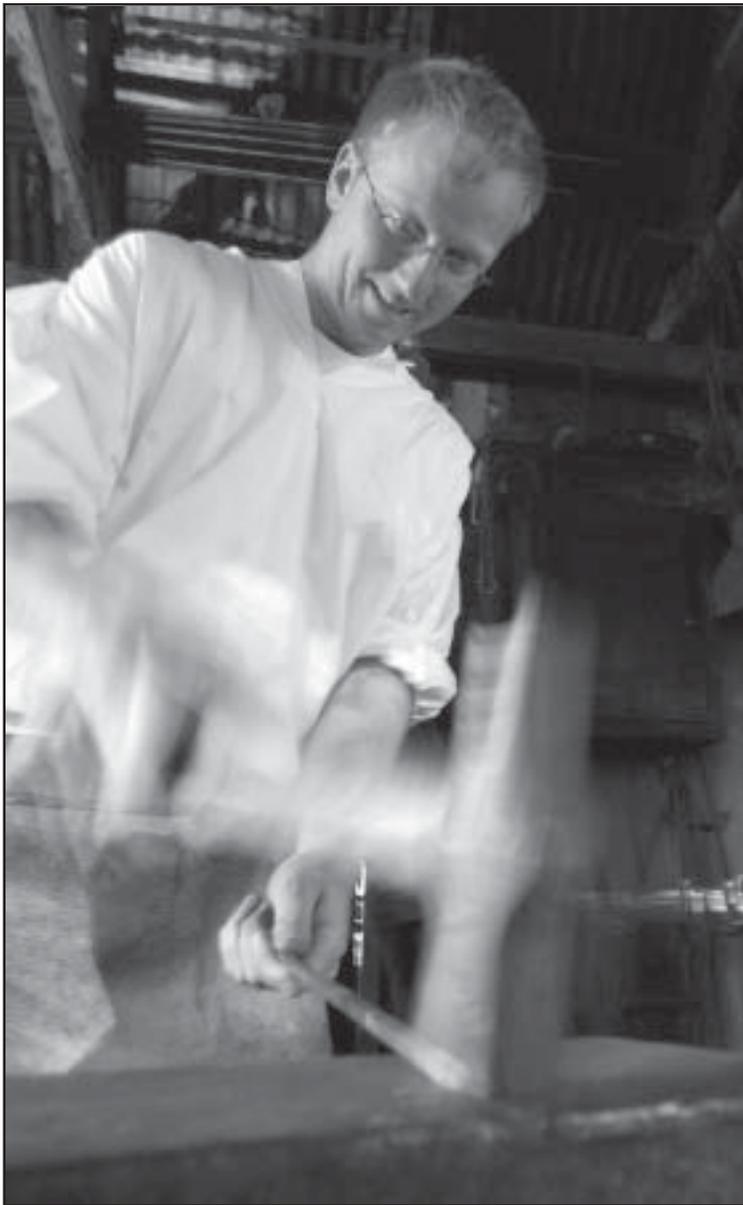
"That saves the Air Force Reserve money and gives back better trained Airmen."



Left: Tech. Sgt. Reggie Beaco, electrical systems repairman, guards a lift truck from the passenger seat during convoy training.



Master Sgt. Robert Owens, standing, NCO in charge of security forces operations, monitors the members of the 926th CES during their live-fire training.



Hammering and sculpting metal with a eye on embracing the past. All on the road to becoming a ...

BLACKSMITH



Staff Sgt. Kent Roberts, an apprentice blacksmith, uses food grade wax to seal the metal of a steak turner made during Noel Acadien Au Village Dec. 10 in Lafayette, La.

Staff Sgt. Kent Roberts, accounting and finance assistant with the 926th Fighter Wing bangs on some metal during Noel Acadien Au Village Dec. 10 in Lafayette, La. Sergeant Roberts is an apprentice blacksmith. He and his mentor John Bernard were demonstrating blacksmithing during the Christmas celebration at Acadian Village. All the proceeds from the event go to fund the Lafayette Association For Retarded Citizens, or LARC, which is located on the same property as Acadian Village. (Photos by Tech. Sgt. Chance Babin)



Staff Sgt. Kent Roberts turns a handle from the bellows that pumps oxygen under a fire that's used to heat metal that he is going to form into a usable tool during Noel Acadien Au Village Dec. 10 in Lafayette, La. Sergeant Roberts is an apprentice blacksmith, it will take him about two years to become a journeyman and eventually he can become a master blacksmith.

New comm flight commander on duty

By Tech. Sgt. Ryan Labadens

The 926th Communications Flight plugged in a new commander; Capt. Christopher Marcella took command of the flight in November 2004.

Captain Marcella has 18 years of Air Force experience under his belt with 10 of those on active-duty. Originally from Los Angeles, Calif., he enlisted in the Air Force in December 1986, and served his first five years in security police at Vandenburg Air Force Base Calif., before retraining into communications.

His next assignment was radio maintenance school at Keesler AFB, Ms. After school he served as a missile radio technician, land mobile radio manager and radio maintenance technician.

After separating from active duty in 1996, Captain Marcella joined the AF Reserve as the radio maintenance NCO in charge at Hill AFB, Utah.

Captain Marcella took advantage of the many educational opportunities af-

forded by the Air Force; he earned two Community College of the Air Force degrees, one in security administration in 1990 and

the other in electronic technology in 1993, and his Bachelor of Arts in Social Science in January 1993.

He received his commission in April 1999 and became the officer in charge of the services flight at Hill AFB. He transferred to Dover AFB, Del., in 2000, where he worked as the OIC of plans and force management for four years before transferring to the 926th CF.

"I'm excited to be here," said Captain Marcella. "A friend of mine raved about the (926th Fighter) Wing, which was one of the things that motivated me to apply for the position."

"I would probably describe my command style as focused," the captain said. "Focused on taking care of the mission, the task and especially focused on taking care of the folks in whatever capacity, such as recognition and training, to name a few. I plan to keep the 926th CF one of the premier communications flights within the Air Force Reserve Command."



Capt. Christopher Marcella

Wing has new family support director

By Senior Airman Tallace Encalade

Your spouse is deployed halfway around the world, your car breaks down and you can't afford to fix it and the roof is leaking and you don't know who to call. What do you do? Where do you go?

Wing members and their families can call Mrs. Monica Stouffer, the director of family support for the 926th Fighter Wing.

"I like to call family support an information center," said Mrs. Stouffer.

She has been in the job since last fall and has quickly learned what's in place and what she needs.

"I'm working with my staff to come up with some new ideas to help our office improve our

mission of providing assistance to wing members and their families," she said.

Even though Mrs. Stouffer has a master's degree in clinical psychology, counseling is not provided at the wing. The family support staff can refer a wing member to a counselor who specializes in what is needed. "If you don't know who to call, we'll find it."

Mrs. Stouffer knows all too well the benefits of having a family support center on base. Not only has she worked in family support for five years, she has been a military spouse for six years.

"My husband was stationed in Germany, and when we first got there I needed employment information and family support assisted me."

Before coming to the 926th, Mrs. Stouffer worked in the family support office at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, and before that at the Army Community Service Center in Kaiserslautern, Germany.

Originally from Granite City, Ill., she was excited about coming to New Orleans.

"The opportunity to come here is an opportunity to learn new things, start a new challenge and serve a new population," she said. "My husband and I wanted to be in a larger city with more things to

do, more history, etc."

Mrs. Stouffer can be reached in the family support office Monday through Friday and UTAs at 678-3417.



Monica Stouffer

Safety and mission go hand in hand

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Jerry Mills

Vigilance is the key to making sure people and personnel are kept safe. For members of the 926th Fighter Wing, there are a group of people who are charged with continually keeping the wing vigilant on safety.

From giving a class on the proper use of fire extinguishers to following up and making sure weapons are stored safely, the 926th Fighter Wing's Safety Office staff advises wing members on a wide range of safety issues.

There are three different sections within the wing safety office.

"Our office sections are also known as the three disciplines," said Master Sgt. Kenny Volante, NCO in charge of ground safety. These three disciplines are flight, ground and weapons safety.

"We assess every unit in the wing safety program to make sure they (all the members of the wing) are adhering to the Federal and Air Force safety regulations," said Sergeant Volante.

Sergeant Volante said he doesn't know everyone's job, but, "You have to go in (a section) and recognize an unsafe condition." He uses guidelines set forth by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Air Force Office of Safety and Health.

"You always hear, 'Safety First,' but if you are already working safely, the mission will always be first. They both go hand in hand," said Sergeant Volante.

Around the wing, the high-hazard areas where safety is an issue are the flight line, explosives and administrative areas, said Sergeant Volante.

"We don't try to be the black hat (bad guys); we try to administer the wing commander's mishap prevention program." In administering the program, the safety office serves as a counseling role in helping to foster an environment of safety throughout the wing. "We are an extra set of eyes watching an operation," said Sergeant Volante.

Senior Master Sergeant Adrian Valentine, weapons safety manager, works to make sure units within the wing are work-



Senior Master Sergeant Adrian Valentine makes sure the fusible links on the ventilation system of a weapons storage igloo are still intact. If there is a fire outside the igloo, the fusible links are designed to break and keep the fire from entering the igloo.

ing in a safe environment with regards to weapons and explosives.

Managing the weapons safety program includes following up on safety discrepancies and making sure any deficiencies are corrected. The continuing goal of the program is to "maintain zero accidents and incidents involving munitions. The way

we can do that is to have a viable weapons safety program," said Sergeant Valentine.

Next time members from the wing safety office come by your office or work area, make sure to get all the suggestions and recommendations they have to offer.

Reservists switch to myPay; LES becomes paperless

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. – Jan. 1 was the deadline for Air Force reservists to start using myPay, the Internet method for managing pay.

If they didn't sign up, they may find it difficult to know how much they are getting paid. The Feb. 1 leave and earning statement is the last paper copy reservists will receive through the mail. The change for Air Force Reserve Command civilian employees depends on local bargaining obligations at their units, but eventually they too are to use myPay.

Under the myPay program, people view their LES online. If they don't have access to the Web at home or at work, they should contact their respective reserve or civilian pay offices.

To use their myPay account, reservists were supposed to activate their personal identification number by Dec. 31.

If reservists don't have a PIN or need a new one, they can obtain a temporary PIN through their reserve pay office or the local Air Force finance office, said Mike Bilbrey, chief of the management and finance branch at Headquarters AFRC.

"These offices have 'trusted agent' access and can assign a PIN," he said.

Another way to obtain a temporary PIN is by going to the myPay Web site at <https://mypay.dfas.mil> and selecting the "new pin" button on the homepage. It may take 10 business days from the date of the request for mail delivery of the new PIN.

In addition, reservists can ask for a new

PIN by fax or mail. They need to sign their request and give their full name, social security account number, a copy of their military photo identification and a daytime telephone number.

The fax number is (216) 522-5800 or DSN 580-5800. The mailing address is:

DFAS-Cleveland/Code PMMCCA, Attn: myPay, 1240 East 9th Street, Cleveland OH 44199-2055.

The new temporary PIN will contain the last five digits of the person's social security account number.

People should wait at least two business days before using their PIN if they got it by fax and four days if by mail. They will not receive confirmation that their PIN has changed. (AFRC News Service)

Pay, benefits increase for reservists

WASHINGTON – Military people will receive a pay hike. If they qualify, they'll get larger re-up bonuses.

Reservists activated for 90 days or more can apply for extra money for college and continuing family health care.

These and other benefits are in the fiscal 2005 National Defense Authorization Act. The president signed the \$421 billion defense bill into law Oct. 28.

The bill OK'd \$2.24 billion for Air Force Reserve Command to train reservists and run the command.

A 3.5 percent across-the-board pay raise starts Jan. 1.

Bonus authority goes up for people to enlist and reenlist in the Reserve. For example, people with no previous military service who qualify for a 6-year enlistment bonus may receive up to a maximum of \$10,000. The same bonus in 2004 was \$8,000. Other examples of the changes are available in the Selected Reserve 2005 Enlist-

ment/Reenlistment Bonuses chart. Reservists can take a lump sum payment or installments.

People who go to college full time using the current Selected Reserve Montgomery GI Bill draw a maximum of \$288 a month. That's equal to 29 percent of the active-duty program's \$1,004 per month.

Reservists activated to fight the war on terror can get more. Full-time students draw \$402 a month for 90 days to a year of service, \$602 for 1-2 years and \$803 for more than 2 years.

The act makes early and transitional health care permanent for reservists activated for contingency support. People called up for more than 90 days can earn eligibility for Tricare standard family health care. For each 90 days of contingency support since Sept. 11, 2001, they are eligible for a full year of coverage if they stay in the Selected Reserve.

"We welcome these new Tricare provisions as a means to improve active and reserve com-

ponent force readiness, and to enhance family member access to care," said Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs.

Some programs won't begin immediately. For example, Congress wants the new Tricare standard enrollment program to start by April 25, 2005.

Dr. Winkenwerder said his people are working on these provisions to ensure they start on time.

Another change permanently sets family separation pay at \$250 per month. Also fixed is the increase in hostile fire and imminent danger pay to \$225 per month.

Air reserve technicians who perform the same job as civilians and reservists can take up to 44 days of military leave for overseas duty. The old law limited the leave to peacetime work. The new law permits the use of the leave to fight the war on terror.

Reservists no longer need to

serve their last six years in the Air Force Reserve to qualify for a non-regular (reserve) retirement. Although reserve retirees can shop at the commissary and base exchange as soon as they retire, they don't start drawing retirement pay until age 60.

Also, the act speeds up concurrent-receipt payments for retirees rated 100 percent disabled. In the past, retirees had their pay docked dollar for dollar by the amount of disability payments the Department of Veterans Affairs paid them. Last year, Congress authorized a phase-in process that would eliminate the concurrent-receipt prohibition over a decade. (AFRC News Service)

(Editor's note: For more details about benefits for reservists, see the related Selected Reserve 2005 Reenlistment/Enlistment Bonuses chart and AFRC News Service Release No. 04143, Health care improves for reservists, families.)

Health care improves for reservists, families

WASHINGTON – Reservists and guardsmen are getting improved family health care for fighting the war on terror.

The National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal 2005 makes other reserve Tricare options permanent. Last year's defense bill temporarily authorized these benefits.

The president signed the act into law Oct. 28.

"Our reservists and guardsmen who are called to duty and their families deserve these great new benefits for their service to their country," said Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs.

Congress wanted to make it easier for military people in Air Force Reserve Command and the other reserve components to get health care.

In the past, reservists and their families could use Tricare for up to 90 days before the reservists were activated if they were scheduled to go on active duty for a contingency for more than 30 days. The new law makes this option permanent.

In addition, the Transitional Assistance Management Program became permanent. The program offers 180 days of transitional health care after reservists deactivate.

Under the Reserve Family Demonstration Project, families don't have to pay Tricare standard and extra deductibles if reservists

must be on active duty for more than 30 days. The law permits Tricare to pay nonparticipating providers up to 115 percent of its maximum allowable charge.

The project started Sept. 14, 2001, and was to end Nov. 1. Now, it ends Oct. 31, 2005.

People called up after Sept. 11, 2001, who served or will serve continuously in a contingency for 90 days or more, may buy standard healthcare coverage for themselves or the entire family after they demobilize. Coverage begins when the 180 days of transitional care ends.

To qualify, people must agree to serve for one year or more in the Selected Reserve after their active duty ends. They get one year of coverage for every year of commitment. If they got off active duty before Oct. 28 or get off within 180 days of that date, they have one year to sign up for the program.

Congress ordered the new Tricare standard enrollment program to start by April 26, 2005.

"We have already begun working on these provisions and will implement them on time," Dr. Winkenwerder said.

More information will be posted on the reserve affairs Web site at <http://www.defenselink.mil/ra>. (AFRC News Service from a Defense Department news release)

Reenlistments

Senior Master Sgt.

George Cunnikin, MXS

Bobby Evans, FW

Robert Owens, SFS

Master Sgt.

Laura Bernard, LRS

Judy Dorsey, AMX

Ronald King, LRS

Raymond Michels, MDS

Eric Rester, AMX

Hershel Slaton, CF

Tech. Sgt.

Juan Anderson, CES

Chance Babin, FW

Robert Carlan, AMX

Dean Landry, LRS

Allan Price, FW

Thomas Rhodes, AMX

Ray Boudreaux, CF

Henry Tilmans, AMX

Willie Williams, MXS

Staff Sgt.

Lakisha Jones, MDS

Philip Phelps, AMX

Serena Birch, CF

Senior Airman

Eric Barnes, MXS

Promotions

Chief Master Sgt.

Georgia Shaw, SFS

Senior Master Sgt.

Rona Janvier, MOF

Master Sgt.

Alvin Every, CES

Richard Gould, AMX

Kyle Graff, AMXS

Cornell Manuel, LRS

Tech. Sgt.

Donald Labarre, CES

Senior Airman

Matthew Bueche, MOF

Airman

Sierra Spencer, FS

Upcoming wing events for 2005

Month	Date	Event
March	19-20	UTA
April	4-8	Wing core annual tour days (7-9 mini phase I)
April	9-10	UTA
May	1	Vulnerability Assessment
	16-27	9th AF standardization evaluation (926th OG)
	21-22	UTA
June	11-12	UTA
	24-27	Water survival training (706th FS)
June/July	18-3	926th CES to Germany
July	2-17	926th CES to Germany
	16-17	UTA
August	20-21	UTA
September	17-18	UTA
		AFRC Unit Compliance Inspection/Health Services Inspection (14-18)/Maintenance Standardization and Evaluation Program



Short Snorts



Portal allows Airmen to chat with friends, family

Airmen at home station or a deployed location can now send instant messages to their friends or loved ones whenever they have access to the Internet. The Air Force recently implemented the "Friends and Family Instant Messenger" program, available through the Air Force Portal.

The Air Force has offered instant messaging through the portal for more than two years though the chat was limited to Airmen and civilian employees only. Under the new program, Airmen "sponsor" friends or family onto the portal by entering their e-mail addresses into the system. The portal then generates e-mails inviting them to log on and get their own specially configured account. Airmen can have up to five people added to the system.

To use the online chat, Airmen first need to get an Air Force Portal account. To sign up, visit <https://www.my.af.mil>.

For more information, go to the story on Air Force Link at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123009448>.

Pentagon, eight bases test new civilian personnel system

Elements of the Air Force headquarters and eight bases will be in the initial implementation of the National Security Personnel System. The eight bases are: Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.; Ellsworth AFB, S.D.; Lackland AFB, Texas;

March Air Reserve Base, Calif.; McConnell AFB, Kan.; Moody AFB, Ga.; Patrick AFB, Fla.; and Tinker AFB, Okla.

The DOD employees slated for conversion from the traditional civil service system will be included in groupings called spirals. Spiral 1 rolls out incrementally, with the first group of employees scheduled for implementation as early as July. Spiral 1 will be phased-in over 18 months. Congress authorized the new personnel system as part of the fiscal 2004 National Defense Authorization Act. For more information, go to the story on Air Force Link at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123009433>.

Strategic forces authorized service medal

The commander of U.S. Strategic Command has authorized the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal for all servicemembers assigned, attached or mobilized to the command for at least 30 consecutive days on or after Sept. 11, 2001.

The medal is awarded to people involved in supporting operations against terrorism anywhere in the world. It is worn after the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal. Both follow the Kosovo Campaign Medal. Only one award of this medal may be authorized for any individual; therefore, there are no service stars.

Tanzi becomes new AFRC vice commander

Maj. Gen. David E. Tanzi returned to Robins Air Force Base, Ga., in January to serve as vice commander of Air Force Reserve Command. He replaced Maj. Gen. John J. Batbie Jr., who retired. General Tanzi commanded 10th Air Force, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Texas, since March 2002. From February 1999 to March 2002, he was director of plans and programs at Headquarters AFRC.

Fly bye bye

An Air Force Reserve Command aircraft and crew from March Air Reserve Base, Calif., flew the last C-141 resupply mission in support of the U.S. Antarctic Program Feb. 4. The C-17, the Air Force's newest long-range

cargo aircraft, will replace the C-141, which has flown supplies and passengers to the research station for the past 39 years.

Holiday closings

During Federal holidays the rear gate to NAS JRB New Orleans is closed. Rear gate closure dates and times for the remainder of the year are:
* Memorial Day - 6 p.m. May 27 until 6 a.m. May 31
* Independence Day -6 p.m. July 1 until 6 a.m. July 5
* Labor Day- 6 p.m. Sept. 2 until 6 a.m. Sept. 6
* Columbus Day- 6 p.m. Oct. 7 until 6 a.m. Oct. 11
* Veterans Day- 6 p.m. Nov. 9 until 6 a.m. Nov. 11
* Thanksgiving - 6 p.m. Nov. 23 until 6 a.m. Nov. 28
* Christmas and New Year- 6 p.m. Dec. 23 until 6 a.m. Jan. 2, 2006

926th Fighter Wing
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