

Southern Flyer

908th Airlift Wing (Air Force Reserve Command), Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Ala., Vol. 43, Issue 1, January 2006



Col. Michael Underkofler, new 908 AW commander

Photo by Staff Sgt. J. Justin Pearce

Change of command set for Jan UTA

Col. Michael J. Underkofler assumes command of the 908th Airlift Wing from Col. Heath J. Nuckolls during a ceremony Saturday, Jan. 7. The change of command ceremony will be held at Squadron Officer College's Polifka Auditorium at 9:30 a.m.

Colonel Underkofler's move to Maxwell may spark a sense of déjà vu for him as well as many of the wing's more seasoned military and civilian personnel since he's definitely been here before, having served as director of operations and commander of the 908th's 357th Airlift Squadron from July 1998 to July 2002.

He returns to the familiar confines of Maxwell on the heels of commanding Keesler AFB, Miss.'s 403d Operations Group. The 403d Operations Group comprises the 403d Operations Support Flight, the 815th Airlift Squadron, the Flying Jennies, and the 53d Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, the Hurricane Hunters. These units fly the

C-130J, WC-130J, and the WC-130H aircraft and are responsible for tactical airlift, airdrop, aeromedical evacuation, and global weather reconnaissance.

A command pilot with more than 5,000 flying hours, Colonel Underkofler has flown global airlift missions including combat and combat support missions in Panama, Southwest Asia, Haiti and the Balkans. Additionally, he has flown several tropical storm and hurricane penetration missions in the WC-130H/J and was a pilot on the first crew to circumnavigate the globe in a C-130J.

Colonel Underkofler received his commission in 1984 through AFROTC at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

He served eight years on active duty before joining the Air Force Reserve in 1992. After his departure from active duty service, Colonel Underkofler started his air reserve technician career at Willow Grove Air Reserve Sta-

tion, Pa., as an instructor pilot, evaluator pilot, and chief of training for the 327th Airlift Squadron. He then served as the executive officer to the commander, 913th Airlift Wing and was selected for the AFRC Job Enrichment Program, completing a rotational assignment in the 913th Logistics Group after graduating from the USAF Aircraft Maintenance Officer Course. He then served as chief of standardization/evaluation for the 327 AS before heading to Maxwell in July 1998.

Colonel Underkofler is married to retired USAF Nurse Corps Lt. Col. Denise Proctor; they have two sons.

Departing commander Col. Heath J. Nuckolls will also return to familiar surroundings, as leaves the 908 AW to command the 94 AW at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga., where less than two years ago he commanded the 94th Operations Group. He will replace Brig. Gen. Thomas M. Stogsdill who will retire from the Air Force Reserve.

Air Force leaders release revised mission statement

By Master Sgt. Mitch Gettle
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON (AFPN) -- The realities of the world have changed dramatically since the creation of the Air Force in 1947 and continue to change almost daily.

With these changes in mind, Air Force leaders released a new mission statement Dec. 7 that defines the current and future direction of the Air Force.

"Today, our world is fast paced, constantly shifting and filled with a wide range of challenges," Secretary of the Air Force Michael W. Wynne and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley wrote in a joint Letter to Airmen. "Our mission is our guiding compass, and now more than ever we need it to be clear and precise."

The mission statement defines the "where and what" the

Air Force accomplishes on a daily basis:

The mission of the United States Air Force is to deliver sovereign options for the defense of the United States of America and its global interests -- to fly and fight in Air, Space, and Cyberspace.

The statement includes two new concepts, "sovereign options" and "cyberspace," which the secretary and chief defined.

They said having sovereign options is the essence of being a superpower.

"Our task is to provide the president, the combatant commanders, and our nation with an array of options ... options that are not limited by the tyranny of distance, the urgency of time, or the strength of our enemy's defenses," they said. "With one hand the Air Force can deliver humanitarian assistance to the farthest reaches of the globe, while with the

other hand we can destroy a target anywhere in the world."

The term cyberspace includes network security, data transmission and the sharing of information.

"We have quite a few of our Airmen dedicated to cyberspace ... from security awareness, making sure the networks can't be penetrated, as well as figuring out countermeasures," Secretary Wynne said. "The Air Force is a natural leader in the cyber world and we thought it would be best to recognize that talent."

Adversaries of the United States will use any method or venue necessary to contest America, and it is an Airman's calling to dominate air, space and cyberspace, the leaders said.

"If we can decisively and consistently control these commons, then we will deter countless conflicts," they said.

"If our enemies underestimate our resolve, then we will fly, fight, and destroy them."

Using past air power pioneers as examples of understanding the mission, they

said, "The Air Force's mission statement has evolved over time, but it does not change the nature of who we are or what we do."



Photo by Master Sgt. Ken Wright

Your spirit makes you great; I'll always be part of 908th

Happy New Year and welcome back. As the saying goes, "Time marches on" and so must I.



Col. Heath J. Nuckolls
908th Airlift Wing commander

As I look back on the past 20 months that I've been in the 908th, I am amazed at your accomplishments given the conditions that you had to operate under.

The wing achieved many firsts, both individually and as a wing – first time in the wing's history to have a mobilization of this size, first time to perform your duties in a wartime environment, and the first wing to have a wing operational readiness inspection under Air Mobility Command's new model. These are just a few and I could list many more, but I want to speak to something else aside from

the accomplishments. I want to talk about the spirit you have demonstrated.

Many of you have made tremendous personal sacrifices as have your families during the past two years. When you were called to do your duty, you answered and answered well. Without reservation you demonstrated one of the Air Force's core values – "Service before Self."

As if mobilization was not enough, many of you continued and still continue to serve in the AOR on extended manday tours after demobilization.

But it is not only about those that deployed, it is also about those who were

here at four in the morning or eleven at night in-processing and out-processing people, uploading or downloading pallets, coordinating Red Cross issues, and visiting with families of deployed members across the Southeast. It is that spirit that makes the 908th such an outstanding organization.

It has truly been my pleasure to serve with you during this exciting period of the unit's history. I know that you will continue to excel in the future and even though I have not been a part of the organization for very long, I will always consider myself a member of the 908th Airlift Wing.

I'm fortunate to return to this stellar unit, hospitable area

Three and one-half years ago I said farewell to the 908th Airlift Wing. It was tough on me and my family to leave because we loved being part of the 908th. My wife, Denise, had been stationed at Maxwell AFB twice and she had lived here longer than anywhere else. Montgomery was the only home my two little boys had ever known. Jake was only six months old when we moved here from Delaware. William was born at Baptist East Hospital less than a year after we arrived.

Right after William was born, Col. Betty Williams, our former 908 ASTS commander, came to the hospital nursery and welcomed him into the world and to Alabama. I think she rubbed some red clay into his heels.



Col. Michael J. Underkofler
908th Airlift Wing commander

Powerful, life-grounding clay, possibly taken from her rose garden. She also pronounced that Jake could consider himself a native son too even though he was born elsewhere. For five years Alabama and the 908th Airlift Wing were

very good to the Underkoflers.

That goodness continued long after I moved to Keesler AFB. Denise and the boys remained in Montgomery as she had one more year to serve before she could retire from the Air Force. During that time there were many crises on the home front that I couldn't help her resolve. Thankfully, our military and civilian friends often came to the rescue.

Although they were happy on the Gulf Coast, my boys kept asking me when they were going back home to Alabama. I'd try to ease their homesickness by telling them Alabama would always be in their hearts. For William, I added that the Alabama clay on his heels could never be washed away, no matter where we lived.

When Hurricane Katrina was forecasted to pound us in Mississippi, it was an easy decision to evacuate to Montgomery. We already had a security blanket here.

The storm left our home uninhabitable for the children so they didn't return to the Gulf Coast. During the stress of figuring out what we were going to do, packing up our belongings, finding temporary living quarters, and enrolling the boys in a new school, the goodness of our civilian and military

friends in the greater Montgomery area was overwhelming. The offers of help and support we received were just what we needed. I know this was genuine goodness, especially by the 908th folks, since my return hadn't been announced.

Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would be allowed to return to the 908th. It is practically unheard of to return from where you came. We believe we're extremely fortunate to serve the men and women of the 908th as you have continuously distinguished yourselves as a premier Air Force Reserve Command unit. I'm proud of all your recent accomplishments.

I am well rested and ready to take on new challenges. More important, I hope to return the goodness and model of service you all have shown me, my family, and our nation. Every day I will strive to make sure we effectively maximize our time, talents, and commitment to excellence.

I don't know if it is the Alabama clay that is the source of goodness and selfless service, but I do think it helps us all with our sense of belonging. I believe it's on my heels and on the heels of all us who serve here in the 908th Airlift Wing, no matter where we reside.



Commander, 908th Airlift Wing

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If you haven't done so already, now's time to prepare for SAV

The distinguished general and first president George Washington once said, "If we are wise, let us prepare for the worst." When tossing thoughts about leftover Thanksgiving turkey and a joyous Christmas holiday season,



By Maj. Troy Vonada
908th AW Performance
Planning Officer

I'm sitting here pondering the 22nd Air Force Staff Assistance Visit and it reminds me of the last battle we had (as a Wing) that ended barely a year ago – the HQ AMC Inspector General Exercise (IGX/ORI). For those of us who have had the luxury (or misfortune) of living through numerous compliance inspections, we've come to realize that to think of them as anything less than a battle could be foolish, or certainly unwise.

By the time you get the chance to read this, we'll have only two UTA's and less than 60 days to make final preparations for the visit. That gives us precious little time to uncover every stone, correct problems we know about and set up processes to solve other

known issues. Self-inspection checklists are paramount in our preparation phase. I urge you to find the current version, run them extensively and turn them into your Self-inspection monitor by the end of January. When running your respective checklist, be HONEST, as it can save you much embarrassment in the future. If problems are identified, come up with solutions to fix them, load them into SITS (Self-inspection Tracking System) and track them through to closure. By doing so, you'll improve the stature of your unit Self-inspection program and ensure preparedness for the SAV.

Fast becoming one of the "old guys" around here, I'm one who believes we

should be ready for inspection each day of the week. Our programs should always be in tip-top shape and open to scrutiny at a moments notice. That being said, we all know it is a rare feat when that is the case. We tend to get lackadaisical in program management and let the day-to-day business of running a wing get in our way in our quest for strong programs. Let me be one of the first to say, "Let's dot every I and cross every T." Doing anything less would not be prudent and may even be the cause of CLAs (Career Limiting Acts)!

In these last few months, I would ask that you use your time wisely. Many traditional reservists may have extra time on

their hands and be available for additional duty days. Take advantage of their availability. Make sure your people know how important the SAV is to you, to them and the wing as a whole.

To those fairly new to the Wing, let me share that we are accustomed to winning. We hate losing and we're out to make sure that we win and we're willing to expend the time, effort and dollars to ensure success. So, please join me and the rest of the team as we go to battle in preparation for the SAV.

In closing, let the wise words of General Washington reverberate throughout the camp...



By Chaplain (Capt.) Jamie
Danford
908th AW chaplain

Want to keep resolutions? Ask God for help

Have you given much thought to New Year Resolutions this year? It is often said that resolutions are the most said – and least kept promises that we make. I believe when we make them we have good intentions – we truly want to change a habit or start a

new tradition; however, reality sets in and we find ourselves back in our ruts.

One reason we don't succeed in our efforts is that we fail to ask for help. We approach the problem on our own power – and find ourselves wanting. This year when we make our

resolutions we need to go to God and ask for his strength and help.

We need to say a prayer – kind of like this one: "Dear God, I want the new year to be different for me." Now spell out in prayer some of the changes you'd like to see. And close this

way: "Dear Lord, I know that I'm going to need a lot of help for this. So right now I place myself in your hands. Help me to receive Your strength. Amen."

May 2006 be a blessed year for you and your family.

Take precautions to ensure taking prescription drugs properly

Taking prescription drugs without a doctor's approval and supervision can be a dangerous -- even deadly -- decision

Prescription drugs are medicines doctors prescribe to their patients to treat health conditions and are not harmful if used properly and only under a doctor's supervision. However, taking prescription

drugs without a doctor's approval and supervision can be a dangerous -- even deadly -- decision.

Commonly Abused Prescription Drugs?

Commonly abused prescription drugs belong to one of three categories, although there are many other categories of drugs:

Opioids - Often prescribed to treat pain and sometimes referred to as narcotics; include morphine, codeine, OxyContin, Darvon, Vicodin, and Demerol.

CNS Depressants - Used to treat anxiety and sleep disorders. Include: Barbiturates: Mebaral and Nembutal and Benzodiazepines: Valium, Librium, Xanax, Halcion, and ProSom.

Stimulants - Prescribed to

treat narcolepsy, attention-deficit hyper-activity disorder (ADHD), and obesity; include: Dexedrine and Ritalin

Medicine Cabinet Precautions

Clean your medicine cabinet out regularly and discard:

- Medications that have expired or more than 2 years old

- "Left-over" prescription medications from previous illnesses

- Aspirin if it gives off a vinegary odor

- Ointments that may have separated or changed colors

- Leftover eyewash or drops

Make sure you:

- Read the product label and any patient information carefully before taking any new medicine

- Think about possible

risks and side affects before taking any OTC medicines, herbs or supplements that may interact with other medicines you are taking. If you have any questions, talk to your physician or pharmacist

- Take all medications in their prescribed or recommended dosages

- Don't take someone else's prescription medicine

- Store medicines in their original containers

- Store medicines according to instructions

- Use products with child-resistant packaging

- Keep all medications out of the reach of children

- Get informed, read as much information as you can.

For more information go to: <https://www.mil/trueblue.afrc.af.mil/trueblue>

A final word about prescription drugs, "Documentation from your physician or other appropriate provider needs to be provided to the ASTS physical examination section (Bldg. 711, medical records room) for inclusion in each member's military medical record to justify use of any prescription medication," said Maj. Charles Stresino, 908 ASTS associate administrator and drug testing program manager.



Wing swings into holiday season

The spirit of giving was in evidence all around the wing as unit members again demonstrated their commitment to caring. Leading the way were the unit first sergeants who made sure the 908th 'took care of its own' by sponsoring the Christmas Clearinghouse.

The First Sergeants' Christmas Clearinghouse assists wing families by providing relief in the form of gift cards to members in financial need. Not to be outdone, the 908 AW Company Grade Officers' Council sponsored a food drive for area people in need during the upcoming holiday season. The CGOC collected 600 pounds of canned and non-perishable food items and delivered them to The Salvation Army.

Similarly, the Top 3 Association took on the task of providing the residents of the Montgomery and Tuskegee Veterans Hospitals with personal items for Christmas. The two facilities house approximately 200 residents. The Top 3 group solicited donations of small, personal-sized items such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, combs, brushes, deodorant, shaving cream, disposable razors, lotion, shampoo/conditioner, powder, prepaid

calling cards, etc. and delivered the items to VA Hospital residents.



Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Lynn Whited

Capt. Will Magee, left, and Chaplain (Capt.) Jamie Danford load up donations destined for the Salvation Army.



AMXS commander Maj. Joe Friday, left, 908 AW Command Chief Amos Moore, center, and SFS first sergeant Senior Master Sgt. Don Johnson serve dining hall patrons.



Photos by Jeff Melvin

908 AW Top 3 Association members, Senior Master Sgt. Phillip Watkins, left, Master Sgt. Nancy Butler, center, and Master Sgt. Oran Hudson fill gift bags with toiletries for area veterans.



Unit first sergeants sort out and tally the money collected following the Christmas Clearinghouse. The clearinghouse funds are used to make the holidays brighter for unit members.



Master Sgt. Val Knight, Tech. Sgt. Flo Walker, and Master Sgts. Beverly Williams and Jodie Byrd show their support for area veterans by volunteering as servers for a luncheon for vets, prepared and hosted by the Montgomery Regional VA branch. Students from Selma High School

participating in a medical vocation training program assisted the 908th volunteers.

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ons.



ommander's call for their annual Christmas Clearinghouse project. The
bers who may be in need.



Tech Sgt. DeAnte Houston, one of the unit members who volunteered to help at the VA Luncheon for Vets, shows his appreciation to veterans by simply saying, "Thank you."



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Ben Bloker

LANGLEY AFB, Va. (AFPN) -- Crew chief Staff Sgt. Adam Murtishaw guides an F-22A Raptor into its parking space after a Dec. 14 mission. The 27th Fighter Squadron earned initial operating capability today, which means the stealth jet is combat ready.

It's a wrap

F-22A Raptor goes operational

LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. (AFPN) – The F-22A Raptor – Air Force's most advanced weapon system – is ready for combat, Air Force officials announced here today.

In reaching initial operational capability, the Raptor is certified ready for operational use.

The first combat-ready Raptors are flying with the 27th Fighter Squadron of the 1st Fighter Wing here. The squadron's deployment capability is a 12-ship package designed to execute air-to-air and air-to-ground missions.

Declaring the transformational stealth fighter "IOC" means the Raptor's proven capabilities are available for combat and supported by a properly trained and equipped force. It also means the aircraft is qualified to fly homeland defense missions.

"F-22A IOC means our warfighters now have an unprecedented lethal mix of air-to-air and air-to-ground capabilities at their disposal," said Gen. Ronald E. Keys, commander of Air Combat Command. "The Raptor's cutting edge technology brings us continued joint air dominance despite advancing enemy threats."

Reaching the IOC milestone culminates a collaborative 25-year effort between various Air Force organizations and industry partners. The road to the IOC included a step-by-step process. The F-22A System Program Office first turned Air Force requirements into a successful acquisition program. Then there was developmental flight test and evaluation, simulation and ground testing at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., and Eglin AFB, Fla. There was engine testing at Arnold AFB, Tenn., and missile testing at Holloman AFB, N.M., and over the Pacific Test Range. Also, there was tactics development at Nellis AFB, Nev., pilot and maintenance training at Tyndall AFB, Fla., and deployability here.

"The F-22A fulfills a long quest to bring fifth-generation capabilities of stealth, supercruise and precision to the warfighter today and 30 years from today," General Keys said. "Now that we have met our first promised milestone of a fully capable, multi-mission platform ready for combat, we are already focused on furthering our integrated tactics development, refining our deployability, growing and training our force."

The general said, "To add to what we learned on our successful first operational deployment to the Utah Test and Training Range to drop JDAMs (joint direct attack munition), fly against double-digit SAMs (surface-to-air missiles) at Nellis and work (close air support) with F-16 FAC-As, we will conduct our first routine peacetime exercise deployment by taking 12 Raptors to Alaska in June for Northern Edge."



Photos by Jeff Melvin



Above, veteran 908 AW intramural basketball player Clarence "Jr." Thomas shows the shooting form that makes him a perennial top scorer. Left, Willie Johnson scores a lay up. Below, Damion Howell drives to the basket.

Hoopsters hope to hold b-ball title

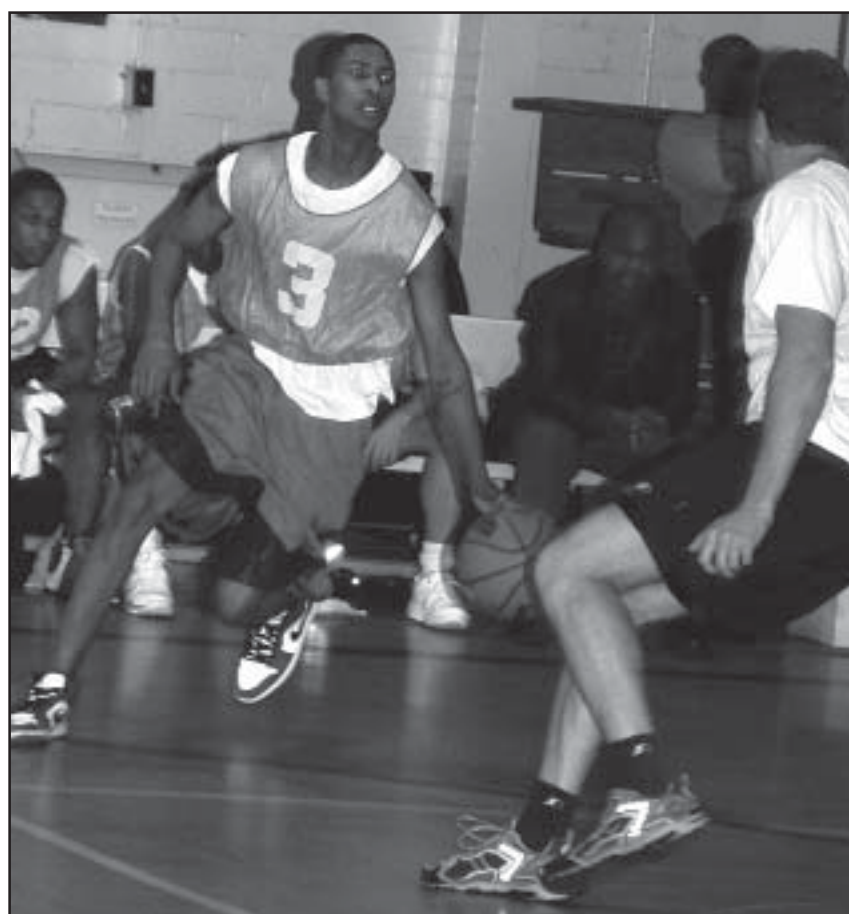
Heading into the holiday break, the 908 AW men's intramural basketball team is undefeated and looking like a lock to either retain their base title or at the least contend for the throne. With a solid blend of maturity and youth, including most of last year's top players, the 908th squad is leading their division.

Coach Chris Rush said his hoopster's "chances of repeating are pretty good".

The keys, Rush said, are: play smart, stay healthy, force turnovers on defense, and share the ball on offense.

The 908th squad expects to get plenty of competition from last year's runners-up, the Base Fire Department, who is also undefeated.

"We beat them last year for the championship so our game against them Jan. 9, 7 p.m. at the Maxwell AFB gym will be big. It should be for first place," Coach Rush said.



Take Note

Congratulations to the following people:

Promotions

....to Senior Master Sgt.
James Lowery II, ASTS
to Airman First Class
Gregory Nikonchuk, MXS

Retirements

Master Sgt. Carl Owens, AMXS
Master Sgt. James Parten Jr., AMXS
Tech. Sgt. Myers Hawkins III, MXS
Tech. Sgt. Joseph Roberts, AMXS



Grad schoolers get TA increase

Effective immediately for FY 06 Tuition Reimbursement, the graduated degree tuition assistance (TA) fiscal year cap for Air Force Reserve personnel will increase from \$3,500 to \$4,500.

Any questions, contact Tech. Sgt. Jo Kaestner, wing education and training manager, at (334) 953-6678/6771.

ARPC makes Reservist medical-dental records easier to get

DENVER (AFPN) -- The Air Reserve Personnel Center will move the medical and dental records of some reservists to the active-duty base where they serve as part of a test to streamline operations. The process, initiated two years ago, will help reduce duplicate copies of the records. This will decrease work and increase efficiency, officials said.

The change will help individual mobilization augmentees. Historically, those individual's records have been maintained at the personnel center. With no medical or dental information available at base health care facilities, just getting an annual Reserve Component Periodic Health Assessment was difficult. So officials devised a plan to solve the problem, which they plan to complete by December 2006.

Osan Air Base, South Korea; Buckley Air Force Base, Colo.; and Peterson AFB, Colo., will be the test bases. Remaining bases will start getting records in March 2006.

The decentralization supports the assistant secretary of defense for health affairs requirement that outpatient medical records be available at the point of service.

CE announces annual award winners

908th Civil Engineers' Master Sgt. Herbert Pfeiffer and Senior Airman Christopher Powell display the plaques they received honoring them as the unit's Senior NCO and Airman of the Year, respectively. Sergeant Pfeiffer, a plumber, and Airman Powell, an electrician, were selected for the unit's top awards along with firefighter Tech. Sgt. Christopher Foley.



Mission Support Squadrons get new commanders

Maj. Eugene B. "Ben" Smith III, left, and Christopher Simpson speak to well-wishers at change of command ceremonies for the 908th Logistics Readiness and Security Forces Squadrons, respectively. Major Smith assumed command of LRS from Lt. Col. Sue Curran. Major Simpson, the only newcomer among the group, replaced Smith as security forces commander. He comes to the unit from Headquarters AFRC Security Forces where he served as anti-terrorism and force protection officer. Collaborating with the host security forces shouldn't be difficult, turns out Major Simpson and the 42nd SFS commander were classmates at the Citadel.

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