

Southern Flyer

908th Airlift Wing, Air Force Reserve Command, Maxwell AFB, Ala., Vol. 45, Issue 5, May 2008

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Need help with financial matters? Many sources of help are available

By Col. Michael J. Underkofler
Commander, 908th Airlift Wing

There were three family things my mother told us that Underkofler children weren't allowed to talk about outside our home; they were politics, religion, and money. At the risk of having my mother bawl me out, I

want to talk to you about one of those: money.

I have several reasons for discussing the normally taboo subject.

First, while I know and appreciate that you serve our nation for several reasons, patriotism being one of the strongest,

eventually we all are going to have to hang up our uniform and retire. I want your retirement years to be secure and just as rewarding as your years in the military. Second, your finances are important to our unit's combat readiness and combat focus. And finally, the military legacy you leave your family can be greatly enhanced by financial decisions you make today.

While I am not a certified financial advisor, I can tell you what rank you are or the salary you make does not determine your overall financial health or the level of comfort you will have in retirement.

If you have any doubts, pick up a popular financial magazine where you can read articles about real singles and families. Financial profiles in each is-

sue always seem to highlight some high wage earners who are living paycheck to paycheck, while others feature moderate wage earners who live comfortably and have a systematic plan to help them meet their financial goals.

Again, at the risk of making my mother angry, I saw this in my own family. I had one set of dual income, professional, college-educated grandparents who lived the lifestyle of the grasshopper in Aesop's fable.

The other set typified that of the ant. Coming from recent immigrant families, the latter didn't have the benefit of much formal education but lived within their means, supported their church, sent their children to private school and college, and retired with a tidy nest egg despite having only one modest salary.

I fully realize that how my family and how you spend your money is a completely private and individual decision. But that doesn't mean you can't talk about it, seek help from others, and utilize every available program the military offers to help meet your financial needs or goals.

Sadly, each year we see incredibly talented and hardworking Airmen who get themselves into trouble with their finances. In some of the worst cases, our Airmen could not gain or maintain a security clearance. Losing a fully qualified Airman due to financial challenges that could have been avoided or mitigated isn't a very good return on investment for the American taxpayer.

We've also had Airmen who have become distracted while deployed because of financial challenges at home. The war on terrorism is stressful

enough, but worrying about overdue bills isn't something that allows you to be combat-focused and may prevent you from being the wingman we all need.

Whether you are the grasshopper or the ant, we can help you make better and more informed decisions about programs and services available to you. For example, a huge component of our two-day Airman Readiness Workshop is financial readiness. We talk about everything from emergency loans to your participation in the Thrift Savings Plan, Individual Retirement Accounts, college loans and scholarships, and family budgeting. Our next class is May 17-18. See your first sergeant or commander about attending.

Our own family readiness staff or that of the 42nd ABW stands ready to help you too. Your unit first sergeant or the 908th AW command chief can also get you the assistance you need. Be sure to ask questions of our staff before you deploy as there are many educational, tax, and financially beneficial programs available.

In years to come at 908th AW reunions I look forward to hearing stories from you about how your retirement check enabled you to hike through the Dolomite Mountains on vacation, that you used your expanded GI benefits to learn a new trade, how you got your kids scholarships through a military organization, bought a car for your grandkid with some of your TSP earnings, or something as equally rewarding. You and your family give up so much because of your service, don't let them needlessly come up short financially.



Colonel Underkofler



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jay Ponder

Col. Michael J. Underkofler Commander, 908th Airlift Wing

Lt. Col. Jerry W. Lobb Chief, Public Affairs

Jeffery Melvin Deputy Chief/Editor

Staff Sgt. Jay Ponder Public Affairs Specialist

Cover photo:

Tech. Sgt. Angela Oden, NCOIC of the traffic management section, shows the section's Airmen how to safely load, unload, handle, and transport hazardous materials on the forklift. See Pages 10 and 11 for more about 908th Logistics Readiness Squadron.

Southern Flyer

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From combat flyer to combat slide flipper

Wing exec set to end nearly 30-year career

By Lt. Col. Jerry Lobb
908th AW Public Affairs

Longtime unit member, wing executive officer, Lt. Col. Carl Poteat, retires May 1.

Many current members of the wing were not born, or were in grade school, when then-1st Lieutenant Poteat joined the 908th Tactical Airlift Group in July 1981. The Auburn graduate had previously served a brief stint in the Navy in 1974-1975, before leaving that service in the post Vietnam drawdown.

Following his departure from the Navy's aviation branch, Poteat wrote for The Prattville Progress newspaper for five years. His writing skills caught the attention of a fellow church member who asked if he would be interested in taking the newly created public affairs position with the group.

1981 was a big year for Poteat. Not only did he begin a new career, but also married his wife, Susan. He returned from their honeymoon to find a letter informing him of his acceptance into the ART program and commissioning paperwork in his mailbox.

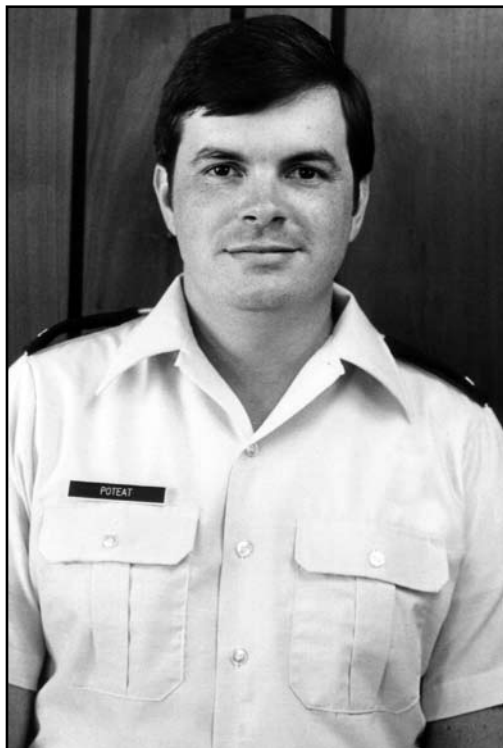
Serving as the public affairs officer from 1981 until 1984, Poteat organized an open house; worked media for the transition from the C-7 Caribou to the E model C-130s. His last "PA" task for that period was taking a group of local civic leaders to the Lockheed plant in Marietta, Ga., to see the new H model aircraft on the assembly line.

In July 1984, he became the chief of the Consolidated Base Personnel Office, a position he would hold for a decade. He entered the personnel field as a trainee. His trainer was then Senior Master Sgt. (later Chief) Ezera "Mac" McElwee.

"I really then understood that it is impossible to overestimate the importance of a quality enlisted force. Mac knew everything and at first I knew little or nothing."

Poteat became the military personnel flight and mission support squadron commander in 1992, overseeing the conversion of the 908th to a wing in 1994. In 2000, he transitioned to be the deputy support group commander and senior ART on the support side.

On the fateful day of Sept. 11, 2001, he was sent home midmorning to be



Then-1st Lt. Carl Poteat at his first UTA



Lt. Col. Carl Poteat on the eve of his retirement

prepared for the night shift that evening. "About 11 that night the base requested support from our security forces. I think 52 of them reported ready to go to work at 4 a.m. on the 12th. I was really proud of our folks and the way they responded."

He entered his current job as wing exec in December 2003. Although he was "less than enthusiastic," as former 908th AW Commander Col. James Stewart, the man who engineered the move, described Poteat's reaction to the move, the former naval aviator excelled in his new position.

"Like the true southern gentleman that he is (obviously because he is a War Eagle), he acquiesced. As history has proven, he was exactly the right person for that job. He knew the personnel business, was a strong writer, and most importantly, provided stability to the front office for all those young wing commanders coming through. It was my distinct pleasure to serve with Carl in the best C-130 wing in AFRC," Colonel Stewart, now the command inspector general, said.

Poteat cracked that he started his military career with the ambition of becoming a combat flyer and finished up being a "combat" slide flipper.

Reflecting on a career that spanned almost 29 years, Colonel Poteat said, "Throughout my career I've wondered why people serve as they do in the reserve. People give up a lot of time and

drive hours to come and serve here. One night during a period when lodging was part of my responsibilities I watched at the front desk as people arrived to get their rooms. The first thing many did was to find out the room numbers of friends/co-workers so they could get together. I think it is the camaraderie, the sense of kinship that we share. That is why people sacrifice and continue to stay."

"We've all worked together and always had a family atmosphere. I've enjoyed that and will certainly miss it."

Poteat now plans to spend some time caring for his elderly parents and warns that we shouldn't be too surprised if he reappears in another job somewhere on base.

He'll be gone but not forgotten said current 908th AW commander Col. Michael J. Underkofler.

"We are losing a lot of corporate knowledge and wisdom as Lt. Col. Poteat walks out the door. During his 27+ years in this unit he has been involved in about every kind of issue anyone can imagine. On a personal note, Lt. Col. Poteat has guided me through two assignments here in the 908th AW. He has been the moral and professional compass of the unit for a lot of years, making decisions based on what is right, even if not popular. Without a doubt he is the finest commissioned officer I have ever served with."

Healthy Airmen

You can predict your medical future

By Lt. Col. Carol Anders,
Nurse Practitioner, 908th Aeromedical Staging
Squadron

This is the last in the three-part series on helping to predict your medical future. The focus this month will be the "baby boomers," that 50-64 year old age group.

The article will also briefly mention the 65 and older age group for those of you caring for aging parents. Remember you cannot change your age, your DNA or your culture, but you can predict your health by knowing what to assess at what age and to detect early on those risks that can affect your health as you age.

One of my patients once said, "If I had known I was going to live this long I would have taken better care of myself when I was younger." Those of you in your 20s and 30s may not think that this article applies to you. However, knowing what lies ahead as one begins to age helps you prepare for a long and healthy life. Those of you in this age group may be shocked to find that more screening is going to happen. If you do not have a primary health care provider, I strongly encourage you to start looking for one NOW.

50-64 Years Old

Age 50 is the magic age at which most doctors begin to do health screenings for several diseases even if you are healthy and do not appear to be at risk. If you did not start the screenings mentioned last month they need to be started NOW and continued throughout life. The risk everyone has at this age is age itself. While male versus female screenings decrease, the ones for both sexes increase.

Everyone in this age group needs to be aware of four areas of concern:

1) **Cardiovascular Risks:** These remain high priority for this age group.

Blood pressure, BMI, abdominal girth and cholesterol screening mentioned in last month's article become more important. Women especially should not make light of cholesterol screening especially after menopause when their risk of heart disease rapidly approaches that of men. For both men and women the test should be done at age 50 and every five years

after that or more often if there is a family history or other risk factors.

2) **Blood glucose (sugar):** Should be tested yearly especially if member has increased BMI and/or a history of diabetes in the family.

3) **Cancer Screening:** Colon cancer screening is a must for people in this age group regardless of family history. **Colonoscopy** is the most well known screening. In this procedure, a long, thin tube with a camera attached is used to view the colon. If there is no family history for colon cancer the first one should be done at 50 and repeated again at 60. If there is a family history these tests may have started earlier and should be done

at least every 5 years. **Flexible sigmoidoscopy** looks at the lower third of the colon and can be performed once every 5 years, but should not replace the colonoscopy.

Barium enema: is an X-ray exam of



the large intestine; it is less precise than the colonoscopy. **Fecal Occult Blood Test:** is used to detect blood in the stool. However, there is some disagreement as to whether or not it should be used as the only screening tool for colon cancer. Other types of screening for various types of cancer other than breast and prostate (which will be discussed later) are not recommended unless you have a family history.

4) **Flu Shot** is a must for people in this age group. The American Academy of Family Physicians recommends that everyone over the age of 50 receive one annually. It must be the shot and **NOT** Flu Mist. There have been no

UPCOMING EVENTS

May

2 — Clergy Day

2 — Holocaust Memorial Service, 3 p.m., Chapel No. 2 (near O'Club), holocaust survivor Max Steinmetz is the guest of honor

3 — Enlisted Call, 4 p.m., Maxwell Events Center (formerly Enlisted Club)

3 — Officers' Call, 4 p.m., Officers' club

June

6 — Employer Day

7 — Wing Commander's Call, 3:30 p.m., Polifka Auditorium,

Bldg. 1403

July

7-12 — League of United Latin American Citizens National Convention & Exposition, Washington, DC

12 — 908th AW Chief's Group bowling tournament

14-18 — Federally Employed Women National Training Program — "Moving On — Moving Up," Anaheim, Calif. For more information about FEW, visit www.few.org

17-20 — Tuskegee Airmen Inc. 37th annual convention, Philadelphia, Pa.

studies of the spray on people over the age of 49, so it is unclear if it works as well as the injection in this age group.

Women in this group have two areas of concern.

1) **Breast Cancer:** By the age of 50 women should be having yearly mammograms even if there is no family history of breast cancer. Despite all of the improved means of spotting breast cancer, deaths remain high among women over the age of 50. Women with family histories of either breast or ovarian cancer should get their BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes checked for mutations linked to both diseases.

2) **Osteoporosis:** Much is said about this in the media. Women at risk are those over the age of 65, those who have a family history and/or low body weight. Early screening is not a bad idea especially if your daily diet is low in dairy products.

Men in this age group have one screening that is a source of much controversy. PSA (prostate-specific antigen) screening is a blood test. It is often used with a digital rectal exam. While the risk of cardiovascular disease is greater concern than prostate cancer for men, it seems that it gets more attention. Prostate cancer screening is a must in men with family history. The reason for the controversy is that prostate cancer screening can result in false positives. If the test is positive it must be followed by a biopsy. Consult with your health care provider for his or her recommendation. The tests are simple and while there may be false positives early detec-

tion is the key to success in treatment.

65 Years and Older

While the risk for more diseases is higher in this age group, seniors may not need as many tests as before.

Women still need mammograms until age 70-85, but many health care providers stop them because it may be easier to live with breast cancer at this age than to undergo chemotherapy and surgery. One group does benefit from them and that is breast cancer survivors over the age of 65. While this is still a highly controversial issue, work with your health care provider to determine what is best considering your family history.

DXA (Dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry): Is the gold standard for osteoporosis screening. All women age 65 should be checked. If the results are good then wait at least two years before the next screening. **PAP smear** can be discontinued if you have a history of negative or normal results since your teen years. Of course if there are symptoms such as vaginal discharge or pelvic pain, these require immediate attention.

Men age 65 to 75 who have a history of smoking are not being screened for abdominal aortic aneurysms. The AAA ultrasound detects these and can result in repair before these rupture and cause death.

Everyone in the age group needs eye exams annually, ear exams and hearing test, TSH (thyroid) blood test, cholesterol screening and Alzheimer's screening.

Eye exams become important for not only simple vision but for glaucoma

and cataracts. Both of these are treatable disease processes that can extend one's vision. Ear exams and hearing test can add to quality of life. The dramatic hearing loss may be caused by a plug of earwax that can be easily removed.

The TSH is a simple blood test that can be used to diagnose the function of the thyroid gland. While not all health care providers agree on its validity, this health care provider believes that periodic screening is vital in the older population, especially if there are changes in one's mental status.

Cholesterol screening now need to be done every four years instead of every five and then skipped altogether after the age of 80.

Often called "old timers disease," Alzheimer's disease is devastating to the family and frightening to the sufferer. Do not expect Alzheimer's screening to be a part of the regular physical. Early diagnosis is a must. While there is still no cure, treatment may help to slow the progression of the disease. Ask for screening if you have a family history or suspect early symptoms—short-term memory loss, increased difficulty with daily tasks. The tests consist of doing various tasks each of which carry a scored value.

It is the hope of this writer that you have read each of these articles and will follow at least some of the advice given so that you can live a long and healthy life. (Material for this article came from "A Guide to Predicting Your Medical Future," Newsweek: 21 January 2008 by Roxana Popescu and Mary Carmichael)



Photo by Jennifer Duncan

Med tech meets Secretary of State

908th AES's Senior Master Sgt Thomas Haney, a flight medical technician, shakes hands with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on the Maxwell AFB flightline April 14. Next to the sergeant is 1st Lt. Derek Shehee, a pilot with the 357th AS. Air University officials conferred an honorary Doctor of Letters degree upon Secretary Rice for her academic achievements and contributions to international relations and national security. Haney, Shehee and four other 908th Airmen who had deployed previously were among the select group of base personnel picked to greet the secretary.



Photo by Maj. Robert Tucker

Desert Duty

Above, loadmaster Staff Sgt. Adam Nixon, 357th AS, directs the loading of cargo on-board a unit C-130 at a deployed location. Right, flight engineer Master Sgt. Shawn Lisle flashes a bright smile while refueling a unit C-130 at a deployed location. Sergeants Nixon and Lisle along with about 60 other 908th Airmen returned home in mid-March following a six-week deployment to Southwest Asia providing support for Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 908th AW was first C-130 unit in Air Force Reserve Command to deploy under a new voluntary rotation system. While in theater, the 908th AW flew about 320 flying hours and 135 sorties, transporting people and cargo.



Courtesy photo

Good to be back

Family members, friends, wing officials and co-workers greet 908th AW returning from deployment to Southwest Asia to provide support for Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Photo by Lt. Col. Jerry Lobb



Photo by Lt. Col. Jerry Lobb



Photo by Jeff Melvin

By Jeff Melvin
908th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

The Air Force Reserve's turned 60 last month and to celebrate the milestone the 908th AW had a party replete with ceremonies, a military band ensemble, children's games, food and a visit by Jett Williams, daughter of country music's first superstar, Hank Williams Sr.

President Harry Truman formally established the AF Reserve on April 14, 1948, about six months after the birth of the Air Force. Like the Air Force, the Air Force Reserve filled its ranks with Airmen who had served in the Army Air Corps during World War II and returned to their communities. Those early Citizen Airmen, like their successors of today, were eager to serve the nation.

Former longtime 908th member Brig. Gen. Edward Crowell, mobilization assistant to the Air University commander, presided over the anniversary celebration. General Crowell and 908th AW Commander Col. Michael Underkofler noted the Air Force Reserve's transformation over its 60-year history from a strategic, or standby, force standing ready as replacements during wartime mobilization to today's Air Force Reserve role as an operational force, "An Unrivaled Wingman," engaged every day in the Air Force's operations around the globe.

Colonel Underkofler said that although much has changed much remains the same, today's Citizen Airmen, like those of yesteryear, serve with courage, commitment and confidence and deserve our thanks.

Following the introductory remarks, two ceremonies took place that aptly illustrate that commitment and courage – two unit members renewed their enlistments and six Airmen who had been awarded the Air Force Combat Action Medal for their actions while deployed received their medals in front of a packed hangar of co-workers, families, friends and guests attending the anniversary celebration. The medal recognizes Air Force members who were engaged in air or ground combat off base in a combat zone.

"Humbling," is how one of the combat action medal recipients, Lt. Col. Blaine Bateman, described the presentation.

Being pinned by General Crowell, a man he greatly admires, and being part of the Air Force Reserve 60th anniversary celebration made for a memorable moment for the colonel and was a source of great pride, he said.

"What I really like was that some of the people that I worked with in the theater were

there," Colonel Bateman said. "Those of us who received the medals had a lot of help from people who put their lives on the line everyday to help accomplish the mission."

A ceremonial cake cutting by the oldest and youngest of the wing capped the official activities and preceded Jett Williams landing aboard one of the wing's aircraft.

Ms. Williams was on hand to participate in a ceremony marking the change of the wing C-130 cargo planes radio call sign to "Hank," in homage to her father.

Wing aviators had wanted to change its radio call sign, each unique to a unit, to something more distinctive and representative of Alabama. Some of their first choices, like "Bama," were already in use so the unit settled on "Hank," which recognizes not only Hank Williams Sr. but another well-known state native, Mobile's baseball great Henry "Hank" Aaron.

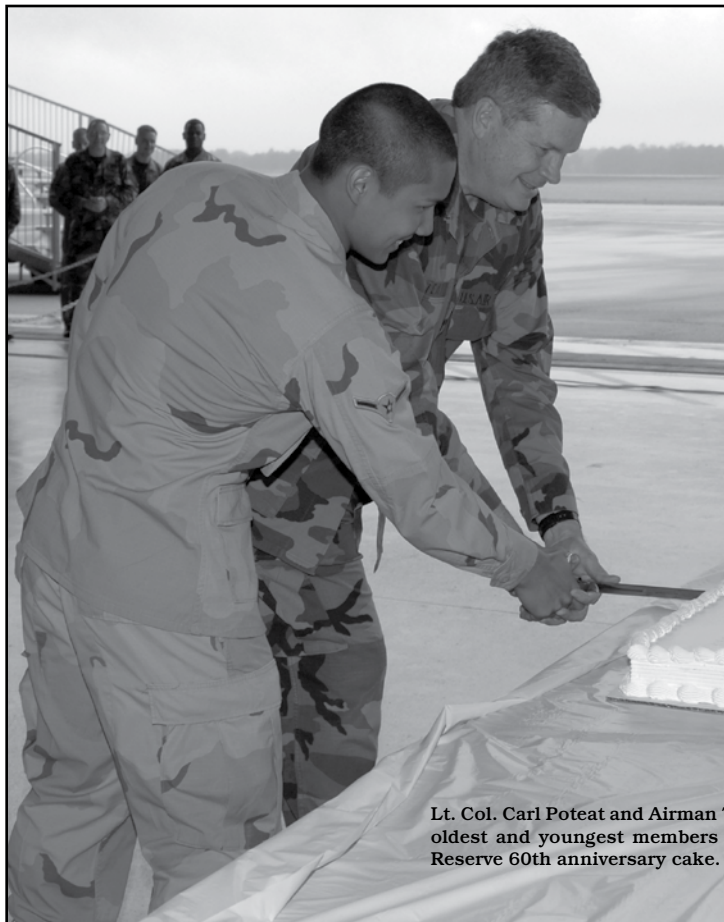
Ms. Williams jumped at the opportunity to accept the wing's invitation to participate in the tribute. She toured the wing, received an orientation flight aboard a C-130 with "Ramblin' Man" emblazoned over the door and made the maiden call, "Montgomery Tower this is Hank Zero One. ..."

Saying she was thrilled to be there in his stead, Ms. Williams thanked the Air Force for honoring her dad.

"If he were here today, I don't think he would believe it. He would be honored. As his daughter, I am honored to be here and I couldn't be more proud to be an American and to see what the Air Force is doing. What a wonderful plane, and to have it named "Hank O1 – the Ramblin' Man," it don't get any better," she said with a wide grin and a twinkle in her bright blue eyes after deplaning.

Following a little cake cutting of her own, she had brief exchanges with admirers and autograph seekers among the crowd before taking the stage with the Reserve Generation, Band of the Air Force Reserve's popular music group and "Putting a Hankin on everybody," her colorful description of some of her father's classics.

Birthday bash



Lt. Col. Carl Poteat and Airman, oldest and youngest members Reserve 60th anniversary cake.

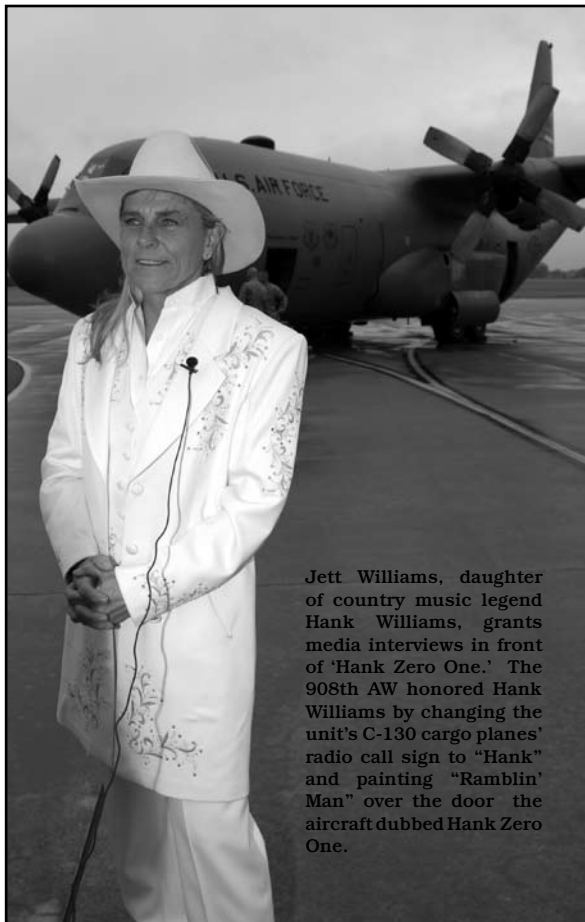


Brig. Gen. Edward Crowell fastens a combat action medal on Lt. Col. Blaine Bateman during the 908th Air Force Reserve's diamond anniversary celebration. Sergeant Maj. Jason Fitzpatrick, Senior Master Sgt. Brent Solomon, and Maj. Dave Hughes and Dan Guitano, Senior Master Sgt. as 908th AW combat action medal recipients.

marks AF Reserve's 60th anniversary



Tony Donofrio, the unit's representative, cut the AF



Jett Williams, daughter of country music legend Hank Williams, grants media interviews in front of 'Hank Zero One.' The 908th AW honored Hank Williams by changing the unit's C-130 cargo planes' radio call sign to "Hank" and painting "Ramblin' Man" over the door the aircraft dubbed Hank Zero One.



Photos by Jeff Melvin

Faith Norton, daughter of Capt. Hope Norton, 908th Airlift Wing, tries her hand at one of the many activities available for children during the Air Force Reserve's diamond anniversary celebration.



Senior Master Sgt. Ken Eddy, 357th AS, at the Air Force Reserve's 60th anniversary celebration. Eddy, Lt. Cols. Blaine Bateman and Tom Ohland, and Senior Airman Maxwell Evans join Lt. Col Bill Sgt. Donald Tarrance and Tech. Sgt. Marissa Allen



Jett Williams, backed the Band of the Air Force Reserve's popular music group, "Reserve Generation" performs a medley of her father's hits.



Tech. Sgt. Ronald Quinton, assistant NCOIC of vehicle maintenance, works on truck.

Photos by Staff Sgt. Jay Ponder



Master Sgt. Donna Bursley, logistics specialist, checks out new gear as he readies for deployment.



Vehicle operators Senior Airmen Victor Nguyen and Angela Livingston conduct visual checks of the vehicles.

L-R-S

Multi-mission
squadron
supplies wing's
many needs



Logistics supply manager helps Tech Sgt. Ralph Hood, 25th APS with deployment.



Tech. Sgt. Anita Gray, locates a package from a bin in the warehouse.

By Staff Sgt. Jay Ponder
908th AW Public Affairs

Whether you need a vehicle for ground transportation or a new pair of boots, the Logistics Readiness Squadron offers a variety of services to the 908th Airlift Wing.

"The LRS provides logistic services to the wing in terms of supply and transportation for movement of personnel, equipment and fuels," said Capt. Brian Vaughn, 908th LRS supply officer.

"We provide a one-stop shop for the wing," the captain said.

Transportation flight provides vehicle operations including vehicle maintenance. The flight is also responsible for vehicle operations including maintenance of military vehicles like the buses, trucks and forklifts the wing uses, said Tech. Sgt. Kelvin Pinkston, airlift transportation supervisor.

The transportation management office, surface freight section provides the overland shipment of goods by truck. TMO also handles the loading, offloading and documentation of the goods and equipment. TMO also ensures the proper packaging of goods or parts being shipped including the proper labeling.

There are also a fuels flight and a supply flight. The supply section receives and stores parts for when aircraft maintenance may need to requisition them. There is also the deployment portion of supply that is responsible for the individual mobility equipment.

The captain was only scratching the surface of the varied missions of the busy squadron. "There is also the logistics plans office, which supports the wing plans office. The Logistics Plans office is also responsible for coordinating the base deployment line," he said.

In civilian life, the captain is an aerospace engineer, developing aircraft for the Army. He described his squadron as a diverse organization with not just one mission. "Years ago," explained Captain Vaughn, "the flights were all separate. The flights were then grouped together as a multi-function organization and became the 908th LRS."

Right, Staff Sgt. Benjamin Carlisle, 908th CES, helps erect a Small Shelter System. These portable shelters provide protection for personnel, equipment and supplies in all types of extreme climate and terrain.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jay Ponder

Below, seated on the steps of the State Capitol, the group of visiting Reservists attending the Air Force Reserve Command Junior Officer Leadership Development Course hosted by the wing listen as 908th commander Col. Michael J. Underkofler explains some of the history of Montgomery. The colonel served as the group's guide during a tour of the city that included stops at landmarks like the Rosa Parks Museum and the Civil Rights Memorial. The JOLDC teaches leadership, followership, team-building, networking, accomplishing goals, and time management. Two sessions remain for this year: June 26-29 at Patrick AFB, Fla., and Sept. 11-14 at Peterson AFB, Colo.



Photo by Lt. Col. Jerry Lobb

Wing snapshots



Photo by Jeff Melvin

Staff Sgt. Keith Rudolph, 908th CF, reads to students at Montgomery's Peter Crump Elementary School during Read Across America Week. Sergeant Rudolph and several wing members joined volunteers around the nation who participated in the annual initiative held during the week of Dr. Seuss's birthday



Photo by Jeff Melvin

Finance technician Staff Sgt. Clayton Barnes gives help to finance customer, Chief Master Sgt. Phillip Watkins. Finance has changed its UTA Sunday customer service hours to 12:30 to 3 p.m.

Dealing with separation? Try this, send a note

By Chaplain (Capt.) David Dersch
908th AW Chaplain's Office

Military members periodically have to deal with being separated from their families and loved ones. Throughout history such separations have been a part of being a soldier. Recently I ministered to an elderly widow of a Marine who had fought in World War II. Although I was trying to give Ella Watson comfort during her sickness, she ended up being a blessing to me. With her permission, here is her story.

Ella shared with me a poem she had written and sent to her husband while he was fighting in the Pacific and she was working at a Goodyear Tire plant back home. She didn't make a copy of it before she mailed it, and after taking a bullet to the head during action, he lost his personal belongings, including this poem, as he was shuffled around getting medical treatment. Eventually they were reunited after a couple years of separation.

Six years after his return home, one day Ella received a knock on the door. There stood a man in uniform with her husband's sea bag. Inside was a Japanese rifle, his clothing, and in a neatly tied bundle all the letters she had sent him—letters that had comforted both of them as they communicated love and faithfulness across the miles. Below is her "lost" poem, as she quoted it to me from her hospital bed.

"To My Darling Overseas"
by Ella Watson

*To my darling overseas who is the dearest one to me,
I think of this, that, and all—and pray the Rising Sun will fall.
And soon you'll be back with me and our land will be free—
Free from all heartaches, suffering and strife,
And God will keep us in the right.*

Bless this land where Pilgrims once trod to a little church to worship God.

*God, He's the One, who will watch over you,
And send you home from across the blue.*

*So now, my darling, I'll say goodnight,
And pray that wherever you are, you are all right.*

This week, take the time to send your lover a note. Put your love in writing. Whether separated or not, this will bring you both closer together.

P.S. The Watsons enjoyed over 40 years of marriage before he passed on in the late '80s.

Money Matters – Reminders from 908th AW Finance

Staff Sgt. Clairmont Barnes
908th AW/FM accounting technician

Last year the 908th AW finance office informed everyone about the Air Force-wide transformation of travel payment operations. The estimated effective date of the complete migration was April 1. However, as with any large undertaking, several stages are implemented before all functions are working with peak efficiency. Therefore, everyone is encouraged to note some of the minor changes to travel voucher submission procedures as well as tips to avoid delays in processing your travel payments.

One of the changes involves the submission of a certified travel order when submitting travel vouchers for payment. Previously, unit members simply attached a blank copy of their orders along with the completed travel voucher. However, current procedures now require a certified copy of orders (signed by the reporting official) to accompany submitted travel vouchers.

Here are a few tips to avoid delays in your travel payments:

1. Ensure your travel voucher (DD Form 1351-2) or continuation form (DD Form 1351-2c) is fully and accurately completed.
2. Make sure you and your supervisor sign your voucher.
3. If you have not already paid off your government travel card, designate an adequate amount of your per diem applied toward your Government travel card (GTC) by selecting split-disbursement. (Located in the upper right corner of the travel voucher).
4. Attach applicable receipts, travel order amendments, or other documents with your travel voucher.
5. If lodging is not available on a military installation, obtain and attach a non-availability statement with your travel documents.
6. To avoid a travel debt, do not charge more money at your TDY location that you will receive for per diem.
7. Official orders must state if UTA is performed in conjunction with annual tour, special tour, or mandays.
8. Ensure all copies of documents are legible.

9. Make two (2) complete copies of the travel voucher, with the original certified pay document (AF IMT 938) attached to the front of the voucher.

10. On the bottom half of new travel voucher versions, the block "reviewer signature" replaces the field "supervisor signature" on older versions of the form. Although the terminology is different, supervisors must still sign the travel voucher for travelers to receive payment.

Additionally, the finance office has noticed a drastic increase in unit members that are late in paying their government travel card bills. Although split-disbursement travel payments are applied towards the travelers' government travel card, the ultimate responsibility to pay the balance in a timely manner rests upon the authorized cardholder. All of which increases the importance for travelers to file travel vouchers within the required 5 days after completion of travel. Prompt travel voucher filing increases the chance of final travel payments occurring before individual GTC payments are due.

Lastly, due to training requirements, the finance customer service hours on UTA Sundays are changing from mornings to afternoons effective the May 08 UTA. The new Sunday customer service hours are from 12:30-3 p.m. Saturday customer service hours of 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. will remain the same. Customer service inquiries can also be handled weekdays in person at the Finance Office or via the customer service line at 334-953-6722. Weekday hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday except Wednesday, which is 8 a.m. to noon.



Take Note

Promotions

Congratulations to the following people promoted to the grades indicated:

....to Master Sgt.

Lance Graham, AMXS
Steve Wells, 357th AS

....to Tech. Sgt.

Charles Barnes, 25th APS
Richard Craker, SFS
Charlie Crenshaw Jr., 25th APS
Sean Kassebaum, AES

....to Staff Sgt.

Chester Lachowicz, CES
Derecus Matthews, LRS
Samuel McKinnon, 25th APS
Richard Olive II, 25th APS
Stefano Semeraro, CES
Stephanie Woods, MOF

....to Senior Airman

Bobby Bracy Jr., 25th APS
Andrew Call, MXS
William Garrison, AMXS
Geoffrey Walker, 25th APS

....to Airman 1st Class

Kemisha Askew, 357th AS
Kevin Summersill, CES

Congratulations to the following captains selected for promotion by the FY 09 Air Force Reserve Line and Health Major Promotion Selection Board. This board selected 478 Airmen for promotion.

Teri Forster, ASTS

Susan Hillhouse, ASTS

Lisa Oliver, CP

Travis Shults, MOF

Scott Smiley, AES

Danielle Stringer, OSF

Retirements

According to wing personnel officials, the following people have approved retirements in the Military Personnel Data System for the months indicated.

May – Lt. Col. Carl Poteat, 908th AW; Lt. Col. James Reid, ASTS; and Master Sgts. Charles Britt, 908th OG, Charles Johnson, MXG, and Danny Wesson, 25th APS

June – Tech. Sgts. Jo Kaestner, ASTS, Emory Morgan Jr., OSF, and Jimmy Rogers, MXG

July – Col. Benton Busbee, 908th AW



Photo by Jeff Melvin

Pictured above is the quilt presented to 908th AW commander Col. Michael J. Underkofler on the wing's behalf at the Alabama Rural Electric Association of Cooperatives opening luncheon April 8 at the Renaissance Hotel and Convention Center in Montgomery. "Honoring Our Veterans; Then & Now" was the theme of the quilt produced by quilters representing each of the AREA's 21 cooperatives. Colonel Underkofler also received a plaque from the association as an expression of appreciation to the state's military.

908th Airlift Wing
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