



ANNUAL TOUR PREPARES AEROMEDICAL STAGING SQUADRON FOR COMBAT OPERATIONS



SOUTHERN FLYER



Vol. 53 Issue 7
August 2016

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Why? How? What?

The 908th Airlift Wing Mission: Provide Combat Ready Support Across the Spectrum of Operations. The mission is what we do and each subordinate group and squadron support this. I usually simplify this by saying we are here to support Combatant Commander taskings.

There are many benefits to serving in the Total Air Force: education, pay, and health care are a few but if you are not here primarily to accomplish the mission of the wing, you may need to refocus. The 908th Maintenance Group supports the wing mission by answering three questions: **Why?** How? and **What?** **Why** are we here? **How** will we accomplish our objectives? and **What** is our piece of the wing mission?

If you can answer why to nearly any area of daily life, it should ensure you are doing things for the right reasons. **Why** does the 908th Maintenance Group exist? *Service* to the citizens of the US and our allies. Monetary and other benefits are useful, but I believe true contentment can come only when we are a part of something bigger than ourselves and putting others before us.

How does the Maintenance Group plan to play our part in the wing mission? With *Integrity*, *Excellence*, leadership, and accountability. Solid leadership begins with integrity and trust. Accountability at the lowest levels drives



LT. COL. CASEY COOLEY
Commander, 908 MXG

us to excellence.

Finally, **What** will the Maintenance Group do to support the wing mission? We will provide Ready, Reliable Tactical Airlift: Airmen, aircraft, and equipment to support combatant commander taskings. On a day-in-day-out basis it is our job to organize, train, and equip our people and plan for and maintain our equipment and aircraft so we are able to support taskings.

It is a special choice an American makes to serve. Service is why we are here. With integrity, excellence, leadership, and accountability is how we serve. The result of our service is answering our nation's call and supporting the fight anywhere, anytime...in the end, it is all about combat capability, period.



Photo by Andrew Stamer

COVER PHOTO:

Medics, nurses, and doctors assess wounded patients and discuss treatment options during the 908 Aeromedical Staging Squadron's annual tour casualty exercise.



"Providing combat-ready support across the spectrum of operations"

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We solicit articles and photographs and reserve the right to edit materials to conform to Southern Flyer editorial policies. Because of the printing and mail-out schedule the newspaper goes to press on Friday, two weeks prior to the unit training assembly. The submission deadline is the Monday two weeks prior to the UTA.

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A MOMENT WITH THE **HAPLAIN**

CH. (MAJ.)
REGINALD D. HORTON

In the month of June we celebrated the life and legacy of an iconic figure, Mahummad Ali. While here on Earth he fascinated us with his array of rhythmical verbiage, some have even labeled him as the first rapper. He said such phrases as “I’m the king, I’m a bad man, I’m the greatest, and I shook up the world.”

I had the wonderful opportunity to meet Mr. Ali in the summer of 1996 while he was shopping in a novelty store in Berrien Springs Mich. Because of his Parkinson’s disease he was not able to speak when I said, “Hi, Mr. Ali.”

Instead, he motioned with his fists as if to edge me on to spar with him; and I immediately said, “No way Mr. Ali, you would drop me to the ground.”

I left the novelty store with excitement, I thought, “I just met the greatest,” or did I? His disease shielded his greatness. I witnessed his inability to speak, his uncontrollable shakes, and slothful walk.

However, there was one thing I noticed his disease could not hide. He was the king who spoke against social injustice. He was the greatest at making those around him seem special. He was a bad man who kept his word, and he shook up the world when he was imprisoned for what he believed.

He reminds me of another iconic figure who walked this earth, Jesus. John calls Jesus in Revelation 17:14 “King of Kings.” Jesus shook up the world when He cast out demons, healed the sick, and raised the dead. He demonstrated His greatness through His servanthood leadership and when questioned by the Pharisees of His authority, Jesus replied, “Before Abraham was, I am,” (John 8:58). Now that’s a bad man!

Wellness is one call away

By Jamie Ellis, 908 ASTS/SGOMH

What does the word wellness mean? For some folks, wellness can mean “I am not sick.” For others, it can mean feeling completely at peace, both physically and mentally. Wellness is an active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward, a more successful existence.

The Air Force has its own definition for wellness in its Comprehensive Airman Fitness Model. In this model, there are four parts: physical, mental, social and spiritual. Each part is dependent on the other to complete total wellness in a person.

You might ask, “What does that have to do with me?” Or, “I feel well so I must be well, right?”

Have you ever had a day where you woke up with a really bad cold? How did that make you feel physically? Exhausted, unable to breath, stuffed nose and lightheaded. What about how that made you feel mentally? In a fog or unable to concentrate. What about socially? You may avoid people because you don’t feel like talking. What about spiritually? It could make you connect more closely with your higher power (i.e. I pray that I get better). As you can see, something such as a simple cold can affect all four components of wellness.

Remember earlier, I mentioned that wellness is an active process to have a more successful existence. What could you do when you have a cold that would be an active process to achieve wellness? For physical wellness you can take medications and get rest, this would in turn help with the mental fog that you may be in, you would then want to connect more with your friends when you started feeling better, and then you could reconnect with your spiritual higher power. As you can see, all aspects of wellness can and do affect one another and taking an active role in any one of these areas can help you improve all of these areas; therefore, helping you achieve total wellness.

Having a crisis in one area of your life can and does affect all areas of your life, but having an active role and making positive choices in one area of your life can heal the crisis. When you have a crisis in one area of your life, like a physical illness, you would first try to take some over-the-counter medications to help, and if it continued on, then you would go to the doctor. When you have a crisis in the mental health, social or even spiritual problems that you have tried to heal on your own but they continue, then you should seek help for this as well.

If you need help during a spiritual crisis, try a chaplain. For a mental health crisis and/or social crisis, you can go to a chaplain, or you can come to your Director of Psychological Health/social worker. My name is Jamie Ellis and I am the 908th Director of Psychological Health. My phone number is 334-953-8359 or 334-538-1110. My email is jamie.ellis.4@us.af.mil. My office is located in the medical clinic with the ASTS. I am available every UTA and during the week.

Upcoming Basic Motorcycle Safety Courses

Basic RiderCourse II

Sept. 10, 2016 (5 hrs)

Instructors: 908th

Start Time: 0700



Basic RiderCourse I

Oct. 2016 UTA (Sat-Sun)

Instructors: 908th

Start Time: 0700

To sign up, contact Lt. Col. Carmel Weed at 334-953-9702 or email Carmel.Weed@us.af.mil

Cornering new Command Chief Carlson

By Andrew Stamer, 908 AW/PA

A month after being introduced as the new command chief for the 908th Airlift Wing, Tina Carlson sat in her office in the command section awaiting the next appointment.

Her schedule was completely full during July's drill weekend. A steady stream of Airmen came through the office to discuss the mission, whether it was operations, training, morale, or professional development – Carlson was there to listen and help advise each and every one of them.

She is also here to advise the commander on enlisted issues as the wing's senior noncommissioned officer.

"My military experience has taught me a lot of organizational skills that I didn't have when I was younger, and a lot of leadership skills, but most importantly, it's taught me customer service," she said. "You put the boots on and you serve people. That really does equate into the civilian sector when you're dealing with people and serving them, I think my military experience has helped tremendously," said Carlson, who will have 26 years of military service in September.

She keeps busy, already planning on working four to five days each month as a traditional Reservist on drill weekends and through telecommuting.

In 2012, Carlson started her own company making gift baskets. And what started as a crafty hobby making rag baskets soon had her adding an additional employee, and then another, until she ended up having five employees who help run the business.

"In high school, I had a teacher that taught me how to make rag baskets, and I found out I was really good at it, and I kept it up. An art studio, probably 15 years ago, saw one of my baskets and asked if I'd make a few to display and sell in the art studio. Before the end of the week, they'd sold them all," she said.

She could be considered a renaissance woman because she has such a wide-array of expertise in many different facets of life. She's no stranger to professional development, going to the four-day course for command chiefs at Robins Air Force Base in Georgia a week after the August Unit Training Assembly, as well as wrapping up her graduate degree in Organizational Leadership at Argosy University in December.

Carlson joined the Air Force at 17 through the Delayed Entry Program (now the Development and Training Program), and has served as a medical technician ever since.

In 2005, after being deployed, she went to school for biblical and theological studies and became a pastor in Duluth, Minn., where she was the director for youth and

family at a church there.

A merger between Northwest and Delta airlines caused her family's relocation to Atlanta, where they live in Peachtree City.

"When we moved I had to give up my job, which was pretty painful, I loved being a pastor," she said. But she was able to continue her military service at Dobbins Air Force Base, Ga.

"I got there a month before they failed a huge medical inspection," she said, even accepting the

position knowing full well that failing the Health Services Inspection was likely. "In the medical field, it's normally the kiss of death to fail the HSI, and when your name is on the report it doesn't matter that you've only been there a month."

But it wasn't a career-ending move. A lot of hard work was put in to take a failing squadron to one that is "absolutely outstanding" now, she said. Much of the work was to teach the people that they were valued and how they fit into the "big mission."

"When people feel valued, and they feel like you care about them, that's when they care about the mission," she said.

And so far, the command chief has seen good things from all-around the 908th.

"I had the honor and the privilege to speak to a squadron today and remind them of how important their jobs are," she said. Not only was it one of the cleanest hangars she had ever seen, but the mechanics were true professionals.

"They found a three-and-a-half inch crack on that airplane. That could have been a big issue if they hadn't found it. What they do matters," she said.

Just like every job in the wing matters.



Blended retirement system training available

By Tech. Sgt. Bryan Franks, Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

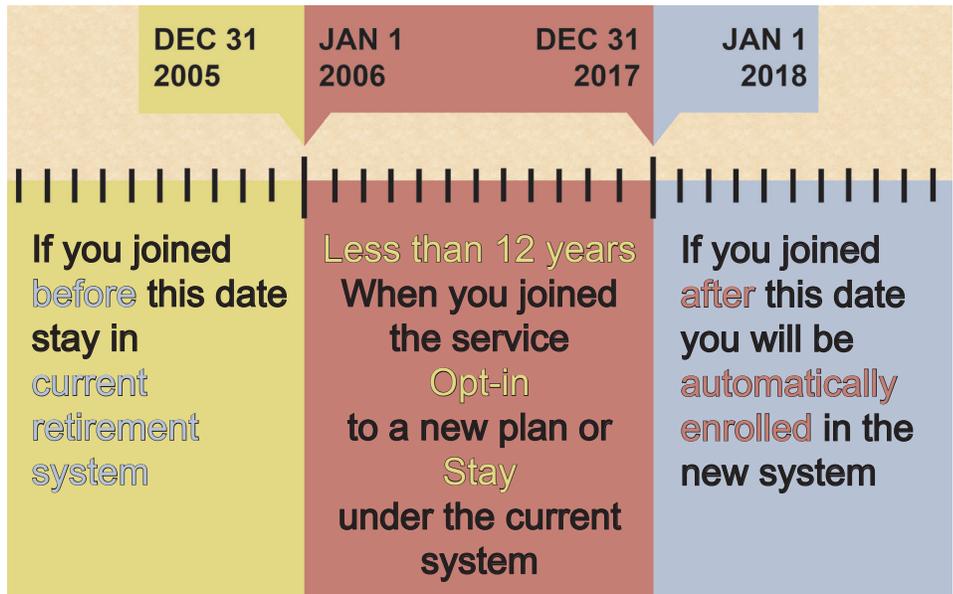
Online training designed to educate Airmen about the new Blended Retirement System, the Defense Department system with changes on the current military retirement system, is now available via Joint Knowledge Online course number P-US1330. The course is also available to those without a Common Access Card -- to include family members -- via an alternate website.

The BRS was enacted into law in the Fiscal Year 2016 National Defense Authorization Act, and will go into effect Jan. 1, 2018. All currently serving members are grandfathered into the current military retirement system. However, those with fewer than 12 years of service as of Dec. 31, 2017, or Air Force Reserve component members with fewer than 4,320 retirement points may choose to “opt in” to the BRS during the designated opt-in period from Jan. 1, 2018, through Dec. 31, 2018.

“The BRS is a major change for our Airmen,” said Brig. Gen. Brian Kelly, the Military Force Management Policy director. “Although the majority of Airmen serving today will not fall under BRS, it is important for all Airmen, either as leaders today, or as leaders tomorrow, to understand the changes that will impact Airmen in the future.”

The BRS Leader Training is a 30-minute course designed to provide basic familiarity with the key components of the upcoming retirement system and the timeline for implementation. It is designed primarily for Air Force leaders at all levels, but is also open to all Airmen and others who wish to learn more about BRS.

“Education is key in providing Airmen the information they need in order to make informed decisions about the BRS,” Kelly said. The Defense Department is on track to provide three additional courses with more detailed information within the next 18 months.



An “opt-in” course is targeted at those eligible to opt into the new system. This course will provide eligible active and reserve component members an understanding of both the current and new systems. The course will be available in January 2017.

A “train the trainer” course for personal financial managers, counselors and retirement services officers is targeted at those experts who serve in an advisory role to commanders, Airmen and their families. This course should be ready by fall of 2016.

A new accessions course targets individuals who enter military service

on or after Jan. 1, 2018. It is intended to provide those members who enter service under the BRS an understanding of their blended retirement benefits and personal options.

The Air Force is taking a comprehensive approach to BRS education. “Online courses are designed to provide basic knowledge and understanding,” Kelly emphasized. “In addition to the aforementioned courses, Airmen will receive in-person education at various points in their career, starting in basic training, and professional counseling will also be available.”

ASTS practices skills during Annual Tour

The 908th Aeromedical Staging Squadron held a home station annual tour June 11-25.

“The intent of the home station annual tour was to ensure both medical and administrative ASTS members were able to accomplish required AFSC specific training events that don’t fit in a typical UTA weekend,” said Maj. Bryan Smith, Force Health OIC. “We were able to practice hands-on patient care and exercise the logistical processes of aeromedical evacuation and patient staging.”

Members practiced assembling an Alaskan shelter tent, moving patients, driving various vehicles, as well as completing a variety of classes and computer based training courses. The culmination of the annual training was “Operation Humid Zombie,” an exercise conducted on June 22 and 23. The exercise name was fitting as members triaged, treated and moved simulated patients through the aeromedical staging process, as temperatures climbed into the 90’s.

“This training was successful in refreshing the skills of our senior members, and providing an initial exposure to junior Airmen,” said MSgt Orenthia Herren, NCOIC of Nursing Services. “Some younger members had their first experiences operating equipment, handling live patients, and dealing with stressors inherent with patient care in austere environments. They finished the exercise better prepared for the next level of training and future deployments.”



Rope toss: Several members throwing ropes over the Alaskan shelter tent. The ropes were then used to pull the outer canvass into place.



ASTS members practice loading and unloading patients from a vehicle during “Operation Humid Zombie,” a training exercise held during their home station annual tour.



Above: ASTS members practice evaluating patients in the triage process inside an Alaskan shelter tent.

Below: Staff Sgt. Kandace Moore treats Master Sgt. Durwin Law's simulated injuries.



Civil Engineers in Maine for Annual Tour

By Senior Airman Sarah Shea, 908 CES

The 908th Civil Engineer Squadron, a total of 19 airmen, traveled from Maxwell to Camp Hinds Boy Scout Camp in Raymond, Maine. The 908th Civil Engineers' primary mission was to work with teams from the Air National Guard, Navy Seabee's and Marine Corps Reserve Engineers to construct a 10,000 square-foot dining facility for the scouts to use.

The squadron flew to Portland, Maine, aboard one of the 908th Airlift Wing's C-130s. Upon arrival, it was a short 45-minute drive to Camp Hinds, where members were assigned tents and settled in for the night.

The first workday started with breakfast from the field kitchen followed by a brief overview of the history of Camp Hinds, introduction of the duration staff and Boy Scout Camp Ranger and rules for the camp were reviewed. The work was then split up among the 75 members, and crews were assigned



Senior Airman Sarah Shea, 908th Civil Engineer Squadron, caulks a shower at Boy Scout Camp Hinds in Raymond, Maine, where part of the squadron spent their annual tour.

to begin the rotation's contribution to completing the dining facility. As the third team in, there were plenty of opportunities for hands-on training in almost all specialties within the CE career field.

During the tour, engineers straightened and plumbed all four exterior walls, built and installed two 60-foot gabled ends, installed 13 60-foot-long trusses, and laid down the entire roof of two-by-six tongue and groove pine, followed by three-quarter inch oriented strand board. In addition, the basement walls were laid out and constructed, the grease trap lines were installed and buried, and the septic tanks were installed. Work was also completed on the old dining facility to keep it serviceable and the medical facility was overhauled. There was also time for training on heavy equipment including dump trucks, Bobcat loaders and a water truck.

At the end of the two weeks the squadron wrapped up their tour with a barbeque paid for and cooked by the 908th senior noncommissioned officers. Outstanding performers were identified during this time: Outstanding Airman, Senior Airman Shanteya Leverette-Wilson, Outstanding NCO, Staff Sgt. Jeremiah Gafford, and Favorite duration staff member, Master Sgt. Cyr from the Maine ANG.

The duration staff OIC Capt. Wolff, coined Senior Airman Sarah Shea for her hard work and dedication throughout the project. As the tour ended, the team packed up and drove back to Portland where a 908th aircraft and crew was waiting to bring them home.



The 908th Civil Engineer Squadron worked with teams from the Air National Guard, Navy Seabees and the Marine Corps Reserve Engineers to construct a 10,000 square-foot dining facility for scouts at Camp Hinds.

Former maintainer still a warrior

A former 908th Airlift Wing member participated in the Department of Defense's 2016 Warrior Games held at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., in June.

Retired Senior Master Sgt. Jamie Womack, who was an assessors flight chief in maintenance, 908th Maintenance Group was on the Air Force team and competed in four events: cycling, sitting volleyball, wheelchair basketball, and track.

Womack, a native of Ozark, Ala., participated due to knee, back, and shoulder injuries, as well as PTSD. He won two medals – a gold in sitting volleyball, and a bronze in wheelchair basketball.

“He is so proud he was able to represent the Air Force,” said Tech Sgt. Monica Lorenzo, maintenance training technician, 908th Maintenance Group.

The Air Force team was able to take home 142 medals throughout the week long games, which are an annual adaptive sporting competition bringing together wounded, ill, and injured service members and veterans from across the country, as well as participants from the United Kingdom.

Approximately 250 athletes participated in eight sporting events: archery, cycling, shooting, sitting volleyball, swimming, track and field, and wheelchair basketball.

Former Daily Show host Jon Stewart

served as master of ceremonies for the game's opening ceremony. “I didn't come up here to give my support to the athletes I came up here to get support from them. There is almost nothing in this world that gives me more support than witnessing the tenacity, the resiliency and the perseverance of these warriors,” Stewart said.

The Warrior Games are the culmination of participation in structured adaptive sports and reconditioning activities of wounded, ill, and injured service members and veterans through their recovery by encouraging physical and cognitive activities, inspiring fitness, mental strength, peer support, and opportunities for growth and achievement.



Teresa Skinner, left, a Warrior Games trainer, makes adjustments to a sports chair for Jamie Womack, a Warrior Games athlete, during a track and field session as part of the Air Force team's training camp at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., April 4, 2016. (Air Force photo by Samuel King Jr.)

New to the 908th

Chief Master Sgt. Tina Carlson, AW
Master Sgt. Thomas Hemphill, 357 AS
Staff Sgt. Daniel Carver, 25 APS
Staff Sgt. Bryant Tunstalle, LRS
Staff Sgt. Joshua Wynne, AMXS
Senior Airman Marcus Holden, LRS

Senior Airman Alexander Turner, ASTS
Airman 1st Class Dalandon Callens, MXS
Airman 1st Class Brandi Franklin, 25 APS
Airman 1st Class Justin Moore, AMXS
Airman 1st Class Travis Jackson, CES
Airman 1st Class Althia White, AMXS

BRIEFS

MILLER TAKES COMMAND OF AIR FORCE RESERVE

Maj. Gen. Maryanne Miller assumed the leadership of Air Force Reserve Command from Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson during a change of command ceremony at Robins Air Force Base, Ga., July 15. Miller joined the Air Force in 1981 and was a distinguished graduate of the ROTC program at The Ohio State University. Her previous assignment was as the deputy to the chief of the Air Force Reserve in Washington, D.C. She commanded two wings and held numerous staff positions at the unit, Air Staff and Joint Staff levels.

DESERVING AIRMEN COMMISSIONING BOARD

Completed packages for the Deserving Airman Commissioning Board are due to 908th Military Personnel Section's Career Development Office by August 7. The board will be held in September to select new officers from the enlisted force. Look for the package requirement via email or you can contact Tech Sgt. Bibb at 334-953-5584 for the complete Deserving Airman Commissioning Package checklist.

BECOME A FIRST SERGEANT

The 908th is looking for energetic members who would like to serve the wing as a First Sergeant. All packages

are due to the 908th Force Management Office, by 4 p.m., on August 7. A board will be held during the September UTA to select our next group of First Sergeants to fill current/upcoming vacancies. Previous applicants must re-apply.

NOW ENLISTING PILOTS

The Air Force is accepting nominations to fill its first class of enlisted remotely piloted aircraft pilots to enhance the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance mission. The first enlisted RPA pilot selection board will convene at the Air Force Personnel Center from Jan. 23-26, 2017, with application packages due to AFPC by Nov. 18. The selection board process mirrors that of the Undergraduate Flying Training program and allows candidates time to complete all eligibility requirements.

BEWARE OF SUPPLEMENTS

Air Force Reservists should be careful when taking dietary supplements because of their potential health risks but also because they could lead to a positive urinalysis test result from products containing drug ingredients not listed on the label - especially weight-loss, bodybuilding and sexual-enhancement products. Before taking a supplement, study the label, buy from reputable manufacturers, get a doctor's opinion, and be vigilant about what you put into your body.



Anthony R. Cunningham, Jr.
Robert E. Light
Kevin Ricks



Christopher L. Wright



Victoria L. Garnes
Quincy A. Miller
Alexis K. Seymore
Quentin D. Simpson



Christopher Arevalo
Crista J. Brantley
Soloman O. Ivy
Aaliyah L. Johnson
Jacquetta Y. Miles
Daniel J. Minor
Trevian J. Moss
Jennifer L. Murphy
Christopher A. Redmond
Columbus Sanders, III
Paul J. Wascher
Kelvin D. Wiggins, Jr.
Briahna D. Williams



Tramel J. Bailiff
Khietre C. Bean
Cameron J. Doss
Deminica L. McCall
Leonardo S. Mullin
Jonnesha C. Sears



UTA Lodging

- * Make reservations, cancellations or changes at least **48 hours** prior to your arrival.
- * Maxwell Toll-Free **1 (800) 673-9356**
Direct **(334) 953-8557/8558**
- * Input your unit authorization code
(Given by unit's First Sergeant)
- * Dial **953-8557 or 953-8558**
- * Upon request, input USER ID
- * Upon request, input PIN number, then "#." PIN is assigned during Newcomers. **If not known, contact 908th Services.**
- * Make, change, cancel, check reservation
Reservation: input arrival date followed by departure date, then type [ADT, IDT, or both (ADT: Annual Tour, Mandays, Special Tour) (IDT: UTA, AFTP, RMP, Make-up UTA). UTA is IDT.]
> ADT only? Call Lodging: **(334) 953-6133**
- * If a scheduled UTA weekend, system will tell you where you will be staying

Questions?

Contact Tech. Sgt. Cedrea Young
(334) 953-1690, option 1

Emer cell: (254) 258-1884

DSN: 493-7332 cedrea.young@us.af.mil

Checkout time:

No time to go to the front desk, or phone charge? Drop the keys in the drop box in Bldg 682 (Main Lodging) for your convenience.

DO NOT USE this box if you have charges on your bill.

In accordance with AFI 34-246 smoking is prohibited in lodging rooms. You may be charged a minimum of \$50 for cleaning for violating this AFI.

UTAs FY16

Aug. 6-7

Sept. 10-11

UTAs FY17

Oct. 1-2

April 1-2

Nov. 5-6

May 6-7

Dec. 3-4

June 3-4

Jan. 7-8

July 8-9

Feb. 11-12

Aug. 5-6

March 4-5

Sept. 9-10

908TH UNIT TRAINING ASSEMBLY

August

Start	End	Event	Location/OPR
Friday, August 5, 2016			
1500	TBD	Commander's Staff Meeting	Bldg 803/42ABW Conf Rm
1700	TBD	First Sergeants' Meeting	Holiday Inn Express, Prattville
Saturday, August 6, 2016			
0530	TBD	Fit to Fight Testing Session One	HAWC
0730	0800	** Sign In **	Orderly Room
0730	TBD	Fit To Fight Testing Session Two	HAWC
0800	1030	Newcomer's MPS Inprocessing	Bldg 1056/Classroom
0800	1100	Lab work/DNA/HIV/Blood testing	Bldg 760/Lab
0800	1530	Physicals	Bldg 760/Floor 1
0830	1530	Immunizations	Bldg 760/Floor 1
0900	0930	SAPM Training	Bldg 1056/CC Conf Rm
0900	1000	UDM Meeting	Bldg 848/CF Classroom
0900	1000	Fitness for duty (DD 689 & Fitness Letter)	Bldg 760/Floor 1
0900	1000	First Duty Station Briefing	Bldg 1056/Classroom
0930	1030	HRDC Meeting	Bldg 1056/CC Conf Rm
0930	1000	TDY/PCS Outprocessing	Bldg 1056/Rm 111/DPMSA
1230	1530	CDC Testing	Bldg 903/FSDE
1330	1400	Fitness for Duty (DD 689 & Fitness Letter)	Bldg 760/Floor 1
1700	1730	Sign Out	Orderly Room
Sunday, August 7, 2016			
0530	TBD	Fit To Fight Testing Session One	HAWC
0630	0700	Sign In	Orderly Room
0730	TBD	Fit To Fight Testing Session Two	HAWC
1230	TBD	SORTS/DRRS/ART Briefing	Bldg 1055/908 CAT
1300	1400	3S2 Training/Wing Training	Bldg 903
1300	1500	3D Comm Element Training	Bldg 848
1300	1400	3D0X1 Knowledge Operation Training	Bldg 1056
1600	-	Sign Out	Orderly Room

Support functions' schedule

Activity	Dates & hours of operation	Location/Ext.
Newcomers' Trg FLT	Sat 0730-1700	Bldg 1056/Rm 101
MPS Customer Svc	Sat 1300-1700 / Sun 0700-1300 M-F 0900-1600 (Closed 1300-1600 every Wed except drill week)	Bldg 1056/3-5522
Reserve Pay	MTTFH 0800-1600 / Wed 0800-1200 Sat 0900-1600 / Sun 1230-1500	Bldg 1056/3-6722
Fitness For Duty	Sat 0900-1000 ** Bring DD Form 689 **	Bldg 760 2nd Floor/ 3-5714
Medical Records	Sat 0800-1500 / Closed Sun	Bldg 760 2nd Floor/ 3-5714
Individual Equipment		Bldg 1154/3-6020
Clothing Sales	Sat 0900-1500	Bldg 851/3-7505
Restricted Area Badge	M-F 0730-1600	Bldg 502/3-4283
Geneva Conv Cards	M-F 0730-1600	Bldg 502/3-4283
Dining Hall	Breakfast: 0600-0800 Brunch: 1030-1300 Dinner: 1600-1800	Bldg 668/3-5127
Lodging Office		Bldg 682 /240-5600
Photo Lab	M-F 0730-1630 / Sun 1300-1500	Bldg 926/3-7981
Comm Help Desk	Sat 0800-1600 / Sun 1300-1500	

On time, every time

By Jaimi Upthegrove, AFRC/PA

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. – The Air Force Reserve Command has initiated a beta test of the Reserve Travel System at five U.S. locations to help reduce the time it takes for some traditional reservists to get their travel vouchers processed and paid.

The test is a response to repeated requests from reservist assigned to units on active duty bases who are voicing concerns of having to redo travel vouchers and waiting an inordinate amount of time for payment.

There were times last year were only 7 percent of travel vouchers submitted by reservists on active-duty bases were paid within 10 business days through RTS according to Jeffrey Pennington, director of the Headquarters AFRC staff.

He said the AFRC Directorate of Financial Management and the Air Force Financial Service Center staff have teamed up to make significant improvements in that success rate, but he has higher hopes for getting more members paid in a timely manner.

The beta test is happening at:

- 908th Airlift Wing, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
- 403rd Wing, Keesler AFB, Miss.
- 512th Airlift Wing, Dover AFB, Del.
- 446th Airlift Wing, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.
- 442nd Fighter Wing, Whiteman AFB, Miss.

Currently, unit reservists fill out their RTS vouchers and take them to the host unit finance office, where the voucher is reviewed and manually entered into another system and sent to the Air Force Financial Service Center at Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota.

From there, workers at Ellsworth audit the vouchers. If everything is OK, the vouchers are submitted to the Defense Finance Accounting System for payment. If there is a problem, the

vouchers are sent back to the reservists for corrections.

“Traditional reservists might not see that they need to make that correction for at least a month due to the nature of their military commitment,” Pennington said. “That’s too long to be without that pay.”

Pennington said without travel reimbursement, many reservists can’t pay the balance on their government travel cards. If a balance remains unpaid for too long they can’t travel for the military until it’s settled, he said.

The beta test models what has been effective at Reserve host units. Reservists take their vouchers to their unit’s finance office for review. The finance office is able to make on-the-spot corrections and enter the information into the system.

From there, the unit audits the voucher and submits to the host base finance office for payment through DFAS.

“The reserve unit can’t do the disbursement themselves because disbursing authorities are limited regionally,” Pennington said. “But this will give the unit more ownership over the pay of their members.”

Ownership is a key factor in customer satisfaction, according to Debbie Smith, budget analyst for the 908th AW.

“It’s comforting knowing someone who is working it out,” Smith said. “Plus, it can get frustrating for us being the middleman and not being able to help, so there’s a lot of excitement around the office for this test.”

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Pennington said getting paid for travel has been a top complaint among reservists, and he is happy to finally have a plan to fix this issue.

The unit finance offices have a lot to learn to take on their new role.

“We have some good help out here right now teaching us, but there’s a big learning curve,” Smith said. “We’re all on board and ready for the challenge.”

Smith said that since unit finance people attend weekly staff meetings with their commander, they will be held to a higher standard when it comes to reservists getting paid on time.

“The test and the new system will be a seamless transition for the members,” she said. “Most won’t even know there’s been a change. They’ll just be excited when they get paid faster.”

Pennington said Reserve officials will review the test results and continue looking into ways to improve the process of paying travel vouchers and increase the focus on Defense Travel System issues in the near future.

“We’d like to see 100 percent settled within 10 business days,” he said.

“Across the board, our members deserve to be paid on time, every time.”



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