

ON FINAL

SEPTEMBER 2016

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE 507TH AIR REFUELING WING



**SIXTY
YEARS OF
SERVICE:**

**THE KC-135 REACHES
A NEW MILESTONE**



COVER

SIXTY YEARS OF SERVICE

A KC-135 on the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center periodic depot maintenance line in the late 1950s.

STORY ON p. 8

COVER PHOTO Courtesy of Tinker History Office

SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

September is suicide prevention month, a reminder to #BeThere for your colleagues, family and friends.

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UNDER ITS WING

A trip on a KC-135 refueling mission from local reporter Silas Allen of the Oklahoman.

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PHOTOS BY TECH. SGT. LAUREN GLEASON

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WING COMMAND CHIEF
Chief Master Sgt. Stephen A. Brown

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FUELING THE FIGHT



ABOVE: A German Tornado receives fuel from the 507th ARW over Norway in August 2016. In August, members of the 507th ARW supported NATO operations in the European theater at RAF Mildenhall, England. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Shaylon Ladd)

RIGHT: A U.S. F-15E Strike Eagle gets gassed up by the Okies over Sweden in August 2016. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Shaylon Ladd)



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**For information on opportunities in the AF Reserve,
give one of our team members a call today.**

TAKING COMMAND: 507th LRS gets new commander

Lt Col. Gregg Russell, deputy commander of the 507th Mission Support Group, passes the 507th Logistics Readiness Squadron guidon to Maj. Damien C. Miller during an assumption of command ceremony Aug. 6, 2016, at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Grady Epperly)



Maj. Damien C. Miller assumed command of the 507th Logistics Readiness Squadron here Aug. 6, 2016.

Miller is the former Director of Operations of the 482nd Logistics Readiness Squadron at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Florida.

As he took command, Miller thanked the 507th LRS Director of Operations, Maj. Britnee McIntyre, and logistics manager, James (Woody) Steinmann, who led the squadron during the interim.

Miller received his commission in 2004

through the ROTC program at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, Florida. He has held various logistic positions and served in Southwest Asia, including Afghanistan.

As the commander, Miller will lead the squadron to provide contingency deployment support, material management and fuels services in the continental U.S. and locations around the world.

"To the men and women of the 507th LRS, I am honored to be your commander, but this is not my assumption of command ceremony, it is ours," said Miller. "I challenge each of you to become more combat

effective."

Lt. Col. Greg Russell, 507th Mission Support Group deputy commander and presiding officer of the ceremony, offered advice to the new commander.

"Empower your troops," said Russell. "They'll give you everything you need to get the job done."

The 507th LRS trains and equips the warfighter for worldwide combat support. The personnel performs aircraft fuels support, asset management, deployment planning and execution, vehicle operations, fleet and traffic management services.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR WITH THESE UPCOMING EVENTS:

SEPTEMBER UTA SEP. 10-11

507TH ARW SUPER FAMILY DAY @ 1200
IN HANGAR 1030

SEP. 10

SFS ASSUMPTION OF COMMAND @1000
970TH AACs AUDITORIUM

SEP. 11

OCTOBER UTA OCT 15-16

4TH QUARTER AWARDS DUE
OCT. 15

EXERCISE
OCT. 27-30

NOVEMBER UTA NOV. 5-6

COMMANDER'S CALL @ TBD
BASE THEATER
NOV. 6

DECEMBER UTA DEC.3-4

ANNUAL AWARD PACKAGES DUE NLT 1600
DEC. 3

JANUARY UTA JAN. 7-8

**SUPER UTA
FEBRUARY UTA FEB. 2-5**

DATES AND TIMES SUBJECT TO CHANGE. FOR
UPDATES, CHECK THE 507TH WEBSITE [HERE](#).

Meet the vice wing commander: Col. Dana Nelson



Air Force Reserve Command officials announced this month Col. Dana N. Nelson has been selected as the new vice wing commander for the 507th Air Refueling Wing here.

Nelson last served as an Individual Mobilization Augmentee to the Chief, Air Advisor Branch, Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, Maryland. She arrived at Tinker Sept. 7, and is now serving as the second in command of the largest Air Force Reserve flying unit in the state of Oklahoma.

Nelson received her commission in 1990 following graduation from the United States Air Force Academy. She began her flying career at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia. While on active duty, Nelson flew various models of KC-135s for more than 10 years. In 2002, she joined the Air Force Reserve with the Defense Intelligence Agency as a Foreign Area Air

Attaché. She served as an attaché in Slovenia, as an analyst at the Joint Intelligence Center, U.S. Transportation Command and as the Chief of the Survey Analysis Center in Doha, Qatar. In 2005, she joined the 459th Air Refueling Wing, Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, and held various leadership positions including Chief of Training, Chief of the Exercise Evaluation Team, flight commander and commander of the 756th Air Refueling Squadron. While stationed at Andrews, she also volunteered for several tours at Headquarters, Air Force, in Information Operations and Special Access Programs, and further volunteered for a DIA Air Attaché tour to Suva, Fiji.

Nelson is a veteran of Operations Southern Watch, Allied Force, Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom, New Dawn and numerous other operations and contingencies in support of the nation's security strategy.

Soaring to Sixty: KC-135 remains backbone of air refueling

By Tinker Air Force Base Public Affairs
Published August 31, 2016

The KC-135 Stratotanker celebrates its 60th anniversary this year and from the start, Tinker Air Force Base has played a crucial role in the longevity of the jet while operating and maintaining this strategic aircraft.

In the mid-fifties, Strategic Air Command, under the direction of General Curtis Lemay, needed an air refueling aircraft that could keep up with the fighter and bomber aircraft of the day. At the time, B-52s often had to lower their landing gear to create enough drag to match the speed of the propeller driven KC-97 in flight, causing stress on the gear and burning many pounds of valuable fuel.

The introduction of the KC-135 eliminated this problem with its ability to reach speeds exceeding 450 mph while carrying more than double the off-loadable fuel of the KC-97.

Tinker's role began almost immediately after the contract for the purchase of 29 aircraft in 1954. The KC-135's first flight took place Aug. 31, 1956, from Boeing's Payne Field in Washington state.

Because of its maintenance function, Tinker has perhaps the longest continuous association of any Air Force base, as plans for the aircraft's maintenance



Crew chiefs with the 507th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., connect a drogue adapter to a KC-135R Stratotanker July 10, 2016, during RIMPAC 2016 in Hawaii. (Photo by Master Sgt. Grady Epperly)

began before the first jet was even delivered to Castle AFB, California in June 1957. Just a few months later, the first aircraft visited Tinker to become a maintenance trainer.

A U.S. Navy F-18 Hornet prepares to receive fuel from a KC-135R Stratotanker assigned to the 465th Air Refueling Squadron at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., July 20, 2016, during Rim of the Pacific 2016. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Lauren Gleason)



The Air Force's fleet eventually totaled 732 planes produced between 1954 and 1965. This fleet includes tankers, along with special mission variants for reconnaissance, electronic surveillance, VIP and airborne command posts. In 1976, Air Force Reserve Command received their first KC-135.

The KC-135 has been the stalwart refueling asset used to support the United States' readiness and war capability since reaching initial operating capability. For years the aircraft flew missions in support of the Cold War as part of the nuclear deterrence "Global Reach" capability of Strategic Air Command and other combatant commands.

The KC-135 was the primary on-station refueler during the Vietnam Conflict. It has also been the backbone of Operations Desert Shield/Storm, Northern /Southern Watch, Allied Force, Iraqi/Enduring Freedom and is now heavily tasked to support strikes against ISIS in the Middle East many of those missions are flown by crews here at Tinker.



Tankers were essential in allowing heavy fighter-bombers to reach North Vietnamese targets and return. Tinker Air Force Base's role began almost immediately after the contract for the purchase of 29 aircraft in 1954. The KC-135's first flight took place Aug. 31, 1956, from Boeing's Payne Field in Washington State. (U.S. Air Force photo)

In 1994, the 507th Air Refueling Wing began operating and maintaining the KC-135 on operational mission's here. The 507th is an Air Force Reserve Command unit and is continuously supporting worldwide contingency operations and U.S. Strategic Command's national emergency requirements with eight KC-135 Stratotankers. The Citizen Airmen of the unit are proud of their contribution to the history of this airframe.

"We take a lot of pride in operating and maintaining the KC-135," Col. Douglas Gullion, 507th Air Refueling Wing commander said. "It's an amazing aircraft but it

would not be flying if it was not for the men and women of the U.S. Air Force. The KC-135 is a true testament of the dedication of generations of Airmen past and present from engineers and aircrew to mechanics on the ground."

The Stratotanker's capabilities go beyond those of just aerial refueling. As an airlift platform, the KC-135 can carry up to 83,000 pounds of cargo and almost 40 passengers. It can also perform in an aeromedical evacuation role, capable of transporting litter and ambulatory patients using patient support pallets and a medical crew of flight nurses and medical technicians.

Even with the recent introduction of the next generation air refueling aircraft, the KC-46 Pegasus, Air Mobility Command has continued to invest in upgrades and life-extension projects for the KC-135. The latest upgrade is the KC-135R Block 45 which provides an improvement to the flight deck that provides flight crews with an updated autopilot and digital panels.

The Legacy Tanker program office headed by Colonel Mocio and his civilian deputy, Charles Darnell here at Tinker are responsible for lifecycle management of the KC-135 fleet while maintenance, repair and overhaul of the KC-135 are conducted here at the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Complex.

Mr. Darnell notes the importance of the aircraft to the Air Force's reliance on the KC-135.

SEE SOARING, p. 10

A KC-135R Stratotanker from the 507th Air Refueling Wing performs a fly over during the Star Spangled Salute air show at Tinker Air Force Base June 21, 2014. (Air Force photo by Senior Airman Mark Hybers)





Tech. Sgt. Michael Moore

**465TH AIR REFUELING SQUADRON
IN-FLIGHT REFUELING TECHNICIAN**



WHAT IS A LITTLE KNOWN FACT ABOUT YOU?

I am afraid of snakes.

WHEN DID YOU JOIN THE MILITARY?

August of 2007.

WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN?

I like to hunt anything that moves, from deer and hogs to ducks and turkey.

AS A KID, WHAT WAS YOUR DREAM JOB?

To be a police officer.

WHAT IS YOUR CAREER GOAL?

I would like to make Chief Master Sgt. one day.

WHAT IS YOUR CIVILIAN JOB?

I am an Oklahoma City Police Officer.

WHAT IS THE BEST PART OF YOUR JOB?

The people and the opportunities to travel, and I love the family atmosphere that we Okies have.

Being part of a flying squadron allows me to see the world. I've been to Japan, Hawaii, Guam and Turkey.

September PROMOTIONS



BALDWIN, JOSEPH J., 970 AACB
CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT

DE LORENZI, JO B., 507 CES
ORR, JASON, 507 MXG



MASTER SERGEANT

ADAMS, JOHN K., 35 CBCS
MOORE, MICHAEL C., 465 ARS



TECHNICAL SERGEANT

SANCHEZ, LISA R., 507 CES
THORNBERRY, BRIAN, 507 MDS



STAFF SERGEANT

ANTHONY, TAYLOR L., 507 LRS
DIGGS, CALEB W., 507 CES
FAITH, ZACKARY E., 513 AMXS
GAITHER, LATONDA M., 513 OSS
NJOGO, DANIEL G., 72 APS
THOMAS, MICHAEL T., 507 SFS



SENIOR AIRMAN

BILSBURY, KATHERINE A., 507 MDS
DONNDELINGER, ALEC, 507 LRS
ORTIZ, RUTH B., 507 CES



AIRMAN FIRST CLASS

WALLACE, MELISA J., 507 LRS



AIRMAN

FORGING THE KC-46:

NEW TRAINING CENTER OPENS TO PREPARE TANKER AIRCREWS

By Senior Airman Dillon Davis, 97th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs

ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. (AFNS) -- A new training center for the KC-46 Pegasus was officially dedicated here Aug. 30, along with the activation of the 56th Air Refueling Squadron, which will be the formal training unit for the Air Force's next-generation refueling aircraft.

The integration of the KC-46 into the Air Force is one of the top three aircraft modernization programs intended to maintain global vigilance, reach and power.

"Today's event marks an important milestone for (Air Education and Training Command) and the United States Air Force," said Lt. Gen. Darryl Roberson, the AETC commander. "Safety, proficiency and the ability to make the complex seem routine were the hallmark of the Air Force's refueling training with Altus (Air Force Base) leading the way. Today, we



U.S. Sen. James Lankford, from Oklahoma, gives a speech at the "Forging the 46" event, Aug. 30, 2016, at Altus Air Force Base, Okla. The 730th AMTS falls under the 507th Air Refueling Wing, and many of the Okies will be training on the new aircraft. The event consisted of an assumption of command for the reactivated 56th Air Refueling Squadron, dedication of the new KC-46 training facility, speeches from key Air Force and community leaders and concluded with a tour of the new facility for attendees. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman Jackson N. Haddon)

stand again, on the shoulders of giants, as we reach a new milestone in dedicating our newest formal training unit, the 56th ARS."

The new center, named the Lev-erett Formal Training Center, will be vital to future Air Force aerial refueling and joint service operations since it will serve as the first stop for all KC-46 aircrew members.

"Members of the 56th ARS are AETC's and the Air Force's first KC-46 aircrew members," said Lt. Col. Daniel Ruttenber, who assumed command of the unit. "The 56th ARS activation and dedication of the formal training unit is

truly a paradigm shift in air refueling and continuation of the long tradition of the 56th (ARS)."

Community partners made a point to recognize the unique partnership between Altus AFB and the city of Altus.

"With the KC-46 coming to Altus, a lot of good things are going to happen and it's all thanks to the community," said U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe from Oklahoma.

The 56th ARS will begin training aircrew members this fall. KC-46 aircrew students train using pilot and boom operator simulators to conduct hands-on training before in-flight training missions.

tion, nuclear standoff, global mobility is all enabled by the tanker programs managed here at Tinker," the colonel said. "We have the largest organic Air Force PDM operation. Every five days an aircraft enters or leaves this facility."

The legendary tanker, continues to be the backbone of the Air Force's air refueling fleet. The 414 Stratotankers

currently in service are spread across active-duty, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Command units across the continental U.S. and overseas bases. The aircraft is also flown by the air forces of Chile, France, Singapore and Turkey. (Greg Davis, Maj. Jon Quinlan and Capt. Joe Simms contributed to this report)

SOARING (continued from p. 7)
"Without the tankers, we don't do the mission we have to do across the globe," he said. "The tanker is core to the Air Force projection needs."

Colonel Mocio elaborated on that point by saying air refueling enables all the Air Force missions.

"Strike projection, bomber projec-

TAKING THE LEAD STORY AND PHOTOS BY TECH. SGT. LAUREN GLEASON



Twenty-five students from Tinker and other reserve units in the Air Force Reserve Command graduated from a one-week leadership course here Aug. 12.

Course instructor, Senior Master Sgt. Kenneth Wright, a Health Services Management superintendent from the 908th Aeromedical Staging Squadron at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, says the Noncommissioned Officer Leadership Development Course is taught once a month throughout Air Force Reserve Command. Each of the 24 instructors in the cadre teaches approximately three classes a year.

"This class is a safe environment for discussing real

Col. Doug Gullion, 507th Air Refueling Wing commander, speaks to the enlisted leaders upon their graduation from NCO Leadership Development Course Aug. 12, 2016, at the Hill Conference Center at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla.



Enlisted leaders from the 507th Air Refueling Wing and other units in the Air Force Reserve Command, along with 507th Air Refueling Wing commander Col. Doug Gullion, pose for a graduation photo upon completion of the NCO Leadership Development Course Aug. 12, 2016, at the Hill Conference Center.

issues that we all deal with in the workplace," said Wright. "We will try to find ways for you to cope with situations in your work center."

Staff Sgt. Mary Ly, an environmental electrical technician with the 507th Maintenance Squadron here, said the interaction made her realize the value of working as a team.

"Actually practicing the scenarios was really beneficial and gave me a basis for when tough situations happen in real life," Ly said.

Not all of the students were from the local area. Tech. Sgt. David Alton, a firefighter with the 914th Civil Engineer Squadron, traveled to Tinker from Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, New York.

"The course definitely improved my skills at writing enlisted performance reports and writing in general," Alton said. "I would recommend it to anyone who wants to be a better leader."

507th Air Refueling Wing commander, Col. Doug Gullion, was on hand to speak to and congratulate the students.

The Air Force Reserve Command NCOLDC was established in 1989 in order to equip enlisted personnel with valuable leadership training.

The five-day course enlisted leaders how to recognize leadership skills in an organization, how to recognize the impact of power in a group, how to develop team-building skills and other leadership qualities.

AIRMAN OF THE QUARTER



Senior Airman Brandy Hill, 465th ARS, holds her award for Airman of the Quarter, alongside 507th ARW Commander, Col. Douglas Gullion, Command Chief, Chief Master Sgt. Stephen Brown and community partners from the Moore Chamber of Commerce and Tinker Federal Credit Union Aug. 7, 2016. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Lauren Gleason)

NCO OF THE QUARTER



Tech. Sgt. Allen Hockenbrock, 507th MXS, holds his award for NCO of the Quarter, alongside 507th ARW Commander, Col. Douglas Gullion, Command Chief, Chief Master Sgt. Stephen Brown and community partners from the Moore Chamber of Commerce and Tinker Federal Credit Union Aug. 7, 2016. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Lauren Gleason)

DIAMOND SHARP AWARD



Staff Sgt. Jacob Keeler, 507th AMXS, is awarded the Diamond Sharp Award by the 1st Sgt. Council for his outstanding performance during Rim of the Pacific Exercise in Hawaii. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Lauren Gleason)

NOT PICTURED:
SENIOR NCO OF THE
QUARTER:

MASTER SGT. AUBRIE MISKELL,
507 MDS

COMPANY GRADE
OFFICER OF THE
QUARTER:

CAPT. KRISTINE CORSER,
507TH MXG, CGO

FITNESS EXCELLENCE



Senior Airman Jorge Martinez, 507th CES, Staff Sgt. Tylyn Dennis, 507th MXG, Senior Master Sgt. Justin Hopkins, 465th ARS, and Tech. Sgt. Jared Fritze, 507th AMXS, are recognized by Col. Douglas Gullion, 507th ARW commander, for excellent fitness scores Aug. 7, 2016. Not pictured are Senior Airman Austin Ferrari, 507th MXS, and Staff Sgt. Craig Garrison, 507th OSS. Fritze scored a 100 on his test, Dennis scored a 99.9, Hopkins scored a 99.8, Martinez scored a 98.9, Ferrari scored a 98.9, and Garrison scored a 98.5. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Lauren Gleason)

INTERTWINING THE CIVILIAN AND MILITARY WORLD

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Brian Abion

When Senior Airman Josh Lemley arrived to work that morning, he wasn't expecting the change of status in threats and immediate tension to fill the room so quickly.

Lemley's first deployment was to Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, where his unit supported the A-10 Warthog, the E-3 Sentry Airborne Warning and Control System, as well as AC-130 combat support missions against terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria.

While deployed, he and his unit were briefed regarding the threats to the base. He said their training paid off when it was time to complete the mission, and despite the dangers, he and his unit remained vigilant and got the job done. Lemley said he gained a new perspective on the world after completing his first deployment.

"Compared to being at home station, you get an immediate sense of accomplishment, especially against the Islamic state of Iraq and Syria," said Lemley. "It's all towards a good cause and it's a really good feeling."

When the crew chief with the 507th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron returned to Oklahoma before the coup d'etat in July, he was still concerned for his team back in Turkey.

The extensive training that aided him during his deployment also prepared him to garner a civilian position as a fuels maintainer on the B-52 Stratofortress at the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Complex here.

"It showed that I not only had experience with military standards and protocol, Occupational Safety & Health Administration standards, but their standards as well," Lemley said.

Lemley, a traditional Reservist, is finishing his Community College of the Air Force degree, in addition to performing regular duties and staying current on training and fitness. As a traditional Reservist, all of these tasks must be accomplished within the one weekend a month and three weeks out of the year. Lemley said he will do whatever it takes to ensure that happens and that the mission is complete.



Senior Airman Josh Lemley, a crew chief with the 507th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, locates equipment to assist with KC-135 maintenance on Aug. 10, 2016, at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma. (U.S. Air Force Photo/Staff Sgt. Brian Abion)

EVERY AIRMAN PLAYS A ROLE IN SUICIDE PREVENTION

By J.D. Levite, Air Force Surgeon General Public Affairs

FALLS CHURCH, Va. -- The Air Force is determined to prevent suicide, but you don't need to be a specialist or doctor to do that. Sometimes all it takes is starting a conversation. Everyone has a role to play. That's a key part of the Department of Defense's #BeThere Campaign, which en-

comfortable turning to for help.

"[Leaders] really need to get involved with their Airmen and get to know them personally so they can identify when things are not going well," Foster said. "They can see subtle changes in their behavior and in their personality and in their work productivity so

need help. Plus, they can always find Military and Family Life Consultants at Airman and Family Readiness Centers.

Something new the Air Force is doing is embedding Military and Family Life Consultants directly into the squadrons. MFLCs don't replace mental health or medi-

cal services, but they do provide access to a short-term counselling service. Airmen with embedded MFLCs will have increased access to this service at the point where they need it.

"We're decreasing the barriers, decreasing the stigma, increasing availability and increasing the use of services," Foster said.

"They know the culture of the squadron they're a part of and that makes it easier for Airmen to trust them and feel like they can go to them."

He said ideally by catching things early or referring Airmen to the appropriate care at the right time, MFLCs could help Airmen in all four areas of Air Force resiliency by keeping them physically, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually fit.

"The bottom line here is if you have your life well-ordered, and you are engaged in all four domains of Airmen fitness, suicide is not something you would resort to."

Recent studies have shown when one person commits suicide it can impact up to 100 other people that they knew and worked with, and eventually those numbers can impact productivity and readiness.



courages making a difference through every day connections.

"We're sending the message that it's ok to have problems and it's ok to talk about them. Having problems and talking about them with people you work with openly is a sign of strength, not weakness," said Maj. Joel Foster, Chief of Air Force Deployment Health who supports the Suicide Prevention Program with annual training. "The fact that everyone can intervene is part of the messaging we're trying to promote. Every Airman is a censor."

He said Airmen should look out for certain red flags, like changes in mood or behavior, substance abuse, indications of problems at home or domestic violence. Supervisors, commanders, first sergeants, and peers need to get to know their Airmen more personally because they're the ones Airmen with problems should feel

they can intervene early and help that Airman get the tools and the right resources that they need."

Commanders have a huge role to play in preventing suicides because they have such a large amount of influence, said Foster.

"They have the influence to create an environment that is conducive to help-seeking behavior, to promoting a healthy lifestyle and encouraging a sense of balance in life," he said. "If we have all of those factors operating, then Airmen will feel a sense of connectedness. They'll have a strong support system to buffer against the stressors of life."

There are already a number of resources for Airmen in need, such as Wingman Online or Military One Source, and the Air Force is introducing new initiatives all the time. For example, Airmen always have access to mental health clinics on base when they

UNDER ITS WING

Story by Silas Allen, The Oklahoman

Sitting in the cockpit of a KC-135 Stratotanker on the morning of Aug. 26, Capt. Dan Shaheen draped the fingers of his right hand over the throttle and pushed it forward.

The plane lurched forward on the ramp for a moment before Shaheen eased back on the throttle.

“Ooh, easy, killer,” Maj. Jenette Milburn said from the right side of the cockpit.

As Shaheen, of Blanchard, expertly guided the 136-foot jet onto a runway, Milburn, of Spring, Texas, told him about what he might expect during his pilot’s examination next month. Once the tower cleared the plane for takeoff, Shaheen again pushed the throttle forward, sending the 87-ton plane lumbering down the runway. Shaheen gently pulled back on the yoke, and the plane took flight.

Shaheen, 30, and Milburn, 42, are members of the 507th Air Refueling Wing, a 1,100-member U.S. Air Force Reserve unit that maintains and flies eight KC-135 tanker jets at the base. The unit has played a role in a U.S.-led coalition’s fight against the self-proclaimed Islamic State.

Earlier this year, several groups of airmen from the unit deployed to Incirlik Air Base in Adana, Turkey, from where they refueled bombers carrying out air strikes against the terrorist group. Some of the unit’s airmen are preparing to return to southwest Asia in December.

Training mission

On this day, though, the plane’s crew was completing a training mission, a midair rendezvous with a B-52 Stratofortress flying out of Barksdale Air Force Base, which is near Bossier City, La.

In an actual mission, the KC-135 could offload as much as 100 tons of fuel into the tanks of another aircraft. But because this mission was only for training purposes, the tanker’s boom operators would practice connecting the KC-135’s transfer system to the B-52 but wouldn’t transfer fuel to the bomber.

Other than that difference, though, the mission looked much like it would if the plane were refueling bombers over the Syrian desert, Milburn said.

“It’s exactly the same,” she said.

A few minutes after takeoff, Shaheen steered the plane west, toward the Texas Panhandle, before leveling off at 22,000 feet. Shaheen and Milburn chatted



A B-52 Stratofortress receives fuel from a KC-135 Stratotanker operated by the 507th Air Refueling Wing Aug. 26, 2016, over Oklahoma. Local media visited the 507th ARW and got the opportunity to fly on a refueling mission. (U.S. Air Force photo by Maj. Jon Quinlan)

“The B-52, an eight-engine jet the size of a house, swung into view, filling the pod’s window. The bomber *edged closer* to the tanker’s tail, eventually closing to a *distance of less than 30 feet.*”

about other traffic in the area, Milburn’s civilian job as a pilot for Southwest Airlines and the weather.

“It’s a nice day up here,” Shaheen said.

“Yeah. So far,” Milburn said.

When the plane reached the Texas Panhandle, Shaheen steered it back to the east, for the second leg of the flight. Shortly before 11 a.m., about an hour into the flight, Master Sgt. Steven Stanton stood up from his seat on the right side of the cockpit, walked through the cabin to the back of the plane and climbed down a few stairs into what the crew calls “the pod,” a cramped space no bigger than a small pup tent.

Stanton lay on his belly on a cushion, his chin resting in a device to help keep his head tilted up. In front of him sat a control panel crowded with knobs, switches, lights and levers. A few inches beyond, a

window looked out over a passing patchwork quilt of Oklahoma farmland.

About 15 minutes later, somewhere over central Oklahoma, the B-52, an eight-engine jet the size of a house, swung into view, filling the pod’s window. The bomber edged closer to the tanker’s tail, eventually closing to a distance of less than 30 feet.

As both planes hurtled from eastern Oklahoma into western Arkansas at speeds greater than 400 mph, Stanton turned three knobs on the control panel — one marked “azimuth,” another marked “telescoping” and a third marked “elevation” — with a deft touch that pointed the tanker’s boom toward the bomber’s fuel port.

When Stanton deemed the bomber within range, he pushed a black lever forward, and the tanker’s boom telescoped out even further. Stanton continued turning knobs to coax the boom into the port. When the boom reached its target, a small green light on the control panel marked “contact” lit up.

Success.

Stanton disconnected the boom and ran through the same procedure about a half-dozen more times. On most tries, the boom found its target almost immediately. Other times, it took some cajoling.

“As you can see,” Stanton said, “it’s not always perfect.”

After about an hour, the B-52 broke away and banked south, back to Louisiana, while the KC-135 turned back to the west for its return to Tinker.

Plane’s history

Although the 507th has only been flying the KC-135 since 1994, the tanker’s history is considerably longer. The plane was brought into service 60 years ago, to keep the B-52 in the air at the height of the Cold War.

Despite the KC-135’s age, defense officials expect the tanker to stay in the air for at least the next 20 years.

Maj. Jon Quinlan, a spokesman for the 507th, said that long life expectancy is due in part to a series of cockpit upgrades the planes received earlier this year. New digital cockpit displays replaced old analog instruments, bringing the tanker into the 21st century.

Earlier this year, officials greenlighted production of the next generation of U.S. Air Force aerial tanker, the KC-46 Pegasus. Although the KC-46 will be an important piece of the Air Force’s refueling capability, it initially won’t be able to replace the capacity the KC-135 provides, Quinlan said.

Proclamation

For more than two centuries, brave patriots have given of themselves to secure our fundamental rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness -- and in times of both war and peace, members of the National Guard and Reserve have stood ready to don our uniform, answer our Nation's call, and protect our way of life. This week, we recognize the important role played by the families, employers, and communities of these men and women in ensuring they can step forward and serve our country when they are needed most.

There are more than one million members of our National Guard and Reserve. Throughout the year, they dutifully train and prepare so that when they are called at a moment's notice to serve their Nation, they are able to serve with the honor and dedication that have long been hallmarks of our Armed Forces. Balancing their lives as civilians with their responsibilities in uniform, they defend and protect our people

at home and abroad. In the face of natural disasters and humanitarian crises, they are quick to respond and offer assistance; during periods of conflict and strife, they help keep us safe and protect our national interests.

These citizen-Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen deserve the full backing of their civilian employers and the promise of a secure and stable life here at home. From the businesses that seek to recruit and retain these patriots in the workplace to the supporters who provide leadership and resources, this unconditional care for our Guardsmen and Reservists and their families is part of what makes our military the greatest fighting force the world has ever known.

During National Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week, let us honor the members of our Guard and Reserve for their steadfast dedication to us all -- both in and out of uniform. And let us acknowledge the families, employers, and businesses whose encouragement and flexibility have enabled our

military to thrive, and whose support has been vital to the success, stability, and security of our Nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim August 21 through August 27, 2016, as National Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week. I call upon all Americans to join me in expressing our heartfelt thanks to the members of the National Guard and Reserve and their civilian employers. I also call on State and local officials, private organizations, and all military commanders to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this nineteenth day of August, in the year of our Lord two thousand sixteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-first.
BARACK OBAMA

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

By Ch. (Lt. Col.) Dwight Magnus



The Fellowship of the Red Bandanna

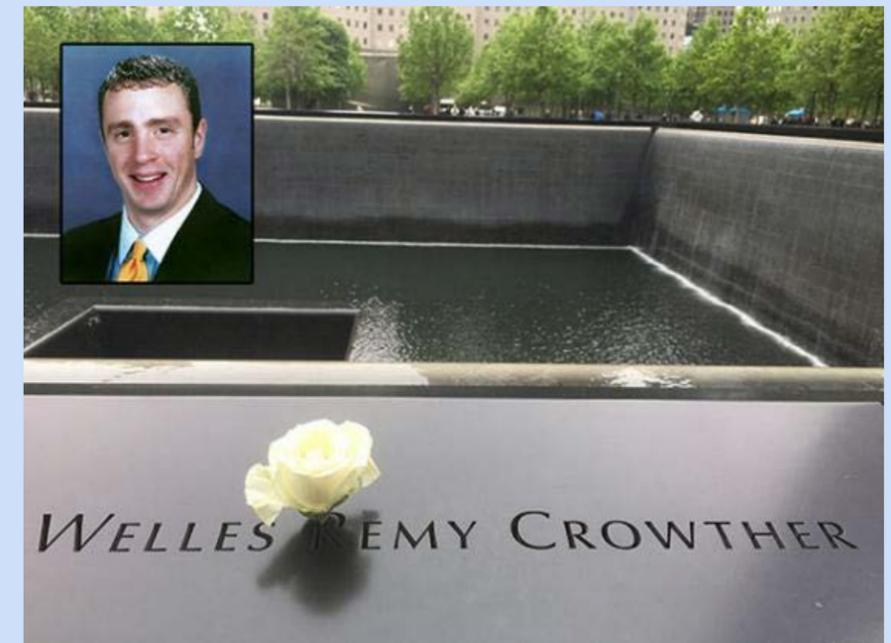
Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. John 15:13

As stories began to emerge from the survivors of the South Tower of the World Trade Center, several mentioned a mysterious young man who stepped out of the smoke and horror to lead them to safety. They did not know who saved their lives, but this they did remember this: Wrapped around his mouth and nose was a red bandanna.

For 76 minutes, the man in the red bandanna barked orders, and led people to safety down stairwells. He said, "I found the stairs, follow me. I know the way out. I will lead you to safety." He urged them to keep going down, and then headed back up, never to be seen again.

Six months later, on March 19, 2002, the body of the man with the red bandanna was found intact alongside firefighters in a makeshift command center in the South Tower lobby buried under 110 stories of rubble.

Slowly, his story began to come out. The man was named Welles Crowther, and he had graduated from Boston College where he played lacrosse, always wearing his trademark red bandanna under his helmet. At 16, he became a junior volunteer firefighter,



Courtesy graphic/911memorial.org

following in his father's footsteps. After college, he joined Sandler O'Neill and Partners as an equities trader and worked on the 104th floor of the South Tower. His dream was to become a firefighter or public servant. On Sept. 11, at the age of 24, Crowther became both, and also a hero -- the "man in the red bandanna."

Welles was willing; willing to serve and to make a sacrifice for the good of others.

He was prepared; he trained

so when the time came he was ready.

Both willing and able, Welles did not miss his moment. He went up while everyone else was coming down.

Are you willing to go up while everyone else is coming down? Are you willing to be God's representative of the moment? Are you willing to join the fellowship of the Red Bandanna?

Blessings,
Ch. (Lt. Col.) Dwight Magnus



Senior Airmen Teyler Williston and Ryan Swaim, Firefighters with the 507th Civil Engineer Squadron Fire flight, work together to flush the fire hose prior to extinguishing a fire during live fire training Sept. 9, 2016, at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla. Tinker Fire Dept. and the 507th CES Fire flight regularly conduct joint training exercises designed to train and equip the fire fighters with necessary skills and experience needed to keep citizens safe. U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Lauren Gleason