

# RABBIT TALES



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE 513TH AIR CONTROL GROUP



**AFRC's only AWACS squadron  
gets new commander**

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**PLUS:** Message from new 970th Commander | In the spotlight

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## Get the most out of your thrift savings plan

Started by a former government employee with his own Thrift Savings Plan account, TSPTalk.com is a mostly free resource to help account holders better manage their money.



The website's mission, according to their 'About Us' page, is to maximize Thrift Savings Plan retirement accounts and help others along the way. Features of the site include forums and a blog with weekly performance numbers for the various investment funds.

## Think twice before hitting the 'send' button



Forwarding an email to your personal account? Sending out a group email that includes addresses that don't end in .mil? By hitting 'send', you could be creating a vulnerability and putting government systems at risk.

The Air Force has recently deployed active monitoring software that detects emails containing user names, passwords and Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

Common examples of PII can include Social Security numbers, home addresses, lists of email addresses and date of birth.

## Promotions

Congratulations to this month's promotees!

 A1C Melissa Wells (970 AACs)  
 SrA Alecia Hall (513 OSF)   
 SrA Shelby Zimmerman (970th)

 TSgt William Gibson (513 MXS)

 Maj Adromeda Augustino (970th)  
 Maj Johnny Villena (970th)  
 Maj Cody Chitwood (970th)  
 Maj Andrew Popoola (970th)  
 Maj Colin Alexander (970th)  
 Maj Harshmir Gill (970th)  
 Maj Matt Portno (970th)

## Tinker mourns loss of 'brother' killed in Afghanistan

by Darren D. Heusel  
 Tinker Public Affairs

Team Tinker members went on about their business with a heavy heart this week, following the news that one of their own died on Saturday in a plane crash in southern Afghanistan while supporting Operation Enduring Freedom.

Staff Sgt. Daniel N. Fannin, 30, a Sensor Operator assigned to the 552nd Operations Support Squadron here, died when the MC-12 aircraft he was flying in went down near Kandahar Airfield. The cause of the crash is under investigation, but officials say there was no enemy activity in the area at the time of the crash.

"Staff Sergeant Fannin was a truly outstanding Airman who made a significant impact in both the 552nd OSS and the 960th Airborne Air Control Squadron," Col. Greg Guillot, 552nd Air Control Wing commander, wrote in an email to members of the wing earlier in the week. "From his time in both (the E-3 'Sentry' Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft) and the MC-12, we knew Dan as a dedicated professional who always had a smile on his face and never missed an opportunity to step up to get the job done."

Colonel Guillot went on to say in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the MC-12 program in 2011, Sergeant Fannin was nominated for the Collier Trophy, which is an annual aviation award administered by the U.S. National Aeronautic Association and presented to those who have made "the greatest achievement in aeronautics or astronautics in America."

(To read the rest of the story, visit [www.journalrecord.com/tinkertakeoff](http://www.journalrecord.com/tinkertakeoff))

## Cover Photo

Col. Jeffrey McGalliard hands the 970th Airborne Air Control Squadron guidon to Lt. Col. Brent Vander Pol, the newest 970th AACs commander. Vander Pol took command of the squadron on April 5. (USAF Photo/SSgt Caleb Wanzer)



# Now What?

by Lt. Col. Brent Vander Pol  
Commander, 970 AACCS

It seems with each passing day some new change jumps out in front of our Air Force lives. The current budget, global threats, a changing force, Total Force Integration, are just a few that come to mind. You can walk down just about any hallway and hear the conversations about how this or that is going to change and how that is going to affect us. I am as guilty as anyone of looking ahead and trying to figure out what this all means.

I have decided that my time would probably be better spent on the things that really never change. The Air Force I joined in 1985 was big and blue and it flew around in a world that was chock full of commies. The Soviet threat drove both the size and mission of that Air Force, so when the Soviet Union finally collapsed under the weight of its' own immorality, the Air Force changed too. We weren't as big, but still just as blue.

The Strategic Air Command, a bastion of cold war doctrine, went away and our focus shifted to the changing shape of the Middle East. Desert Shield/Storm showed the world the dominance of air power as they watched precision weapons destroy targets on television. The end of that conflict made our Air Force change again. The accuracy and precision of air power meant that we probably could adjust our force and still meet the threats we faced.

We got smaller. We moved forces and closed bases and became more expeditionary in nature. We spent a lot of time baby sitting a middle-eastern dictator. We enforced resolutions and sanctions. We stood up for oppressed people in the Balkans and adjusted our tactics and strategy to deal with smaller conflicts. September 11th, 2001 forever changed America and our Air Force. We patrolled our homeland and beefed up security at bases here and abroad. We finally finished what Saddam Hussein started.

We became even more expeditionary and deployed to provide freedom to people who had not known it for quite some time. As the curtains begin to fall on the Afghan war, we are left to wonder what will happen next. I am quite certain that what will happen is that some things are going to change.

You see, the constant thing in my career has been change itself. So what should we do, 970th? We focus on the things that have never changed in all that time.

**Our whole purpose is to get our planes in the air with people in them who know what they are doing.**

During all that time and change the Air Force was ready. When we were needed, we were ready. As a flying unit, OUR WHOLE PURPOSE IS TO GET OUR PLANES IN THE AIR WITH PEOPLE IN THEM WHO KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING. That is the same thing that was expected of the Army Air Corps and it has not changed to this day.

We will keep those two things our primary focus. We have many things we have to do, but none of them are ever going to be as important as those two. A great man once said, "keep the main thing, the main thing." (If you see that guy, tell him he left his black flight boots in the office.) Change is certainly coming, and the 970th will be ready.



## U.S. Air Force's only reserve AWACS unit receives a new commander

by Staff Sgt. Caleb Wanzer  
513 ACG Public Affairs

Lt. Col. Brent Vander Pol assumed command of the 970th Airborne Air Control Squadron, the Air Force's only reserve Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) squadron, in an April 5 change of command ceremony presided by 513th Air Control Group Commander, Col. Jeffrey McGalliard.

Vander Pol comes to the 970th AACCS from the 513th Operations Support Flight, where he served as the director of operations. He first came to the 513th Air Control Group in 2003 and has held various positions including Instructor Pilot and Standardization and Evaluation Chief.

"The 970th is not a building, a patch or a sign on the wall," Vander Pol said. "It's a collection of great people who are willing to sacrifice their time for something greater than themselves."

He succeeds Lt. Col. Matthew Conrad, who took command of the 970th AACCS in October 3, 2009. In his



farewell remarks during the ceremony, Conrad spoke of the importance of each Airman within the squadron.

"Every individual in the 970th has their own story and set of motivations," Conrad said. "As the commander, getting to know my folks and watching them make a difference has truly been one of the most satisfying privileges."

As commander of the 970th AACCS, Vander Pol heads up the only AWACS squadron in the Air Force Reserve. The squadron has played a role in operations since it's stand-up in 1996, most recently Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

Vander Pol graduated from the United States Air Force Academy in 1989 and is a command pilot with more than 3,000 flight hours, mostly in the E-3 Sentry. In his civilian occupation, he is a pilot with United Airlines and has flown over 10,000 hours in the Boeing 737 and 777 aircraft.

"You take care of the people of the unit, and the people will take care of the mission," McGalliard said to Vander Pol during the ceremony. "I have faith in you to successfully lead this squadron into the future."



(top right) Outgoing commander Lt. Col. Matthew Conrad poses with his wife after the change of command ceremony on April 5.

(above) Left to right, Col. Jeffrey McGalliard, Lt. Col. Matthew Conrad and Lt. Col. Brent Vander Pol stand at attention during the change of command ceremony.

## In The Spotlight



**Master Sergeant Frank Waskom**

**Unit:** 513th Maintenance Squadron

**Job title:** First Sergeant

**Hometown:** Houston, Texas

**Place you'd like to visit:** Italy

**Civilian job:** Equipment Specialist for the E-3

**Favorite part of your job:** Helping people help themselves.

**Little known fact about you:** I'm a private pilot. If I had enough money, I'd fly every day.

**Favorite memory from your time in the 513th:** Okinawa, Japan TDY with Aaron Thomas and Alan Mann to repair BRAT testers. Went deep sea fishing and caught Mahi Mahi.

**If you had a superhero ability, it would be:** Batman. He gets to play with all the cool gadgets, has a stealth suit and flies anytime...anywhere!



**Master Sergeant Jane Ward**

**Unit:** 513th Operations Support Flight

**Job title:** First Sergeant

**Hometown:** Oklahoma City

**Place I'd like to visit:** Israel

**Civilian job:** Construction Project Manager for the City of Oklahoma City.

**Favorite part of my job:** Helping the folks in my unit.

**Biggest pet peeve:** People who hold you up in traffic with their inattentive driving. Then they speed up to make it through a yellow/red light, but make you miss it.

**Little known fact about me:** I used to race motorcycles and won quite a few races/trophies.

**Favorite memory from your time in the 513th:** The crazy "70s" Cow Bell the OSF had several years ago at building 240. Everyone dressed up. That was really fun!

## Lt. Col. Bryan Dickson

**Retirement Date: 1 June 2013**



**How many years have you served in the Air Force?**

A total of 28 years and 7 days. I did 6 years active duty, 5 years in the Connecticut Air Nat'l Guard, and 17 years as a reservist.

**What was your biggest fear when joining?**

The day I found out that the AF wouldn't send me to pilot training. My eyes were too bad. I was pretty crushed. My eyesight was so poor they wouldn't even send me to nav school. Mother Air Force said the nearest thing she had to a flying job was a position called a "weapons controller -who flew around in the back of a jet called an A-WAX." I jumped at it.

**What do you love the most about being in the Air Force?**

The people and the adventures (TDYs). Great people made sucky TDYs fun. The TDY adventures were numerous: trips to Egypt, Jordan, Saudi, Italy, Crete, Tokyo, Iceland, Germany, Hawaii, Panama, England, Alaska (and lots more). Getting tub rides in F-15Cs. Sliding out of an E-3A that was on fire. Busting a window out of a rental car in Rosie-roads. Running anti-drug ops in Great Inagua and Colombia. Whew. Good times! My most enjoyable TDY was Crete. The Renaissance port of Chania is unbelievable. It's like Epcot only 1,000% better. The most awe-inspiring TDY was Petra in Jordan. It's most recognized as the temple from "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade." The temple is carved into the side of a mountain and is even more impressive than the pyramids. My most cherished TDY memory is from a Chinese restaurant in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. That's where I asked my wife to marry me.

**Do you have a metaphor for what it's like to be in the Air Force?**

I dunno. High school? Fun times. Great people. A little drama.

**What was your favorite position you held with the Air Force?**

I have the distinction (along with Trina Hood) of having been in every unit in the 513th/970th. And I've had some GREAT jobs! I was the very first OSF Commander; I was the Deputy Group Commander; I was an Instructor MCC in the 970th; for a short time, I was the acting Chief of Maintenance; and I am currently the 513 AMXS Commander. My favorite position? 2nd Lieutenant! Because you get away with murder!!!! Seriously, my two commander jobs were the best. Squadron Commander really is the best job in the Air Force.

**What will you miss the most?**

The sense of doing something worthwhile and important. There is nothing in the civilian sector that compares to the Air Force. It sounds corny, but our nation's security is guaranteed by the US military. And the AF's piece of the "military mission" is to fly, fight, and win. And how well we fly, fight, and win is DIRECTLY attributable to how well ops and maintenance does their job. Our jobs are important - whether you're a maintenance puke who fixes broke jets, and turns healthy jets; OR an ops weenie who flies those jets.

**Anything else?**

In closing, I'm tempted to quote Gen. Douglas MacArthur and say something about old soldiers never dying, just fading away. Or when I cross the river, my last conscious thoughts will be of the Corps, and the Corps, and the Corps. Instead I'll leave you with this: when I joined the 965th in 1986, the old

guard was made up of grizzled Vietnam-era Lieutenant Colonels - guys like Jerry Hill, Harold Phillips, and Rod Davis. Guys who flew F-4Es, Gunships, and Connies. With each successive retirement, it became clear to me that my generation was inheriting the legacy. The torch was being passed to us. We were the new keepers of the Air Force's heritage. 28 years has now slipped by. We've had our time. I'm proud of my service. I'm honored that I was able to carry the torch - keep the flame alive. And I now pass the baton to you. Care for it and safeguard it for the next generation.



## Safety Corner Tornado Safety

Remember:  
**SAFETY BEGINS WITH  
YOU!**

513ACG.Safety@tinker.af.mil

Even before the sirens go off, there are things to think about this tornado season.

A disaster supplies kit is simply a collection of basic items your household may need in the event of an emergency.

Try to assemble your kit well in advance of an emergency. You may have to evacuate at a moment's notice and take essentials with you. You will probably not have time to search for the supplies you need or shop for them.

You may need to survive on your own after an emergency. This means having your own food, water and other supplies in sufficient quantity to last for at least 72 hours. Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster but they cannot reach everyone immediately. You could get help in hours or it might take days.

Additionally, basic services such as electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment and telephones may be cut off for days or even a week, or longer. Your supplies kit should contain items to help you manage during these outages.

Visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) for tips on tornado safety and a recommended supplies list.

(Source: [www.ready.gov/build-a-kit](http://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit))

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## Fit to Fight Hall of Fame

Have a great run time, push up or sit up count from your last PT test?

Tell us on facebook message or email  
513acg.publicaffairs@tinker.af.mil!

Next month, we are starting a group-wide hall of fame for the top Fit to Fight test scores.



## Where Are They Now? Colonel Joel Winton

*How long did you serve with the 513th?*

Worked in the 507th and 513th from March 2000 to August 2003.

*What is your current position?*

Currently a civilian space lawyer at Vandenberg AFB, Calif. I pull reserve duty as a Joint Operations Planner at the Joint Enabling Capabilities Command (JECC) in Norfolk, Va.



*What was one of the biggest challenges you faced while assigned to the 513 ACG?*

The activation post-9/11 was the biggest challenge.

*What is your favorite memory of the 513th?*

Flying when it mattered after 9/11, both Stateside and in Northern Watch.

*Do you have any advice for current members?*

Don't do drugs; never settle on less than you are capable of achieving. Be as effective as you can possibly be in your particular sphere of influence. Vince Lombardi, a former Green Bay Packers coach, said something that strikes a chord: "A person ought to experience tension between where he/she is and where he/she ought to be."

*Where are you now?*

Santa Barbara, Calif.

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## Fit to Fight MVPs

**Tech. Sgt. Justin Tate**

Unit: **970 AACCS**

Score: **97.3%**

Run time: **10:24**

Push ups: **57**

Sit ups: **54**

**Capt. Frank Urbanic**

Unit: **970 AACCS**

Score: **97.3%**

Run time: **10:25**

Push ups: **57**

Sit ups: **54**