

August 2015

RABBIT TALES

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE 513TH AIR CONTROL GROUP

ANOTHER FIRST

AWACS reservists team up with E-3 program managers
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INSIDE:

AF moves to replace AWACS radio system // Feature: Service, from country to others

RABBIT TALES

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All photographs are Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated.

513TH UPDATE

Upcoming events

- Saturday – 0900 – Annual SAPR Training (970th Auditorium)
- Sunday – 1300 – Annual SAPR Training (552nd OG Auditorium)
- Sunday – 1430 – All Call with AFRC Command Chief (Base Theater)
- Sept. 12 – 1100 – 513th Family Day (38th CEIG/Tinker Annex)

Fit to Fight MVP's

Captain Byron Schalk
Unit: 970th AACs
Score: 94.3%



Major Trevor Anderson
Unit: 513th OSS
Score: 93.7%

Promotions for August

Congrats to this month's promotees!

- Senior Airman** Hunter Millard (970th Airborne Air Control Squadron)
- Staff Sgt.** Danielle Blankenship (513th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron)
- Staff Sgt.** Nicholas Endsley (513th Maintenance Squadron)
- Staff Sgt.** Courtney Redmond (513th Operations Support Squadron)
- Tech. Sgt.** David Foster (513th Maintenance Squadron)
- Master Sgt.** Dawn Hardwick (513th Operations Support Squadron)
- Senior Master Sgt.** Alphonzo Glover (513th Maintenance Squadron)

Cover photo

Maintenance reservists from the 513th Aircraft Maintenance and Maintenance squadrons pose for a group photo on July 20 at Westover Air Reserve Base, Mass., at the end of the four-day trip. Crew chiefs and maintenance specialists regularly travel with E-3 Sentry aircraft to perform launch, recovery and on-site repairs if needed. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Caleb Wanzer)



Fit to Fight hall of fame



Team Tinker

513th ACG



1.5-Mile Run

Men: **7:51** **8:57** Men: TSgt Daniel McDonald
Women: **9:44** **12:07** Women: TSgt Krystal Stalder

Pushups

Men: **110** **82** Men: SrA Robert Duncan
Women: **65** **48** Women: 1st Lt. Lily Baker

Situps

Men: **109** **92** Men: 1st Lt. Michael Doughty
Women: **84** **63** Women: 1st Lt. Amie Inman

1-Mile Walk

Men & Women: **9:15** **11:22** Men: MSgt Darrell Freel
13:57 Women: MSgt Elizabeth Staff

Air Force moves to replace AWACS radio system



By Justin Oakes

66th Air Base Group Public Affairs

HANSCOM AIR FORCE BASE, Mass. -- The AWACS Communication and Network Upgrade program office here is conducting market research in an effort to replace the existing tactical radio system on E-3 Sentry Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft.

Recently, the Hanscom-based team issued a request for information to assess potential commercial sources able to produce, install and modify components that will be compatible with the new multi-

functional information distribution system/joint tactical radio system, known as MIDS/JTRS.

The current legacy tactical radio system on Block 40/45 AWACS will be replaced by the MIDS/JTRS to support Link 16 enhancements - some of which have been mandated

“The current radio is 20-30 years old and finding replacement parts becomes increasingly more difficult as time goes on,”

by the Federal Aviation Administration by 2020.

The Link 16 Network is used by several Armed Services, and facilitates communication between other aircraft and ground forces. Beyond radio command and control communication, Link 16 allows for images and real-time video to pass among users.

In addition to federal regulations, diminishing manufacturing sources also drives the Air Force’s decision to update the AWACS communication system.

“The current radio is 20-30 years old and finding replacement parts

becomes increasingly more difficult as time goes on,” said Steven Clark, CNU program manager. “We have to replace the existing radio box, but we’ll also be modernizing the terminal and adding new capabilities.”

Some of the increased capabilities of the new unit include crypto modernization; frequency remapping; Concurrent Multi-Netting 4, or CMN4; concurrent contention reception; enhanced throughput and dynamic network management.

With CMN-4, for example, on-board battle managers will be able to monitor and receive messages on four different channels while transmitting through one dedicated line.

“The more information feeding into our intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft simultaneously, the better,” Clark said. “Battle managers will have better situational awareness and access to a larger pool of information.”

As far as the installation itself, “it’s not as simple as removing one radio and replacing it with another,” Clark said. “Factors such as size, weight, power, connectivity and available products all have to be taken into consideration.”

While the CNU program is still in its infancy, it’s gaining momentum quickly.

Program officials anticipate a request for proposal sometime during the second quarter of fiscal year 2016, with a contract award goal in early FY17.

“We’re moving forward and taking the necessary steps to ensure a successful and expedited modernization to the AWACS radio system,” Clark said.



Lieutenant Colonel James Matthey

Unit: 970th Airborne Air Control Squadron

Job title: Director of Operations

Hometown: Landstuhl, Germany...AF brat.

What did you want to be when you grew up?
An Air Force officer.

Little-known fact about you: I’m a fourth generation service member. My great grandfather served in the Michigan Guard and served under General Pershing both in Mexico and during WWI in the Calvary. My grandfather was drafted in WWII, my father (also prior enlisted) flew in Vietnam. I’m carrying on the family business.

Favorite memory from your time in the 513th?

There are many “favs.” Starting here as a CDMT in ‘97, all the deployments...and more importantly the re-deployments. My commissioning and ABM graduation, too.

If you had superhero ability, it would be:

Why stop at one? I want to be IRONMAN!

Have you watched any good shows or movies recently? Just re-watched “Gettysburg,” “The Replacements” and I’m now a big fan of “Shark Week.” Oh, and as a disclaimer, if you see me getting out of a silver Accord, it’s my wife’s car, and my son put the “Minion” stickers on the back window...not me!

An E-3G Sentry flown by reservists from the 513th Air Control Group touches down on July 19 at Westover Air Reserve Base after completing a training mission. Reservists showcased the Block 40/45 Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft to program managers during the four-day trip. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Caleb Wanzer)





“This was a great opportunity for us to come together and speak the same language.”

– Lt. Col. Chris Williams, E-3 program manager

Maj. Phil Schredl, an air weapons officer assigned to the 513th Operations Support Squadron, shows upgraded software on board an E-3G Sentry Block 40/45 to 2nd Lt. Ryan Kramer and Capt. Jeff Rodriguez, both E-3 program managers, July 18 during a training mission. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Caleb Wanzer)

AWACS reservists team up with E-3 program managers

By Staff Sgt. Caleb Wanzer
513th Air Control Group Public Affairs

For the first time in the history of the E-3 Sentry, reservists from the 513th Air Control Group invited E-3 program managers from Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass., on board to showcase the Block 40/45 upgrade during a training mission on July 19.

The program managers, who are responsible for upgrades and development of the Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft, got a first-hand look at the product of their work during the more than five-hour mission.

“It’s amazing how we all work on the same system, either on the program management side procuring the aircraft or on the operator side, we all work with the AWACS system, but we speak a different language,” said Lt. Col. Christopher Williams, an E-3 Block 40/45 pro-

gram manager from Hanscom AFB. “This was a great opportunity for us to come together and speak the same language.”

The team from Hanscom spoke with each aircrew member during the flight, learning how the upgrade has affected each crew position in day-to-day operations. Maj. Phil Schredl, an air weapons officer assigned to the 513th Operations Support Squadron, spent the majority of the mission working directly with the program managers.

“The overall interaction was outstanding,” Schredl said. “They came in with several questions and concepts that they wanted to see how they could adjust to make life easier for us.”

The team didn’t only get to look over the reservists’ shoulders, but were able to sit down at the consoles and use the software during the flight.

“I think it was really rewarding



Senior Master Sgts. Malachi Sturlin (left) and Courtney Powell (right), computer and display maintenance technicians assigned to the 970th Airborne Air Control Squadron, showcase upgraded computer hardware on board an E-3G Sentry Block 40/45 to program managers on July 18 during a training mission. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Caleb Wanzer)



Operations reservists from the 970th Airborne Air Control Squadron review documents before take-off July 20 at Westover Air Reserve Base, Mass., (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Caleb Wanzer)

for them to use the consoles and see first-hand the product that they've worked so hard on," Schredl said.

Block 40/45, the largest upgrade to date for the E-3 Sentry, also requires upgrade training for all operations and most maintenance Airmen in the 513th.

Multi-day trips away from the reservists' home station like the one to Westover Air Reserve Base, Mass., helps each aircrew member retain the certification training better, said Lt. Col. Elaine Boyd, a mission crew commander assigned to the 513th OSS.

"With some crews back at home, they'll do one training sortie, then a week or two later they'll get the second training sortie," Boyd said. "There's definitely a learning fall-back doing it that way. By doing it four days in a row, there's less of a

step back in learning and the overall retention increases."

Aircrew members require consistent training flights on the new system to maintain currency. Until the entire E-3 fleet is upgraded to Block 40/45 in 2020, many reservists will have to maintain currency on the old and new systems.

"[Block] 40/45 is a huge upgrade," Boyd said. "I like to compare it between the old Nintendo game styles and an Xbox that the kids have now. It's a huge upgrade for us."

Observing Airmen from the 513th in action with Block 40/45 on a training mission gave the program managers a better perspective, E-3 program management engineer Michael Diaz said.

"Seeing these guys in person really puts urgency at the forefront of what we do," Diaz said. "What I'm

going to bring back to the office is the necessity to do things more quickly. I'm not saying that we don't try our best already, but these guys need solutions and they need them to work."

Diaz, along with the other program managers, said they look forward to working with the Airmen who operate the aircraft again in the future.

"The biggest takeaway for me is that we need to be in constant contact with the operators and make sure that more folks from the program office get to meet and talk with the operators," he said. "An experience like this is really eye opening. Part of my goal today was to make contacts and stay in contact in the future, so I think this will be something we'll definitely do again."

Service, from country to others

By Staff Sgt. Caleb Wanzer

513th Air Control Group Public Affairs

Senior Airman Xuyen Ha, formerly a hydraulics mechanic with the 513th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, takes the idea of service before self seriously. After eight years of combined active-duty and reserve service in the Air Force, Ha is hanging up his uniform to serve in a different way.

On Monday, Ha started his first year as a medical student at the Oklahoma State University College of Medicine in Tulsa. While he doesn't know exactly which type of doctor he wants to be, he does know that he wants to serve people.

In January 2010, Ha was activated while on active duty to support the Haiti relief effort as an aircraft mechanic.

"My role was to fix the planes that we transporting goods and supplies to the medics and doctors in Haiti," Ha said. "I remember that the medics would carry bloodstained sheets away to be cleaned and all I could do was watch and continue prepping the planes for takeoff."

It was that experience that changed his life goal to serving people, he said. Later that year, Ha transferred to the Air Force Reserve and began going to college full time.

"On active duty, I took four to five classes, but I found out that if I wanted to go to medical school, I couldn't work and do school at the same time," he said. "That's why I became a reservist, so I could better focus on my schoolwork."

The Air Force helped Ha through his bachelor's degree in more ways than one, Ha said. Financial aid from his veteran's benefits helped immensely, but his service equipped him in other ways that money couldn't provide.

"My military service also really helped me mature into a more responsible adult," he said. "The discipline I got from everyday work really helped me with studying."



The grimy, hard work on the flight line also prepared him in ways he didn't expect. While volunteering at a free clinic in Oklahoma City, he found out that life as a maintainer had some similarities to life in the medical field.

"Some people, when they go to that clinic, they realize that they don't want to touch someone with diabetes," he said. "I was fine with it. After being drenched in hydraulic fluid, bodily fluids didn't bother me. And after smelling an aircraft urinal, I could handle any other smell."

Even though Ha still has at least six more years of study, he knows that the rest of his life will be spent helping others.

"Being able give people the hope of a better and healthier future is what drives me to work hard to become a medical professional," Ha said.



Our key spouses had their second meeting during the July UTA with more than 20 spouses in attendance. With a regular schedule set starting with a workday to fill care boxes for those deployed, the future is bright! If your spouse wants to get involved, look for the 513th Key Spouse group on Facebook or email the 513th public affairs office at 513accg.publicaffairs@us.af.mil. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Caleb Wanzer)

Col. David Robertson, the 513th Air Control Group commander, presents U.S. Rep. Jim Bridenstine with unit patches on July 11 from the 513th during a pre-deployment briefing for reservists at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla. Bridenstine, a pilot with the Oklahoma Air National Guard, thanked the Airmen and their spouses for their sacrifice and spoke of the vital part the Air Force Reserve plays in today's military. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Caleb Wanzer)

