

On-final

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Operation Holiday Spirit fundraiser set for December 3

The 2010 Operation Holiday Spirit steak dinner fundraiser is scheduled for Dec. 3, at 6 p.m. at the Veterans of Foreign Wars hall in Del City, Okla.

The meal will cost \$25 per person. For tickets or more information, contact Capt. Robert Atkins at (405) 734-6379 or Lt. Col. Ralph Hawkins at (405) 734-6778.

Veterans' Angel Tree needs donations

Donations are being accepted for the annual Angel Tree project benefitting residents of the veterans' home in Norman, Okla.

Master Sgt. Christine Reed and Ms. Courtney Hawkins in the Wing command section have veterans' names and their needs in a book in their office.

To help a veteran this year, choose a veteran to support. Then purchase the requested gift, wrap the item and clearly mark on the wrapping for whom the gift is intended. Then take the gift downstairs to the public affairs office for distribution. Anyone can sponsor a veteran, and multiple veterans' sponsorships are accepted and encouraged. Donations will be accepted until Monday, Dec. 13.

Aerial port squadron team makes strong showing at Reserve 'rodeo'

72 APS team wins two events in inaugural 'Port Dawg' Challenge

by Tech. Sgt. Zach Jacobs
507th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

"These guys are the cream of the crop," said Senior Master Sgt. Michael D. Knight.

The "guys" in question were Reserve Airmen from the 72nd Aerial Port Squadron here on Tinker Air Force Base.

After a two-day-long "Port Dawg" Challenge held at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga., in which 22 other APS units from across AFRC took part, Knight had plenty of reasons to say that about his Airmen.

Knight said the 72nd team won two out of eleven events at

the competition, and was one of two teams to win two events.

According to Knight, the squadron's air terminal operations center

squadron's senior leadership decided to send a team, but there was a slight problem at the time.

"Several members of our squadron were (deployed) down range," said Knight. Thus, there was little time to practice here at Tinker for the competition.

"We only practiced for one afternoon for the entire competition," said Knight.

However, Knight said that the time spent "down range" played

a major role in the team



U.S. Air Force Photo

The 72nd Aerial Port Squadron team poses with their awards on Oct. 29, 2010, after the closing ceremony of the first-ever Port Dawg Challenge at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga. The team members are, from left to right: Senior Airman Anthony Lawson, Staff Sgt. Bradley Williams, Senior Master Sgt. Michael D. Knight, Staff Sgt. Randy Owens, Tech. Sgt. Zach Walker and Tech. Sgt. Joseph Kessler. The 72 APS team won two events in the competition.

superintendent, when the competition was announced nearly six months ago, the

see RODEO, page 7

Wing members help repair home for local resident

by Tech. Sgt. Zach Jacobs
507th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

To hear her tell her story, one could say Ms. Treva Clark and her family personify the word *resilience*.

However, it is difficult to say the same about her home.

But members of the 507th Air Refueling Wing teamed

up with the local chapter of a national charity to help her and her family be more resilient.

Clark, a 68-year-old resident of Oklahoma City, and her daughter and granddaughter were recently selected by the Rebuilding Together charity to receive extensive home repairs as part of their "Rebuilding

Dreams Together" project.

Clark's home was named the winning project after the result of close to 10,000 total votes from consumers, franchisees and associates of Choice Hotels' Econo Lodge and Rodeway Inn brands.

see REPAIR, page 7

Commentary: Give a different kind of thanks on Thanksgiving

by Lt. Col. Thomas J. Finneran

95th Reconnaissance Squadron commander

On Nov. 18, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln delivered the famous Gettysburg Address.

An excerpt from that speech follows, “The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work, which they who

fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain -- that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government: of the people, by the people,

for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

President Lincoln recognized the men that died on the field at Gettysburg and challenged Americans to not forget what they did there. He also challenged all Americans to remember them for their sacrifice.

Thanksgiving is only a few days away. Every service member, civil servant or contractor working in the Department of Defense today is part of two of

the longest military conflicts in United States history. As of today, we have been fighting in Afghanistan for more than nine years and Iraq for more than seven years. We are veterans and should be proud of that.

After reflecting on the words of President Lincoln at Gettysburg, let's give thanks on Thanksgiving Day for those who answered our nation's call to military service.

O-f

Commentary: is enlisted performance reporting inflated?

by Chief Master Sgt. Phillip Browning

80th Flying Training Wing command chief

SHEPPARD AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFNS) -- The Enlisted Performance Reporting system constantly comes under heavy criticism from all ranks in the Air Force. The primary complaint is that the system is considered inflated.

So, let me simply say, “If you want it to be, it will be.”

I recently met with a group of NCOs during a professional enhancement course and received both verbal and non-verbal cues from many in attendance who feel that our reporting system is inflated.

When asked why, a few mentioned knowing other supervisors who are giving “firewall 5” EPRs to troops who are, in their opinion, average or below average performers. Because of this, some indicated that as supervisors, they weigh their decision on what ratings to give their folks based on not wanting to hurt their opportunity to fairly compete for promotion. This attitude is the one reason why our performance reporting system continues to be inflated.

lem? Change the form? Remove it as a promotion factor?

In my opinion, changing the form, removing it as a promotion factor or attempting other radical measures isn't the answer. Simply put, the solution stares at each of us every time we look in the mirror.

Supervisors first need to take time, even if it takes more than an hour, to give an honest, thoughtful and documented performance feedback to their people. Second, they need to provide verbal feedback as needed, and when necessary, write letters of counseling, admonition or reprimand to remind folks when they're not meeting standards.

This adds up to the final step: writing the EPR based on one's actual, not potential, performance during the rating period. If the first and second steps are done right, the third shouldn't surprise the individual being rated.

One argument that comes to mind is what if leaders within my chain of command question a rating? Though this may happen, I suspect it's infrequent, especially if leaders are kept informed about performance or lack thereof during

the rating period.

Even then, most of the time those in the chain of command are just doing a sanity/integrity check, as some still believe that a 3-level first-term Airmen cannot get a “firewall 5” EPR.

Remember, the purpose of having a system that is built with checks and balances is to provide the most-objective rating possible for a member. You as the rater should be able and ready to justify the marks earned by the member being rated. If you can do that, stick to your guns. If you can't, re-evaluate whether or not you've provided a fair and accurate assessment.

Another argument is “I don't want to hurt my folks' opportunity to fairly compete for promotion against peers who are given undeserved ‘firewall 5’ ratings.”

Sure, there are ramifications to lower ratings. They are there for a reason. But consider the end-state of what you've been entrusted with as a supervisor -- to build a capital “A” enlisted Airman.

You should ask yourself whether you are chartered to develop an Airman, or to create an E-1 to E-9.

How many of us have inherited someone who's an E-1 to E-9?

On paper, they walked on water. In reality, they are a disappointment.

You're just adding to the E-1 to E-9 pool if you give, and I stress *give*, your folks a “firewall 5” report who don't meet the performance standards that you set for them.

Simply put, if you fall prey to the same practice, you're just as wrong as those supervisors that you criticize.

Here's my point: focus on rating your folks based on the standards that you set for them as a supervisor, not on the watered-down practice of others.

Don't worry about what that 4 or less rating is going to do to those you supervise and let it push you into giving a ‘sympathy’ 5.

Trust me, they worked hard to earn that 1, 2, 3, or 4 rating, and you would be wrong not to give it to them.

Set the example. Provide honest feedback by laying out clear standards and expectations, and if the member is serious about his career, he will measure up.

O-f

Top five ways to prepare for ORI

by Lt. Col. Bonnie Tremblett

507 ARW Performance Manager

Someone recently asked what “top five” things we can do right now to prepare for our March 2012 operational readiness inspection.

That’s a very good question, because there are some important things we should all keep in mind about preparing for

our upcoming ORI.

First, since the ORI is our every-60 month opportunity to demonstrate our skills for Air Mobility Command (AMC) inspector General, the first recommendation is to know your job, inside and out.

Know your mission essential task lists thoroughly. Be able to demonstrate job proficiency. When you know your job, your confidence is markedly higher and you’re more likely to really shine when the environment is “IG-stressed.”

Second, know why you’re doing what you’re doing and why it’s important. We put hundreds of volunteers on the road every year; we participate in all theaters in Operations IRAQI FREEDOM, ENDURING FREEDOM, UNIFIED RESPONSE, NOBLE EAGLE and others. What we do is important.

Think about our fellow Airmen who are deployed, who

have deployed or who will deploy; then we need to be absolutely certain that what we do matters and we need to do it to the best of our abilities.

Third, remember that *attitude is everything*. If you’re not all about a positive attitude, you’re already behind. Take every opportunity to learn, ask questions, talk to one another, adopt best practices, ask your supervisor questions, and read other units’ ORI reports. Then reflect on what you bring to the fight. Everyone can be the best at leading a positive ORI campaign with pride.

Fourth, participate in our home-station and away Ability to Survive and Operate (ATSO) exercises. Be good at getting “MOPP’ed up,” and be able to do your job with your protective equipment on. ATSO applies to all of us, including our equipment, and can’t be overemphasized. There’s an expression about

wearing a “chocolate suit.” Don’t melt down because you’re not used to operating in your gear.

Also, take pride in your exercise participation and in your skill sets. Normally about one-fourth of a collective ORI grade will be ATSO demonstrations and appropriate responses. The only way to be good at those is to practice.

Finally, embrace the ORI rhythm; it has a meter to it. In a thousand-person-strong wing, only about 350 people will be tasked to deploy to the ORI. Whether you’re a deployer or you support the home team getting out of town, remember that we represent the 507th Air Refueling Wing in its entirety to Air Mobility Command and to the rest of the Air Force. We need to do our very best because it matters.

The ORI will be here before we know it, so be ready!

O-f

“You turned my wailing into dancing”

by Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Mike Jones

507 ARW Wing Chaplain

Have you ever been so down that you just can’t seem to get going? You have no energy, no motivation and no desire to do anything.

Or maybe you are so worried and anxious about something (career, marriage, relationships, money, deployment ... take your pick) that you just can’t concentrate on anything for very long so you jump from task to task without getting much of anything done.

You have? Well you’re not alone. So have I.

There are, of course, no easy answers. I have personally

found that sometimes talking to friends or a counselor can help me by getting a different slant on things.

If the depression or anxiety you experience is severe enough to keep you from doing your job safely, or brings to the surface serious thoughts about doing harm to yourself or others, then seeing a chaplain, therapist and/or a physician would be a very good idea. Another important part of the answer for me is my faith. It has played a huge role in getting me through some pretty tough times.

When I am feeling down I read through the Psalms and remember that God is my cre-

ator and sustainer, my strength and my fortress, my hope and my salvation.

God walks with me through the dark valleys of life, of fear and of despair. It is God who turns my wailing into dancing (Psalm 30:11). Sometimes it is for just a little while, but it’s enough.

For you see, my faith in God will see me through because my God will see me through. And God will see you through too. So hang in there and look to God for strength: “I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth” (Psalm 121:1-2).

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Wing reserve enlisted council plans fitness-themed contest

TREAC Weight Loss Challenge to motivate wing to slim down

by Tech. Sgt. Zach Jacobs

507th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs
and TREAC President

If you've seen the television program "The Biggest Loser," you know the efforts contestants take to lose weight and begin a healthy lifestyle.

The Tinker Reserve Enlisted Advisory Council is sponsoring a "spin-off" of that program.

The "TREAC Weight Loss Challenge" is a program designed to promote weight loss and healthy living among members in the wing, specifically the enlisted corps.

"I think the program is a great way to help jump-start fitness," said Tech. Sgt. Lindsay Newton, a commander's support staffer with the 507th Civil Engineer Squadron and a TREAC member. "With the new Air Force fitness standards and the holidays coming up, it will be a fun challenge for people to lose weight and get fit."

During the October 2010 UTA, Col. Jeffery R. Glass, the 507th Air Refueling Wing commander, noted that with the Air Force's new standards on the physical fitness test, or PFT, more than 100 Airmen in the Wing had been recognized for scoring "excellent" -- 90 points or above -- on their most recent PFTs. He also noted, however, that the Wing's failure rate was greater than 30%.

So, that day, Glass challenged those who got "excellent" scores to help other Airmen in the wing who might have struggled with their PFTs.

That's where TREAC sprang into action. Its members decided on a program to push members to get fit and live a healthier lifestyle.

It will pit an unlimited

number of teams from across the Wing against each other to lose weight. These teams will consist of four Wing members (officers, enlisted, or civilian, with at least two being enlisted), and one Wing member who has a current "excellent" score on his/her PFT to serve as that team's "coach."

Every quarter, these teams will weigh in individually or, preferably, collectively on a tonnage scale. This amount will be their baseline from which to lose weight.

Over the span of the following quarter, each team is encouraged to work out together and keep each other accountable on exercise and diet between UTAs.

At the end of each quarter, the teams will once again weigh in to find out the total weight they lost. Two teams will be declared the winners for that quarter, one by having lost the most weight by percentage and the other having lost the most weight by gross.

These five-person teams will be recognized at the quarterly commander's calls with awards. Then, the competition will begin again that UTA with teams forming and weigh-ins, just like the previous quarter.

Newton, the TREAC Weight Loss Challenge's coordinator, said the program will help those struggling with their weight to get an "extra boost" to help motivate them.

"There are people who struggle with weight who need guidance," said Newton. "I think this little fun competition will help steer them in the right direction."

Team registration will end COB of the Saturday of the

OEF/OIF stop loss benefit deadline extended to Dec. 3

Eligible applicants entitled to \$500 retroactive pay; legally designated beneficiaries may also apply

by Daniel P. Elkins

AFPC Public Affairs Office

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFNS) -- Eligible Airmen, veterans and their beneficiaries now have until Dec. 3 to apply for retroactive stop loss special pay following an extension in the continuing resolution signed by the president Sept. 30.

The new Dec. 3 deadline extends the original Oct. 21 cutoff for applications and allows eligible recipients more time to apply for the benefit.

Airmen eligible for the benefit include active, retired and former members as well as reserve and guard component members who served on active duty while their enlistment or period of obligated service was involuntarily extended, or whose eligibility for separation or retirement was suspended as a result of stop loss. Legally designated beneficiaries for Airmen affected may also apply.

To file a claim, eligible individuals may download a stop loss claim application at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/stop_loss. Applicants who were serving in the Reserve or Guard at the time of stop loss may apply by visiting the Air Reserve Personnel Center Web site at <https://arpc.afrc.af.mil/vPC-GR>.

Due to the benefit period coming to a close this year, officials at Air Force Personnel

Center here have seen and influx of applications, which has lengthened the processing period to eight to 10 weeks from the date an application is received. After processing, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service may require an additional 21 days for processing the payment.

Those found to be eligible are entitled to receive \$500 in retroactive special pay for each month they were affected by stop loss. Those who accepted a selective reenlistment bonus subsequent to being affected by stop loss are not eligible for the special pay.

More than 3,700 claims by Airmen have been approved for retroactive stop loss special pay since officials here began accepting claims in September 2009.

Air Force officials used stop loss for Operation ENDURING FREEDOM from Oct. 2, 2001, through Jan. 31, 2003, and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM from May 2 through Dec. 31, 2003. Individuals who were deployed during either operation may be eligible beyond the inclusive dates depending on their Air Force specialty and deployment return date.

For more information on program eligibility and claims instructions, call the Total Force Service Center at (800) 525-0102. 

January UTA. Weigh-ins will take place the following day. To register a team or to get more information, call Newton at

(405) 736-3278 during the week or (405) 734-7428 during the UTA, or email her at lindsay.newton@tinker.af.mil. 

Air Force Reserve creates force support squadrons

AFRC Public Affairs Office

On October 15 the Air Force Reserve Command established force support squadrons at reserve locations throughout the United States including the 507th Air Refueling Wing.

The merger came following yearlong test previously conducted by AFRC at seven reserve locations.

The merger involves merging manpower and personnel

functions with services. Combining these services in one organization is designed to streamline processes, maximize customer service and cut costs associated with maintaining separate organizations.

"The Air Force has become a leaner force," said Col. Joseph Vivori, director of manpower and personnel at Headquarters AFRC.

"As a result, our people have

to make the best use of the resources they have," he said. "By combining manpower, personnel and services under one manager, we will reduce overall costs and give our people more flexibility to respond to their customers."

"Force support squadrons are designed to bring people and services together," said Maj. Gen. Allan R. Poulin, AFRC vice commander, who approved

the test for the command. "Like the active force, we will have one agency to care for our people and manage the services that support them. It makes good business sense for us to organize the same way we deploy overseas."

Airmen and their families can expect to continue to have the same world-class support, care and facilities they've always had, command officials said. **O-f**

'Huffing,' using 'Spice' is dangerous, officials say

by Lisa Daniel

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON -- While they may be legal in some states, "designer drugs," often marketed as herbal remedies, are banned under military law and policies by the Defense Department and all of the services.

Military officials, having seen a spike in servicemembers' use of otherwise legal substances, including prescription drugs, are trying to get the word out that besides leading to a court-martial and a less-than-honorable discharge, such practices also can be dangerous.

That is especially true of the practice of sniffing, or "huffing," products such as glue, paint thinner, and gases such as butane, propane and helium, all of which are known to cause disorientation, euphoria and other symptoms, said Navy Lt. Cdr. Sean Swiackowski, the deputy medical examiner for the Armed Forces Medical Examiner's Office.

Several servicemembers have died recently from huffing, and the use, while mostly associated with young, unmarried people, appears to cut across age and socioeconomic backgrounds, Swiackowski said.

"We've found it's actually a broad range of people," Swiackowski said. A 40-year-old Army colonel -- who otherwise appeared to be healthy and fit -- died from huffing, he said.

Swiackowski said he believes the deaths, and occasions when other users were left brain-damaged, were accidents caused by people who didn't realize how harmful misusing such products can be.

"People think it's not harmful because they use it to clean their homes and desktops," he said. "To them, there's no potential injuries to themselves because these are things you get around the house, or buy in the store."

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, many products used in huffing contain 1,1 dichloroethane, a chemical highly toxic to the heart that is produced to remove grease, paint and varnish, and to make other chemicals.

The problem, Swiackowski said, is that the chemical's reaction in the body is volatile, and people can get a false sense of security from using it without experiencing a toxic reaction.

"You could use it one time and it causes a toxic event, or you can use it a hundred times,

and on the 101st, it kills you," he said.

Swiackowski said he has made it his mission to educate servicemembers about the dangers of inhalants.

"The biggest part of my job is in preventing me from having to see anyone else" in the morgue due to substance abuse, he said. "The biggest part of my job to the community is education."

"People don't realize this is drug abuse," he added. "You may say you're just going to do it one more time, but that time could be your last."

Army Col. Timothy Lyons, the chief of toxicology in the medical examiner's office, said even so-called designer drugs are dangerous, such as synthetic marijuana, marketed as "Spice," or "K-2," and *salvia divinorum*, a variation of the sage plant known as "salvia."

"A lot of these products are made in garages and homes, so you don't have quality control," Lyons said. "Each package, even under the same name, has different levels of compounds, so you really just don't know what you're getting."

Unlike marijuana and other drugs illegal under civilian law, designer drugs are not regulated or properly tested, and sellers often don't reveal their full

ingredients, Lyons said. Toxicologists know, however, that the compounds bind in the central nervous system, "and some of these synthetics bind even greater than marijuana," he said.

Servicemembers who think they know someone with a substance abuse problem should reach out to that person and ask if they can help, Swiackowski said.

If they refuse or deny the problem, consider telling their commanding officer you think they have a problem, he said.

"Confront it like you would in any system where you want to get help," Swiackowski said. "The nice thing about the military is you can always ask to see someone and get help and have it not be in your record."

"The problem is, you have to admit you need help," he added. "Lots of times, they don't think they need help because they don't know what a big issue it is. They don't realize it's so dangerous to do these drugs." **O-f**

Oklahoma's state House Bill 3241 became law on Nov. 1. The law outlaws the distribution and sale of synthetic marijuana.

Commentary: adapt to fitness to survive, thrive

Unit commander urges dropping 'dinosaur-like tendencies' toward changing fitness standards

by Lt. Col. Matthew C. Conrad

970th Airborne Air Control Squadron commander

Do you ever feel like a dinosaur? Do you feel like you have been around for a while and have witnessed a dramatic shift in the environment? Do you ever wonder what has happened to this Air Force or Air Force Reserve that we all joined a few years ago? I sure do.

Is it the mission? The answer is no. We have been doing this mission for quite some time and nobody does it better than the men and women in the Air Force Reserve.

Is it the people? Again, I would have to answer an emphatic no. The people in the Reserve are the brightest and most dedicated individuals that our nation has to offer.

If it is not the mission and it is not the people, then why does it seem that change is underfoot? I think, ladies and gentlemen, that we have swerved into it. Change is indeed underfoot; our environment will continue to change and we must adapt to it. While the concept of one weekend every month and 15 days a year is still around, the practice, as you all know, is something much bigger than that.

AEF is now firmly established in our culture. Every 20 months we will step up to the plate and fulfill the needs of "Big Blue." This is a dramatic culture shift from the Air Force Reserve I joined, yet we have embraced it and we continue to survive and thrive. What is the next threat? From my perspective, I think it is the Air Force Fitness Test.

Few could argue the benefits of having a more fit—dare I say



Photo by Tech. Sgt. (retired) Melba Koch

507th Air Refueling Wing members take part in the annual wing fun run May 1, 2010. Lt. Col. Matthew Conrad, commander of the 970th Airborne Air Control Squadron, believes that Air Force members should adapt and change to the new fitness standards, likening it to losing "dinosaur-like tendencies."



Photo by Tech. Sgt. (retired) Melba Koch

fit to fight—Air Force. It goes without saying that in a strenuous situation the more fit you are the better you will be able to perform.

Then where does all the reluctance to embrace this new culture come from? Probably from those of us, me included, who demonstrate an inordinate amount of dinosaur-like tendencies (and whose 32-inch waist "501 Blues" are now in the '80s exhibit in the Smithsonian.)

Believe me: I am familiar with the failure rates. I understand how hard it is to get and keep a 44-year-old body in shape. I know the angst among commanders who worry about their ability to accomplish the mission with soaring failure

rates. I feel for the individual who must now exercise and diet like they have never in their life. However, the goal is a healthier fighting force and the fringe benefit is a healthier you, and who doesn't want that?

I know the three secrets to passing the fitness test. I will now enlighten you. Here they are, in no particular order—train, train, train. You have simply got to do it. As a commander I can provide you the time and give you the support, but as a reservist I cannot make you train on your own time — that is all up to you. I can almost guarantee you won't pass without training.

I have a commander friend who urged his troops to be-

come eagles and not ducks. In that same vein, I would like to encourage all reservists to discard our destructive dinosaur behavior and adopt the attitude of another clearly prehistoric species: the alligator.

Have you seen one up close? They are ugly, mean, nasty and, most importantly, good at what they do.

They have not evolved one iota from Day One, yet they have adapted and survived and thrived. The last time I checked, they were nowhere close to being on the endangered species list.

So let's all get busy and strive to become alligators and leave the dinosaur attitude where it belongs—the Jurassic period.

O-f

Reservist can pursue damages for loss of job

Pennsylvania servicemember returns from deployment, finds his job given away

by Shannon P. Duffy

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

A Pittsburgh-area Air Force reservist who lost his civilian job after returning from a military deployment to Pakistan has won the right to pursue punitive damages against the companies that gave his job away.

Plaintiff Arnold Hamovitz was working as a civilian airfield manager for the 911th Airlift Wing in Moon when he was sent to Pakistan in September 2005. When he returned to the U.S. four months later, a new company had taken over management of the facility, and his job had been given to someone else. He then filed a federal lawsuit saying he had been denied the right to “reclaim” his civilian job after returning.

U.S. District Judge Terrence F. McVerry of the Western District of Pennsylvania initially ruled in *Hamovitz v. Santa Barbara Applied Research* that Hamovitz was not entitled to seek punitive damages under either the federal Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act or the Pennsylvania Military Affairs Act. But Hamovitz’s lawyer, Timothy P. O’Brien, urged the judge to take a second look, arguing that while punitive damages are not

allowed under either USERRA or PMAA, there should be nothing preventing him from concurrently pursuing a “common law wrongful discharge” claim that allows for punitive awards.

The judge agreed, and now Hamovitz may now pursue damages under a state tort claim for wrongful discharge. Judge McVerry wrote that the federal and state statutes would not be offended, and instead would be complemented, by the addition of a common law tort claim.

“Although the plaintiff could be reinstated and recover lost pay and benefits if he successfully proves his USERRA claims, there does not appear to be any statutory basis to compensate plaintiff for any noneconomic damages and emotional losses which may have resulted from defendants’ alleged wrongful refusal to hire him or for a full range of punitive damages,” Judge McVerry wrote.

O’Brien argued that the federal law is not “exclusive” and instead includes a clause that explicitly protects a plaintiff’s right to pursue additional claims under state law. And the Pennsylvania statute, he said, provides no specific remedies at all, but merely articulates the clear

public policy of Pennsylvania on the issue of preserving jobs for military reservists and banning discrimination on the basis of military service.

As a result, O’Brien argued that a Pennsylvania common law tort claim for wrongful discharge ought to be allowed for any Pennsylvania plaintiff suing to reclaim a job under USERRA and PMAA.

Judge McVerry noted that Hamovitz claims to have suffered emotional distress, embarrassment and humiliation as a result of being denied his job upon return: “Because USERRA does not provide any meaningful route to compensation for these types of alleged losses, and in light of the plain language of USERRA, the court finds and rules that plaintiff’s remedies under USERRA do not appear to be exclusive,” he wrote.

As a result, “plaintiff is entitled to seek additional tort damages, including compensatory damages for emotional distress, embarrassment and humiliation, as well as punitive damages, as are available under Pennsylvania common law.”

Hamovitz is a former Marine and a member of the Air Force Reserve. The suit said he had several previous deployments, and that “these repeated deployments were looked upon

unfavorably” by his employer.

At the time he was called to active duty in 2005, Hamovitz was employed by VT Griffin Services, a defense contractor hired to operate the Air Reserve Station. But during his deployment, Hamovitz claims that the contract was awarded to two other firms -- Santa Barbara Applied Research and Maytag Aircraft Corp. -- which began operating the Air Reserve Station under a “teaming agreement.” Hamovitz’s lawyer argued that Santa Barbara and Maytag were “successors in interest” to VT Griffin and therefore had the same legal duty to rehire reservists like Hamovitz upon their return.

But the suit says neither Santa Barbara Applied Research nor Maytag took any steps to ensure that Hamovitz’s job would be held for him, and later flatly rejected his request to be reinstated.

In court papers, O’Brien summarized the damages he intends to seek if the case goes to trial as scheduled in January: back pay of \$270,000, front pay of \$350,000, plus \$250,000 in attorney fees, for a total award of \$870,000, plus possible punitive and emotional damage awards. **O-f**

This story was taken from the Oct. 25, 2010, issue of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

RODEO from page 7

taking home awards. And that experience paid off.

The team members won the cargo-in-transit visibility, or Cargo-ITV, and Joint Inspection events, both of which required real-world know-how in which to excel.

“A big part of winning those events was due to real-world experience the team members had,” said Knight. “They literally came off their (deployment) leave and reconstitution and came to the competition.”

“This testifies to the fact that the training and the job knowledge from a deployment

showed,” said Knight.

The Joint Inspection event was particularly difficult, said Knight, due to the team only being able to use two weight scales instead of the normal four or even six, to perform.

Officials named the 27th Aerial Port Squadron, from the Minneapolis-St. Paul

International Airport Air Reserve Station, as the “top dawgs” for the competition.

Knight said there should be another Reserve aerial port competition in two years.

And Knight said the 72nd APS will send another team to it.

O-f

Deployed 507 CES Airmen make shade for aircraft, Marines

by Senior Airman
Melissa B. White

451st Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Airmen and Marines worked together here to build sun shades to improve the quality of life for a new F/A-18 Hornet squadron Sept. 23 and 24.

The 777th Expeditionary Prime BEEF Squadron, also known as the Base Engineer Emergency Force, provided the skill set and received help from members of the 232nd Marine Fighter Attack Squadron, or VFMA, to set up the structures for their aircraft.

The F/A-18 squadron from Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., is the first Marine Corps unit of this type here and has been in place for about four months.

"We're here to provide them with better facilities, and it works out great because they're hard workers," said Staff Sgt. Daniel Wissmann, a 777th EPBS structural journeyman.

"It's really hot out here so we're working together as fast as we can to get the job done."

On the work site, Airmen and Marines worked side by side to fasten bolts, move arches, secure a canopy and operate machinery in a smooth partnership.

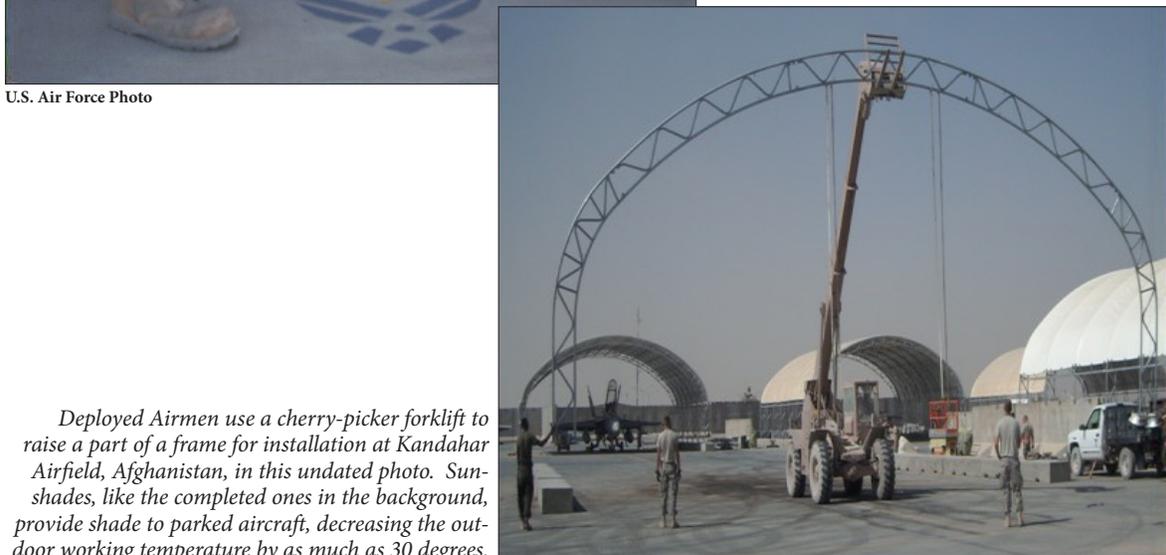
"I like being out here with these guys," said Marine Cpl. Cody Deppen, a 232nd VMFA structural and hydraulics mechanic. "It's a good change of pace from the day-to-day work. I never get the chance to work with them back in the States."

The Prime BEEF squadron is



U.S. Air Force Photo

Senior Airman Justin Fjeldsted (left) and Tech. Sgt. Samuel Neal, both of the 507 Civil Engineer Squadron, pose by the 777th Expeditionary Prime BEEF Squadron logo at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, in this undated photo. Fjeldsted designed the logo to mark projects the squadron has completed during its deployment. The squadron has been deployed since MONTH XX, 2010.



U.S. Air Force Photo

Deployed Airmen use a cherry-pick forklift to raise a part of a frame for installation at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, in this undated photo. Sunshades, like the completed ones in the background, provide shade to parked aircraft, decreasing the outdoor working temperature by as much as 30 degrees.

in the process of building 10 sun shades for the unit. Squadron members expect to complete the project in November.

It typically takes the group about a day-and-a-half to complete one, with an additional week to pour the concrete blocks and allow them to cure before they are able to anchor each structure.

Building the sun shades will enhance the quality of life for the Marines who work on the aircraft and will increase mis-

sion effectiveness.

A survey showed temperatures 30 degrees cooler under the sun shades, according to Wissmann. Summer temperatures at Kandahar Airfield can exceed 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

"Sometimes the sun makes the jets so hot that they're too hot to work on," said Lance Cpl. Drew Petti, 232nd VMFA aircraft ordnance technician.

"The shades create a great improvement in temperature," said Petti. "The improvement

is great."

The Prime BEEF squadron, which handles smaller-scale construction projects than RED HORSE units, falls under the 577th Prime BEEF Group at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, and is one of three Prime BEEF units in the country.

"I like the fact that I'm improving the quality of life and helping others, especially those who put their lives on the line every day," Wissmann said.

O-F

TAKEN UNDER OUR WING

507th Air Refueling Wing acquires Tinker's Fitness Center West

by Tech. Sgt. Zach Jacobs

507th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

Over the years, the Air Force has placed a premium on physical fitness, and bases worldwide have gone to great lengths to ensure that Airmen have access to the facilities and equipment needed to get and stay fit and healthy.

And Tinker Air Force Base is no different.

There are five different fitness centers here on base, including building 1103, Tinker Fitness Center West.

This small, yet functional center was built in an effort to serve members of units on the west side of the base, including the 507th Air Refueling Wing.

Patricia Griffin, Tinker's sports director, said the Tinker Boxing Team, for a brief period, called the West center home. They had a full-size ring, heavy and speed bags and other boxing equipment in the center.

But Griffin said on October 1, 2010, the 507th took over management and operation of the fitness center.

Griffin said the wing commander, Col. Jeffery R. Glass, had envisioned the 507th taking over the facility for some time.

There were several factors in the 507th in managing the Fitness Center West, Griffin said, including a lack of manpower from base services staff in being able to man the West center for the hours needed for members of the Reserve campus.

Senior Airmen Kevin Giles and Larnell Stokely, services specialists with the 507th Force Support Squadron, said the fitness center has taken on a new identity with the boxing team



U.S. Air Force photo

Col. Jeffery R. Glass (second from left), commander of the 507th Air Refueling Wing, helps other VIPs cut the ribbon to officially open the Tinker Air Force Base's boxing team workout space at Tinker Fitness Center West in this undated photo. The team had a full-size ring, heavy and speed bags, and other boxing equipment located at the fitness center.

Civilian workers install and adjust four new treadmills in the space where the boxing equipment once stood on Oct. 29, 2010. The 507th Air Refueling Wing officially took over operation and management of the Tinker Fitness Center West on Oct. 1, 2010.



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Zach Jacobs

gone and members of the Wing using the facility more often.

Giles said there are better fitness opportunities for Wing members to fit a workout into their schedules, "especially those who need to pass their PT tests."

Giles said that although the center is operated by members of the Wing, the doors are still

open for all patrons authorized to use base fitness facilities.

Stokely said that there is a wide range of people who exercise there, including retirees, contractors and people from the nearby Navy ammunition detachment.

Stokely and Giles said that with the Wing taking over the center, some of the equipment

has been relocated, namely that of the base boxing team, leaving quite a bit of empty space in the building.

But they said that's about to change.

"The plan is to occupy as much free space as possible with new equipment," said Stokely.

Giles said the new equipment planned to be installed includes new treadmills, leg weight machines, medicine balls and yoga mats. He added that the free weight room will become a multipurpose room for plyometrics, aerobics, yoga and video-based workouts, like P90X and Insanity.

Equipment, however, is not the only thing to be upgraded.

Giles said that plans are in the works for FSS staffers to get educated to be Cooper Institute-certified personal trainers.

Although the Tinker Fitness Center West is the same building that most Wing reservists have known about, the changes in store for the center should help them achieve their fitness goals more easily.

Stokely said some people he's talked to are excited about the improvement plans in store for the fitness center.

And Giles said he hopes the positive attitudes and proper military bearing he and Stokely bring to the center will inspire more people to choose the Fitness Center West for their daily workouts.

Hours of operation are 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays and 6:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. during UTAs.

For more information, contact Corie Wells at (405) 734-5607 or the Fitness Center West at (405) 734-2227.

O-f

REPAIR from page 7

Clark and her late husband bought their home in 1973. But the problems began on April 19, 1995, the day of the Murrah Federal Building Bombing in Oklahoma City. The blast literally split her home in the living room and kitchen.

Her husband was also diagnosed with cancer that year.

In 1999, a large rainstorm caused a tree to fall on the house and split the garage.

Since 2004, she's done without hot water in her home.

And within the past four years, ice, hail and rainstorms have created holes in the roof, leading to water leaks, a collapsing ceiling and a major health hazard: a rat infestation.

During this time, she received no help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA.

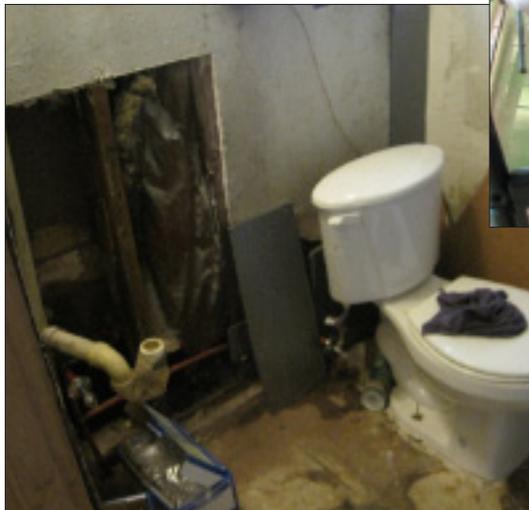
Additionally, Clark is partially blind and has heart problems, all while she is caring for her 30-year-old daughter, a single mother, who is recovering from a kidney transplant.

Again, *resilience* is a word that could come to mind when imagining their situation.

But, in conjunction with the national "Make a Difference" week, seven Wing members and two family members made a major difference for Clark and her family.

Senior Master Sgt. David Liszeski, the career advisor for the 507th Mission Support Group and a Rebuilding Together team member, said

(BELOW) Ms. Treva Clark's bathrooms were in serious need of repair. The Rebuilding Together team replaced her toilet, cut out and replaced rotting pieces of wallboard, and replaced water lines for all plumbing fixtures in the house. Plumbing repairs throughout the house totaled more than \$10,000.



U.S. Air Force Photo

the work was extensive.

The team built two functioning bathroom vanities complete with faucets, emergency shut off valves and drains. They also replaced two tub and shower valves with chrome trim and re-plumbed hot and cold water lines for two toilets and two sinks, and replaced a washer box and drains.

The team also replaced the wallboard in the water heater cabinet and installed a 40-gallon electric water heater inside, a new frost-free faucet outside, and a sewer cleanout plug on the side of house.

The Rebuilding Together also gave her kitchen a good work-over, including replacing the

hot and cold water lines and cleaning out the drains for her sink, dishwasher, refrigerator and washing machine.

Liszeski said there's a bit more work to do, including sealing leaky kitchen and laundry drains in the foundation of the house and installing new drains in their place. The additional work should be completed by the middle of

November, said Liszeski.

At a gathering of volunteers, underwriters and sponsors, Treva Clark addressed the crowd. She thanked all who helped her out, especially the Wing's members who stepped up and lent their knowledge and efforts.

She said frequently that God had blessed her and her family.

O-f

U.S. Air Force Photo



(TOP) Senior Master Sgt. Treva Ragland (left) talks to Ms. Treva Clark about her home and the problems Clark has endured. (BOTTOM) (Left) Ragland, Senior Master Sgt. Liszeski (right), and Ms. Treva Clark and her daughter pose in front of the Clark home on the day of the work project.



U.S. Air Force Photo

What do you think of the new *On-final*? Do you like the changes you've seen from editions past? Are there changes or additions you'd like to see? The 507th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs staff wants to hear from you! This is, after all, your paper. We are also accepting questions for the "Ask a chief/colonel..." and "Getting fit to fight..." columns.

Please email your questions and/or comments to 507arw.pa2@tinker.af.mil.

Getting fit to fight...

by Tech. Sgt.
Lindsay Newton
507th Civil Engineer Squadron



In our busy lives, it's hard to find time to exercise amid work, meetings, appointments, kids' activities, school functions, vacations and many other events. So how do we reservists find time to get in the workouts we need to pass our grueling fitness test?

As a full-time wife and mother who puts in a 40-hour-long work week, chases around a toddler, shuttles two other youngsters to baseball and soccer practices and games, and makes monthly UTAs, I have figured out a few things that might be helpful to others in the Wing who might be in my shoes.

If you don't have access to a gym on a regular basis, use your outdoor resources. If you take kids to sports, bring your running shoes with you and find an area to run or walk while they practice. Or at games, take them 20-30 minutes early to warm up beforehand to get a quick walk or run in, if the coach or another parent is there. If you are at home, strap your toddler in the stroller or let the older kids ride their bikes, and take

a walk around the neighborhood.

While at home, take a few minutes out of your day to knock out some pushups or crunches. Do 10 pushups each morning when you get out of bed, or do them at night before you go to bed. If you watch TV with the family, do crunches during the commercials. Add more repetitions with time as they get easier to do.

Also, remember little things like taking the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator, or parking at the far end of the parking lot instead of the closest spot you can find. Little changes in your daily routine can make a long-term difference!

Additionally, consider working out with a partner. Whether it's your spouse, a friend, or your child, having someone to work out with is great motivation. A partner can help pass the time and keep you accountable for what you do!

Another issue to address is working out during and after pregnancy. To the moms (and moms-to-be) out there: as someone who had a baby 1-½ years ago, I was very fortunate to be able to lose the baby weight very quickly in big part by staying active during my pregnancy.

One suggestion is walking.

It's not only the simplest form of exercise, but it's a beneficial one you can do during and after your pregnancy with your child in a stroller.

Swimming is another great workout during and after pregnancy. It's a low-impact activity that gets your whole body moving, and it can also help alleviate pressure on your back.

And although it might look difficult, yoga is a great form of exercise antepartum and postpartum. The stretches can help with any back or leg pain from your growing belly! Also, some yoga classes at fitness centers and yoga DVDs are pregnancy-specific and can also include workouts to help you get back into shape.

Or, if you're looking for a more thorough pregnancy workout plan, look on the Internet. There are several great Web sites with various workout plans to help get you back into shape.

Ultimately, ensure you don't do anything too strenuous that might put your baby or yourself in danger. Talk to your doctor about an exercise and/or diet plan that's right for you. Staying active benefits you in so many ways. It keeps your blood pressure down, helps with lower back and leg pain, and boosts your energy levels!

In summary, it's hard for many of us to make time to get fit to fight. We who work multiple jobs (civilian career, the Reserve and family) must find the time to get the exercise we need, regardless if it's a dedicated daily span of time or taking a few minutes several times a day. And we moms going through or having gone through pregnancy usually have a tougher time to keep the weight down and stay fit. But, as the adage goes, where there's a will, there's a way. **O-f**

Tech. Sgt. Newton is a management analyst with the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center and a commander's support staffer with the 507th Civil Engineer Squadron.

"Getting Fit to Fight..." is an informational and discussion column. If you have any medical issues, you are urged to see your primary care manager.

If you would like to ask a wing "expert" a fitness question, or would like to be the fitness "expert" for the month, send an email to 507arw.pa2@tinker.af.mil.

All pertinent questions will be answered by the month's columnist, and the best questions and answers will be published next month.

Employer support orientation flight scheduled for Dec. 3

by 507th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs Staff

Members of the 507th Air Refueling Wing are invited to nominate their employer for the employer support orientation flight scheduled for Friday, December 3.

The Wing tries to host local employer support flights twice a year.

"The employer support orientation flight has been a regular event for our unit," said

Lt. Col. Richard Curry, chief of 507 ARW Public Affairs.

Curry said employer support flights are traditionally sponsored to acquaint business leaders who employ reservists with the Air Force Reserve mission. These employers gain an understanding of how their support affects the overall defense of the nation, he said.

Curry said wing reservists may nominate their employers by filling out the nomination

form which will be sent out to everyone via e-mail and submit it to the public affairs office.

Space is limited on these flights so Public Affairs asks members do not nominate employers for repeat flights and submit only one nomination per reservist.

"If we are unable to fly your employer on this mission, watch for future announcements and please try again," said Curry.

All nominations should be

submitted to the public affairs office by COB of the Sunday of the November UTA to allow time to contact employers.

For more information, contact Public Affairs at 734-3078.

To nominate an employer, deliver the completed nomination form located on page 12 of this issue to the public affairs office in Building 1043, or send an email with the same information to richard.curry@tinker.af.mil. **O-f**

507 ARW RECRUITERS

Senior Master Sgt.
Marvin Greene
(senior recruiter)
Tinker AFB, OK
(405) 734-5331



Tech. Sgt. Jackie
Harris-Sanchez
Moore/Norman, OK
(405) 217-8311

Master Sgt.
Melissa Melichar
(in-service recruiter)
Tinker AFB, OK
(405) 739-2980



Master Sgt.
Marcel Jacques
Midwest City, OK
(405) 733-9403

Tech. Sgt.
Adam Thomas
Midwest City, OK
(405) 733-7639



Master Sgt.
Stephan
Kimbrough
Vance AFB, OK
(316) 759-3766

Master Sgt.
Ronald Gregory
Altus, OK
(580) 481-5123



Staff Sgt.
Senecca Collins
Tulsa, OK
(918) 250-3400

Master Sgt.
Stephan Kimbrough
(in-service recruiter)
McConnell AFB, KS
(316) 759-3766



Tech. Sgt. Jason Sommers
McConnell AFB, KS
(316) 681-2522

October/November 2010 promotions

Airman:

Harmon, Tara M. 507 LRS
Kane, Katrina D. 513 OSF

Airman First Class:

Allen, Sada B. 507 MEDS
Burris, Anthony D. 507 SFS
Herman, Hannah R. 507 AMXS

Senior Airman:

Abbott, Kristen B. 35 CBCS
Flemings, David 507 CES
Norman, Justin C. 507 AMXS
Salvatori, Jason M. 507 LRS

Staff Sergeant:

Arkel, Matthew E. 507 LRS
Drake, Regine A. 507 MSF
Esparza, Carrie E. 970 AACCS
Haus, Nicholase E. 507 AMXS
Kiggins, David P. 513 AMXS
Kim, Christopher B. 507 MXS
Nightingale, Emily L. 513 AMXS
Sproles, Justin T. 507 AMXS
Taylor, Victoria L. 507 MEDS
Triano, Ernest T. 72 APS
Triplet, Paris A. 507 CES
Wegner, Elaine N. 507 CES
Wichman, Brandon C. 507 SFS
Yanney, Joseph P. 513 ACG

Technical Sergeant:

Becerra, Fabian A. 507 CES
Belcher, Ryan W. 507 OSF
Erford, Wyatt A. 72 APS
Fletes, Celeste 507 SVFT
Gerth, Creston D. 507 MEDS
Jordan, James M. 72 APS
McNeil, Leo G. 507 MXG
Quarles, Chandra L. 35 CBCS
Richesin, Jeffery L. 72 APS
Stauda, Dustin L. 507 MXS

Master Sergeant:

Begay, Bob Jr. 513 AMXS
Horr, Eric E. 35 CBCS
McLean, Edwin L. 507 MXG
Taylor, Ernest T. 72 APS

Senior Master Sergeant:

Allen, Jeremy M. 513 AMXS

****NOTE: Master Sgt. Eric Horr and Tech. Sgt. Leo McNeil were promoted to their new ranks through the Performance Enhancement Program.**



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Grady Epperly

Here's the handoff Col. Rodney Bryan (right), outgoing commander of the 507th Mission Support Group, watches as Col. Jeffery R. Glass (left), 507th Air Refueling Wing commander, hands the guidon of the 507th Mission Support Group to its new commander, Lt. Col. Mary Ann Lutz (center), at a change of command ceremony in the fuel cell hangar here October 3, 2010. Chief Master Sgt. David Dickson, the group superintendent, stands by to receive the guidon from Lutz.

Wing names quarterly award winners

The 507th Air Refueling Wing announced its quarterly award winners for the third quarter 2010 during the wing commander's call July 10 at the Tinker Air Force Base theater.

The winners are:

Airman of the Quarter: Senior Airman Sara Mesenbrink, 507th Communications Flight

Noncommissioned Officer of the Quarter: Tech. Sgt. Amy Preskitt, 507th Logistics Readiness Squadron

Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Quarter: Senior Master Sgt. Richard Stull, 507th Maintenance Squadron

Company Grade Officer of the Quarter: Capt. Patrick Mitchell, 507th Security Forces Squadron commander



Employer orientation flight nomination form

Employer's name/title

Employer's phone/fax/email

Company name

Company address

Reservist's name/rank

Reservist's unit

Reservist's business phone

Reservist's home phone