

# On-final



Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma | December 2010 | Vol. 30, No. 11

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Medical group to give flu shots until December 4

The 507th Medical Group immunization clinic is scheduled to continue influenza vaccinations on Saturday, December 4 from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. This year's flu shot includes the H1N1 vaccine. 507 MDG is required to vaccinate 90% of wing personnel by December. They still have enough of the vaccine to immunize the rest of the wing's reservists. However, family members should see their primary doctors for their flu shots. Those who have been immunized elsewhere should bring proper documentation to the immunization clinic for them to update their system. For more information, contact Tech. Sgt. Andrea Talley or Maj. Michelle Wollenzin at 734-2487 or 734-3151.

## Wing supports USSTRATCOM exercise

by Lt. Col. Richard Curry  
507 ARW Public Affairs Chief

TINKER AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. -- The 507th Air Refueling Wing joined with other Air Force airlift and tanker units recently to participate in a U.S. Strategic Command-led exercise.

GLOBAL THUNDER 2010 is a USSTRATCOM-led annual exercise focused on providing maintenance, battle staff and force support training with primary emphasis on exercising nuclear command and control capabilities.

The GLOBAL THUNDER exercises are designed to reflect the ongoing evolution of USSTRATCOM and its component commands. This exercise provides the opportunity to incorporate the most current technology and techniques in support of these efforts. Just as technology changes, so do the threats.

This annual exercise provides USSTRATCOM the opportunity to constantly hone its abilities to deter, dissuade



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Zach Jacobs

507th Air Refueling Wing members pull a hose from a fuel truck to the fuel connector on a KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft as a part of Exercise GLOBAL THUNDER 2010 at Tinker Air Force Base on November 6, 2010. The exercise tested Stratotanker refueling team responses to changes in alert status.

and defeat current and future threats to the United States and our allies.

During the exercise, wing participants worked together coordinating maintenance and force support for our tankers, including demonstrating the wing's ability to generate KC-135 tankers and crews to alert status for rapid response.

Air Force officials state, "The nuclear enterprise remains, today and for the foreseeable

future, the foundation of U.S. deterrence strategy and defense posture.

"As long as it is U.S. policy to deter others from using or developing nuclear weapons, and to maintain a safe, secure and effective nuclear capability, it will be necessary to provide training and to measure the readiness of our forces and the effectiveness of our procedures under simulated crisis conditions." **O-f**

## Annual wing Angel Tree project to benefit nearly 300 veterans

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

The thoughts of many of us turn to shopping, parties, and gift-giving this time of the year.

But since 2000, a special program put on by members of the 507th Air Refueling Wing has ensured that our local military veterans are not

forgotten during the holidays.

The wing's Angel Tree project is now entering its tenth year and is still going strong.

Jeannie Hanks, a recreational activities specialist at the Norman veterans' home, said although two other organizations in the local area also give gifts to veterans at the home at Christmastime,

the 507th Angel Tree project is the largest contributor to the veterans home every year.

"You are the only ones we count on every year," said Hanks about the 507th, adding that the wing contributes more than 90 percent of all gifts given to veterans at the home.

Wing members select names of veterans and their needs

from a list given to the wing by the veterans' home. Those veterans list their gift requests and the wing members purchase gifts for the veterans they've selected.

Once a member purchases and wraps a gift, he/she then takes the gift to the public affairs office for distribution.

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# 'Tis the season for inspections



by Colonel  
Michael F. Mahon

Vice Commander, 507th  
Air Refueling Wing

Congratulations on a job well done for 2010's alphabet soup of requirements (UCI, LCAP, ASEV, HSI, ORI, NORI, AEF)! However, remember that the wing's challenges continue.

To prepare for ORI in March 2012, many wing members will be carrying out a herculean effort to ensure that we attain the highest level of readiness in time to peak for the big event. To that end, those members will volunteer their time and expertise as planners, EETs and observers, or will augment the IG as associate inspectors. If you are interested in being a part of that, please contact your unit's EET.

Having just returned from my fourth inspection with the IG team, I would like to share

some personal takeaways.

First, remember that attitude is everything. Stay in character and treat all injects as you would every day, letting the IG call the end game.

Next, "Fight your Wing" means to fight as a cohesive organization, and not against our own best interests.

Finally, ensure your conversations with the IG are strictly business: keep your eyes on the prize.

As we prepare for the upcoming ORTP events, I ask you to take to heart some tips from a recent IG newsletter.

EOC-led attack response drills upon arrival at a deployed location are highly effective in establishing standardized base protection capabilities. Additionally, those same drills improve information flow and increase efficiency of post-attack response capabilities.

Also, immediate "hot washes"

after attack drills are proven to enable continuous proactive improvement and exchange of ideas. Plus, they are a great opportunity to establish standard procedures and checklists to avert costly errors.

Please remember, repeated training events and drills ensure a dependable and reliable level of response from all participants. The crawl-walk-run method for ORI preparation that is summarized in the ORTP construct has a proven track record and the team behind our involvement has the wing's best interests in mind. Let's support our fellow Airman, as they have been tasked with a complex, detail-oriented, labor-intensive, vital and often thankless undertaking.

Again, thank you all for what you have accomplished in 2010. I wish everyone a joyous holiday and peaceful New Year and I look forward to success in a very busy 2011. **O-f**

## On-final

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*All photographs are Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated.*

## 'You are key components'

by Lt. Col. Bryan Dickson

513th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron  
Commander

As a commander, one of my jobs is to speak with folks who decide to leave our unit. Some of them leave because their enlistment is up. Some leave because their personal situation has changed and the Reserves no longer fit into their "game plan." Some folks leave because they have hit or surpassed 20 years and are eligible to retire.

No matter the reason, whenever I'm visiting with folks who are planning to leave, I always think of Todd Leiss.

Todd retired from active duty in 1998 and gave a very memorable farewell speech.

One of his key points that impacted me deeply and has always stuck with me was this: he had a chance to stay for four more years, but nobody took the time to say, "Hey - we appreciate you and the work you do. We understand if you want to leave, but would love for you to stay." In Todd's own words, *...I was offered four more years in the Air Force. I received a letter that said, "Mark this box if you want to stay and mark this box if you will retire at 20." If they wanted me to stay, maybe one person on the Wing staff could have talked to me and offered me a reason to stay. If they wanted me they would*

*have said that I was valuable, and that they needed me and my experience...*

The fact is, each and every one of you *is* appreciated. The work you do *is* important. The experience you have *is* difficult to replace. The 513th and the 507th *need you* to accomplish the overall mission: to FLY, FIGHT, and WIN! You are *key components* to that success.

I make a point of asking everyone who sits in my office to consider staying. And I'm asking you now: if your enlistment is coming up, consider staying. We need you, we want you, and we value your service. **O-f**

# Commentary: 'The back-breaking road to recovery'

by Staff Sgt. Marshall Brace  
22nd Air Refueling Wing

MCCONNELL AIR FORCE BASE, Kan. (AFNS) -- As someone who has been physically fit his entire life, I never thought I would fall into the category of somebody who had to overcome a fitness challenge.

However, a few months after completing my first marathon, all that changed while on vacation in Beijing in June 2008.

I was enjoying the day on the Great Wall of China with my wife, Megan, when I leaned on the wall to pose for a picture. The unkempt wall crumbled and I fell 30 feet into the Chinese jungle.

A few hours later, in a Chinese emergency room, we learned that I had fractured two vertebrae, compressed a third to half its original size and had a small puncture in my left lung.

The next morning I underwent emergency spinal surgery and had two rods and four screws installed into my spine to stabilize the compressed vertebrae and prevent paralysis.

Ten days later, I was released from the hospital in China and returned to my duty station at Kadena Air Base, Japan, to start my recovery.

To say my recovery was rough would be an understatement. I had to relearn how to walk, sit up, climb stairs and rely on my pregnant wife to push me around in a wheelchair. I attended physical therapy and did my daily exercises religiously.

Four months later, after confirming that my bones were no longer broken, I was allowed to start a 30-minute routine of

walking and running.

Although it was great to be jogging again, even if it was only for a few minutes, I couldn't wait to feel strong enough to go for a real run. I had set my mind on running another marathon and was anxious to train again.

In May 2009, almost one year after breaking my back, I begged my doctor to remove my physical limitations profile so I could complete my annual physical training test.

The clinic staff was surprised by my unusual request, but they complied. It was important to me to get off of a profile in less than a year, so I wouldn't be eligible for a medical evaluation board.

Leaders at work had been very supportive. As I am a crew chief, they had placed me in a work center that was conducive with my recovery.

The Air Force is important to me and its core values are something I strive to live by. Thus, I felt it was my duty to prove that I was still fit to fight.

I successfully passed my PT test. I maxed out the waist circumference and pushups. Though I wasn't able to do sit-ups, I completed the run in less than 12 minutes. My wife and baby daughter surprised me with a Superman cake to celebrate my success on my "Great Fall Anniversary."

Although my doctors were beyond excited with my progress, I was still in a lot of pain, due to the hardware I received in China. I knew that while the screws and rods were in my spine, I could never get back to being the athlete I was before my injury. Although I was not enthusiastic to start


the recovery process all over again, I found an orthopedic surgeon who would remove the hardware, and I had my second spinal surgery in October 2009.

With the hardware removed, I finally began to feel like myself again. I set my sights on completing another marathon, and set obtainable, short-term goals to help mark my progress along the way.

In April 2010, I ran my first 5K race since breaking my back. Then in June, two years after the initial injury, I passed all components, including sit-ups, and scored an excellent on my PT test. I finished strong at the Air Force Half Marathon in September, with a time of 1:45 and felt like I was ready to take on a full marathon.

In October, one year after my second back surgery, I crossed the finish line of the Wichita Marathon in 3:50. It was a personal best -- 30 minutes faster than my first.

Success doesn't always come easy. I had setbacks and frustrations with my progress and pain, but then I would remember how lucky I was to be alive and walking. The doctors told me that most people who fall 30 feet either die instantly or are permanently paralyzed. They said I owed my survival to my healthy physical condition because my strong back muscles held my broken bones in place after my fall.

It is my belief you can achieve anything you set your mind to. Stay positive, and remember you make time for the things that are important to you. If you make fitness a priority, set achievable goals and stay dedicated to yourself, nothing is unobtainable. 

Chaplain's corner:  
'String him up'  
by Chaplain (Lt. Col.)  
Mike Jones

507 ARW Wing Chaplain

I once heard a story - true or not, I don't really know - of a woman who was out Christmas shopping with her two children.

After hours of looking at row after row of toys and everything else imaginable and her children asking for everything they saw, she finally made it to the elevator.


She was feeling what so many of us feel during the holiday season - overwhelming pressure to go to every party, taste all the holiday food and treats, get that perfect gift for every single person on our shopping list, and make sure we don't forget anyone on our Christmas card list.

Finally the elevator doors opened to reveal a crowd already inside. She pushed her way in, dragging her two kids and all the things she bought.

She was so exasperated that when the doors closed she couldn't take it anymore and loudly proclaimed, "Whoever started this whole Christmas thing should be found, strung up and shot."

From the back of the elevator came a quiet, calm voice, "Don't worry, we already crucified Him."

For the rest of the trip down the elevator it was so quiet you could have heard a pin drop.

Don't forget this year to keep the One who 'started this whole Christmas thing' in your every thought and deed. It could make all the difference between enjoying this holiday season or being overwhelmed by it. 

# Review aims to streamline ART hiring process

by Daniel P. Elkins

Air Force Personnel, Services and Manpower Public Affairs

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas -- Personnel officials from the Air Force Reserve Command and the Air Force Personnel Center met here Oct. 26 through 28 to begin steps in reducing the timeline of the hiring process for air reserve technicians, or ARTs.

Leaders from AFRC and AFPC met with civilian force integration officials to identify present challenges, assess performance gaps and set goals for reducing the hiring process by 50 percent. Their efforts also are intended to tackle a 15-percent ART vacancy rate.

An ART is a full-time federal civil service employee who serves in a position that requires an active Reserve assignment in a Reserve unit. ARTs account for approximately 14 percent of

Air Force Reserve Command personnel but make up 70 percent of the command's full-time staff. Traditional reservists make up 80 percent of AFRC, while civilian employees represent the remaining 6 percent.

Officials at AFPC and at Headquarters AFRC have worked diligently to identify issues in ART hiring and are working hard as a team to reduce processing times over the next few months.

"ARTs are responsible for training our traditional reservists and ensuring they remain proficient in their core jobs and wartime skills," said Col. Michael McCully, director of AFRC Manpower, Personnel and Services at Robins Air Force Base, Ga.

"Our technicians also maintain day-to-day continuity in their units. Vacancies in our ART force affect unit readiness,

so being able to bring ARTs on duty sooner will increase Air Force mission capabilities and improve unit morale throughout the command," said McCully.

Officials are closely examining each step of the process as well as the "handoffs" between the command and AFPC to make the overall hiring procedure more efficient.

"The intent of this review is to eliminate bottlenecks and clarify requirements for each step in the hiring process," said Michelle LoweSolis, the director for force integration at AFPC. "Not only will this bring critical assets on duty more quickly, it will help stem any cascading effects."

The review comes as Air Force officials move to implement a single staffing tool through USAJOBS beginning Nov. 15 that will move the service closer to an 80-day hiring

process initiative directed by the president earlier this year. USAJOBS will allow both internal and external candidates to apply through [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov) from which a single referral list will be generated for hiring managers.

AFRC leaders also have set their sights on that 80-day target, hoping to cut the current 166-day average by more than half. Officials hope to shave much off time in each step of the hiring process while also streamlining "handoffs" between each step.

Members from both AFPC and AFRC have formed a team to perform an ART value stream map analysis that will continue the review process. The team will review its progress with senior leaders in early January to ensure success.

To learn more about ART positions, visit the AFRC website at [www.afrc.af.mil](http://www.afrc.af.mil). **O-f**



**Airmen in the making**  
Twenty-two members from the Choctaw, Okla., High School Junior ROTC pose in front of a KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft at Tinker Air Force Base on November 5, 2010. Their four-hour tour of the 507th Air Refueling Wing included a complete tour of a Stratotanker and a visit to the 72nd Security Forces Security Squadron complex, where they witnessed a military working dog demonstration and a military weapons display at the armory.

Photo by Lt. Col. Richard Curry

## Preparing for winter weather

Here are some tips from the wing safety office, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to prepare your home, car and family for the winter weather.

### At home:

- \* Install foam weather stripping around windows and doors that leak cold air inside your home.
- \* Insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic and allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing.
- \* Detach all garden hoses from your house and bring them into your garage or shed.
- \* Install winter covers for your outdoor faucets. Frozen water in the pipes could freeze, causing a water leak from a burst pipe.
- \* Learn how to shut off water valves (in case a pipe bursts).
- \* Look into winterizing your outdoor power equipment (e.g., lawnmower, power washer).
- \* Replace all air conditioner/heater filters that are dirty.
- \* Have a technician inspect your heater. An inspection should cost around \$50.
- \* For those who don't have municipal water, consider flushing your hot water heater. Sediment in untreated water collects on heating elements, preventing the heater from working efficiently.
- \* Check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors at least monthly, replacing the batteries every six months.
- \* Ensure the flashlights around your home all have fresh batteries.
- \* If you have a fireplace, consider an inspection or cleaning. This can prevent a house fire.
- \* Consider rock salt or specialized ice-melting crystals if you have a long walkway or steep driveway, as well as sand for improved traction.
- \* Know ahead of time what you should do to help elderly or disabled friends, neighbors or employees.

### In the car:

- \* Keep a safety kit in your vehicle. Recommended items include road flares, an extra quart of oil, leak sealant/infla-

tor for tires, jumper cables, hand warmers, a blanket, a flashlight, a battery-powered or hand-crank radio and a windshield ice scraper.

- \* Keep the gas tank decently full in case you have to leave for an emergency. In addition, check or have a mechanic check the following items on your car:

- Antifreeze levels: ensure they are sufficient to avoid freezing. (Older cars might need a radiator flush.)

- Battery and ignition system: should be in top condition and battery terminals should be clean.

- Brakes: check for wear and fluid levels.

- Exhaust system: check for leaks and crimped pipes and repair or replace as necessary.

- Carbon monoxide is deadly and usually gives no warning.

- Fuel and air filters: replace and keep water out of the system by using additives and maintaining a full tank of gas.

- Heater and defroster: ensure they work properly.

- Headlights and hazard lights: check for serviceability.

- Oil: check for level and weight. Heavier oils congeal more at low temperatures and do not lubricate as well.

- Thermostat: ensure it works properly.

- Tires: make sure the tires have adequate tread. All-weather radials are usually adequate for most winter conditions. However, some jurisdictions require that to drive on their roads, vehicles must be equipped with chains or snow tires with studs. Also, check your tire pressure at least weekly to prevent having to change a flat tire in freezing weather.

- Windshield wiper equipment: repair any problems and maintain proper washer fluid level.

### For the family:

- \* During outdoor activities, wear appropriate clothing, including mittens, scarves, hats

## Holiday fire prevention tips

### Preventing Christmas tree fires:

Special fire safety precautions need to be taken when keeping a live tree in the house. A burning tree can rapidly fill a room with fire and deadly gases.

**Selecting a live tree:** Needles on fresh trees should be green and hard to pull back from the branches, and the needle should not break if the tree has been freshly cut. The trunk should be sticky to the touch. Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree trunk on the ground. If many needles fall off, the tree has been cut too long, has probably dried out, and is a fire hazard.

**Caring for your tree:** Do not place your tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace or heat vent. The heat will dry out the tree, causing it to be more easily ignited by heat, flame or sparks. Be careful not to drop or flick cigarette ashes near a tree. Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.

**Disposing of your tree:** Never put tree branches or needles in a fireplace or woodburning stove. When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly. The best way to dispose of your tree is by taking it to a recycling center or having it hauled away by a community pick-up service.

**Artificial Christmas trees:** If you are using a metallic or artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant.

**Never put lit candles on a tree:** Do not go near a Christmas tree with an open flame - candles, lighters or matches.

### Maintain your holiday lights:


Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up. Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory.

**Do not overload electrical outlets:** Do not link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet. Make sure to periodically check the wires - they should not be warm to the touch. Also, never leave your holiday lights on unattended.

**Use only nonflammable decorations:** All decorations should be nonflammable or flame-retardant and placed away from heat vents.

**Never put wrapping paper in a fireplace:** It can throw off dangerous sparks and embers that may result in a very large chimney fire.

**Avoid using lit candles:** If you do use them, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked down. Never leave the house with candles burning.


Finally, as in every season, have working smoke alarms installed on every level of your home, test them monthly and keep them clean and equipped with fresh batteries at all times. Know when and how to call for help. And remember to practice your home escape plan. 

For more information on fire safety, visit the U.S. Fire Administration website at [www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov).

and watertight footwear.

- \* Stay hydrated!
- \* Hot chocolate and coffee don't really warm you up if you're cold. Neither does alcohol.
- \* Keep gloves and a stocking cap in the pockets of your winter coat.
- \* Be aware of the wind chill factor.
- \* Work slowly when doing

outside chores.

- \* If you must travel, inform a friend or relative of your proposed route and expected time of arrival.
- \* If you have pets, bring them inside. If you cannot bring them inside, provide adequate, warm shelter and unfrozen water to drink. 

For more information, visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) and [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

**ANGEL TREE***from page 1*

Hanks said of the Angel Tree project, "It touches them deeply that someone would think to purchase something for them and you don't even know them."

"They are very flattered that you all are taking care of your own," Hanks added.

This year's party is scheduled for December 22 at 10 a.m. at the veterans' home in Norman.

At the time the *On-final* went to press, wing members, their families and friends had selected 268 veterans. However, 16 other veterans still need sponsorship.

To sponsor a local veteran, call Courtney Hawkins or Master Sgt. Christine Reed in the wing command section office at (405) 734-6379.

To help give gifts to the veterans, call Lt. Col. Richard Curry at (405) 734-3774. **O-f**



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Zach Jacobs

Courtney Hawkins, management assistant with the 507th Air Refueling Wing command section, stacks gifts for the 2010 Angel Tree project in the wing public affairs office November 17, 2010. The wing's project will benefit more than 284 veterans at the Norman, Okla., division of the Oklahoma Veterans Center.

## Wing plans chief describes ORI training events

*Four operational readiness training programs to culminate in exercise prior to March 2012 ORI*

**by Lt. Col. Ken Humphrey**

507th Air Refueling Wing Chief of Plans

By now, most wing members should know when the upcoming operational readiness inspection is scheduled -- March 2012 -- and that we are being evaluated along with the 137th Air Refueling Wing, and the 164th Air Wing from Memphis, Tenn.

What many of you may not know is the type of conventional ORI training preparation that the 507th is currently scheduled to attend.

Officially referred to as the Operational Readiness Training Period, these ORTPs are composed of four separate training events culminating in an operational readiness ex-

ercise prior to the ORI. Each ORTP training block builds upon the others.

The Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center cadre and our wing exercise evaluation team will coordinate, train and provide feedback to the participating wings during each ORTP event. ORTP-1 and ORTP-2 are both scheduled for February 8-13, 2011, at the Will Rogers Air National Guard Base.

Primarily a command and control exercise, ORTP-1 involves those wing personnel that are expected to be in the installation control center and emergency operations center.

Approximately 20 individuals from each wing will take

part in ORTP-1, a one-day event. ORTP-2 concerns those personnel assigned to a unit control center, which is the vast majority of all of you in the 507th.

Unit control center procedures, shelter management, PAR/sweep team, self-aid buddy care, door guard duties and CBRNE/ATSO procedures are the focus of ORTP-2.

Approximately 80 individuals from each wing will be participating in ORTP-2. Personnel will be divided into six separate facilities and undergo three days of classroom training and exercise scenarios having the opportunity to gain experience in various UCC roles. Check with your unit deployment

manager to determine if you are scheduled to go to ORTP-2.

I'll cover ORTP-3 and 4 in the following months. If you have any questions, you can contact me in the wing plans and programs office at (405) 734-0101. Remember OPSEC!

**O-f**

*The 507 ARW public affairs office wants to know how your section/unit is preparing for the 2012 ORI!*

*Email your ORI tips, tricks, suggestions and methods to [507arw.pa2@tinker.af.mil](mailto:507arw.pa2@tinker.af.mil).*

*The most helpful entries could be printed in these pages!*

*Let's help each other out!*

# 507 MXS members assist childrens' charity fundraiser

by Lt. Col. Richard Curry

507 ARW Public Affairs Chief

Members of the 507th Maintenance Squadron volunteered in October in support of a fundraising event for Infant Crisis Services, Inc.

According to Maj. Michael Von Buelow, 507 MXS commander, the Airmen spent nearly six hours of off-duty time to rearrange the ICS warehouse to accommodate tables for their fundraiser on October 20, and clean-up the next day.

"Our squadron members helped set up and tear down the facilities used during this fundraising event," Von Buelow



U.S. Air Force Photo

Members of the 507th Maintenance Squadron pose with Infant Crisis Services coordinators at a fundraising event in Oklahoma City on October 20, 2010. The event raised more than \$325,000, which was \$75,000 over their goal.

said. "The group was hoping to raise \$250,000 but actually received over \$325,000. We were very happy we were a part

of this great program."

ICS began in 1984 and has fed, diapered, clothed and provided hope for more than 140,000

babies and toddlers in central Oklahoma.

ICS currently serves more than 1,000 babies and toddlers in central Oklahoma each month by providing life-sustaining formula, food and diapers to babies and toddlers in times of crisis, and treating families in need with compassion and without judgment.

"In Oklahoma, 22.5 percent of children under the age of five live in poverty," said Von Buelow, adding that "children living in poverty are at a moderate to high risk for lack of food and basic necessities."

**O-f**

## Getting fit to fight...

by Col. Gregory "Happy" Gilmour

507th Operations Group



Is it really "Fit to Fight" or "Fit for Life?"

For the past year, I have listened to the roars about the new Fit to Fight program. But in reality, is the program really new?

At the basic level the answer is *no*, the test has not changed. The test still has pushups, sit-ups, a 1.5-mile run or walk and a waist measurement. Sure, the numbers may have changed, but every other test we take in the Air Force has minimums -- why should the fitness test be any different? When I saw what the new standards were, I was, like everyone else, scared of the unknown.

Two years ago, I was 46 years old, weighed 283 pounds and had knee surgery that cleaned out most of the cartilage in my left knee, making running very painful.

What do you do when faced with adversity? Like any good

Airman, you go to war!

For me, that war was laziness. I was determined to lose weight and get into better shape. I had to change the way I lived my life.

The biggest thing I had to do was change my eating habits. I ate the same things but focused on portion control. Early on, counting calories helped me lose a lot of weight. After reaching a plateau, I found help at Weight Watchers.

In addition, I hit the gym with a newfound resolve to rehab my knee. When my knee was ready for roadwork, I found a running partner, Colonel Michael Mahon, the wing vice commander. Since we both had knee issues, we understood the challenges and pains that each other faced. Having a workout partner really helped.

Over the year, I had great success and a few setbacks, but, all things considered, the results have been eye-opening.

This year I lost 53 pounds and scored 80.3 on my most recent fitness test. The numbers that really count are seen in my

blood tests, which I get every year from my flight physical.

This year, my blood pressure dropped from 136/90 to 115/72 and my cholesterol dropped from 195 to 135. These numbers mean just as much as my fit scores. The decreased weight, blood pressure and cholesterol are indicators that show I am working hard to keep from getting diabetes, heart disease and Alzheimer's disease.

The war I waged against laziness will continue for the rest of my life. As most of us do, we naturally tend to follow the path of least resistance. Sure, getting older comes with aches and pains, but if we keep moving, it will make getting older easier.

For those that say, "They do not pay me to work out every day," I encourage you to look around at your local health clubs and notice there are many civilians working out to get fit. These people are getting and staying in shape, trying to live a healthy life.

The 507th Air Refueling Wing has a reputation of excel-

lence in all mission areas. Why should we accept anything less than excellence in our fitness? Think about your family and get fit for them. Your family will be around long after you have retired from the Air Force.

My challenge for 2011 is to get leaner, stronger, and faster. Join me and you will enjoy a longer, healthier life. **O-f**

*Col. Gilmour is the commander of the 507th Operations Group. These views are his own.*

*"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](mailto: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.*



Photo by Lt. Col. Rich Curry

**Stuck on you** Staff Sgt. Jeffery Ingersoll of the 507th Medical Squadron gives Master Sgt. Christine Reed of the 507th Air Refueling Wing command staff her annual influenza vaccine at the medical squadron building here October 2, 2010. The 507 MDS gave 1,005 flu shots during the October and November UTAs, and a record 681 shots during the October UTA alone. See "News in Brief" for more information about flu shots at the immunization clinic.

If you would like a question answered directly by a colonel or chief, or have a fitness question you would like answered by a fitness expert, let the 507 ARW public affairs office know! Email your questions for a colonel, chief and fitness expert to [507arw.pa2@tinker.af.mil](mailto:507arw.pa2@tinker.af.mil). This is your paper; let us know what you want to see in it!

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