

507th Air Refueling Wing and 513th Air Control Group, U.S. Air Force Reserve

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On-final

*Flag of hope flies in
Moore Oklahoma*

Inside:

Airmen picking up
the pieces after storm

507th member survives monster tornado,
assists with rescue effort

Commander in Chief comes to Tinker AFB,
surveys devastated Moore



Inside:

Airmen picking up the pieces.....	4
Reservist survives tornado.....	6
President surveys devastation.....	8
Good to excellent.....	11
Around the wing photos.....	12

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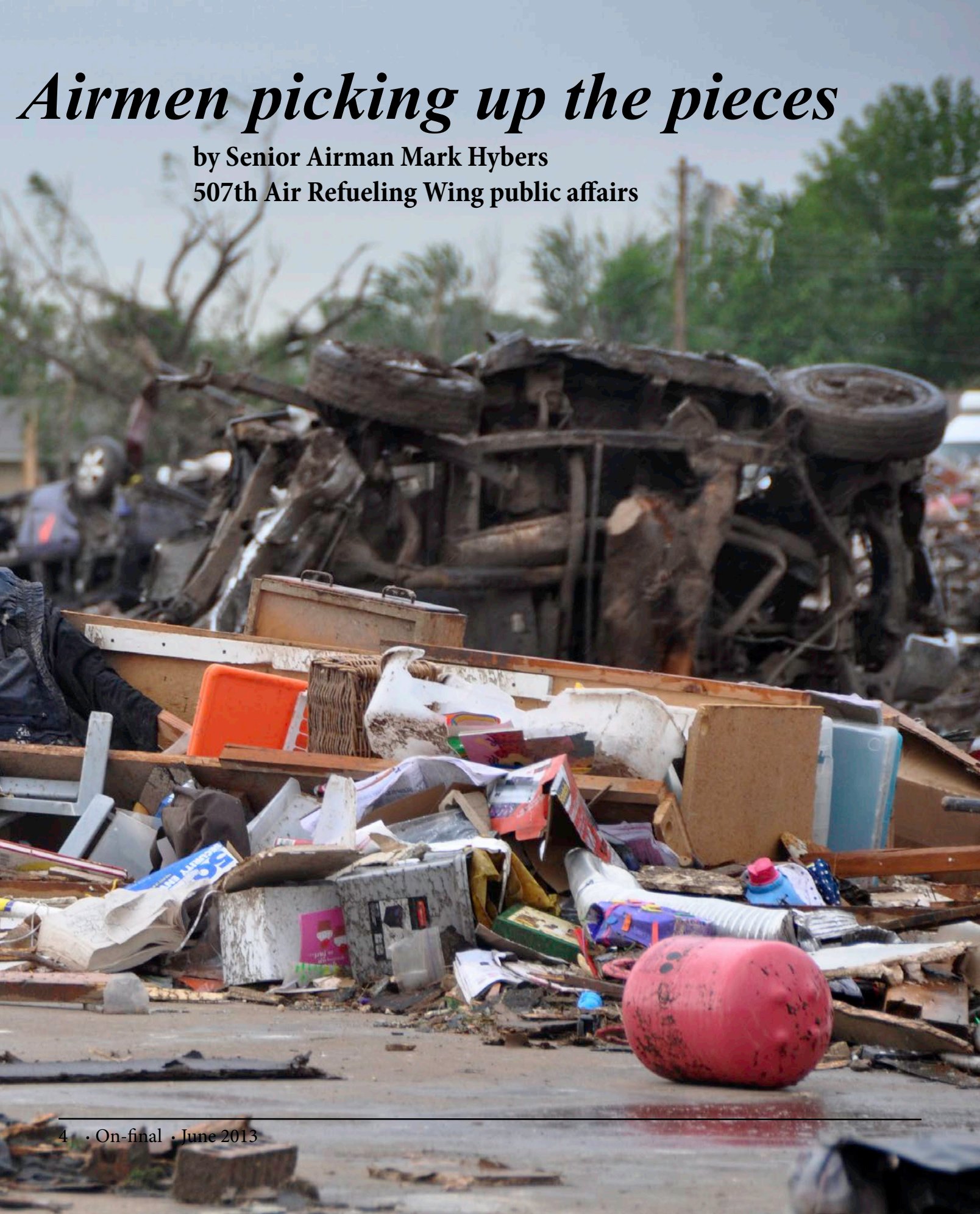
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A United States flag hangs from a home devastated by a tornado that hit the town of Moore, Okla. May 20, 2013 near Tinker Air Force Base. (U.S. Air Force photo by Maj. Jon Quinlan)

Airmen picking up the pieces

by Senior Airman Mark Hybers

507th Air Refueling Wing public affairs



Members of Team Tinker are picking up the pieces after one of the largest and most costly tornadoes in history ripped through Moore, Oklahoma, Monday May 20, 2013.

In the 507th Air Refueling Wing alone, more than 20 Airmen and their families suffered either minor damage or a total loss after Monday afternoon's deadly storm passed.

Master Sgt. John Prokup, air transportation manager from the 72nd Aerial Port Squadron, lives in Moore. His house was nearly missed by the deadly tornado, but did catch debris coming in from miles away.

"I found some paperwork in my back yard from Newcastle (Okla.) and my wife found Farmers Insurance receipts from the 1960s," Prokup said.

Other members of the 507th did not fare so well. Master Sgt. Tom Lord's house suffered substantial damage as the large tornado passed about a block north. Lord, a member of the 507th Medical Squadron, said houses behind and east of him were completely destroyed.

Lord's house is very close to the Briarwood Elementary School and is where the storm transformed into its largest and most deadly state as it continued east, according to local weather sources.

Fortunately for the Lord's neither he nor his wife and daughter were home when the tornado hit. Sergeant Lord was at work in Norman while his wife, Jeanette was working at their church home schooling children.

"We were sitting in the storm cellar at work when a guy told me that my neighborhood had just been destroyed," Sergeant Lord said.

When he finally made it to his house, Lord said it was still standing but there was a lot of noticeable dam-

Wing News

age. The worst damage, he said, was not visible from the front of his house.

"When I got inside, the first thing I noticed was a large gap between my roof and house," he said. "The roof must have been picked up and set back down."

Lord also said there is also a gap all the way down the side of the house. Most of the windows were blown out, several doors had been blown off the hinges and there were several holes in his roof. He even had the passenger side headlight sucked out of his truck and tossed into his back yard.

"My 18-year-old dog Rusty came running up to me," Lord said. "It's amazing that he was able to survive such a huge tornado."

Lord also found what he believes to be pieces from the Orr Family Farm located near his house. Over 100 horses from that location were lost during the tornado.

Lord also said an upstairs bedroom had the west wall blown into the attic.

"There is no other real damage up there, so I'm assuming when the roof lifted off the house, the wind just blew it over," he said.

For now, Lord his wife and daughter are living in temporary housing while dog Rusty is staying with family. He said his insurance adjuster hasn't had a chance to assess the house yet, but has indicated that Lord and his family should start looking for a more long term living situation.

"Our insurance will pay for us to rent something for a year," he said. "Depending on how bad the structure of the house is, it might take that long or longer to get it repaired."

With the cleanup of the aftermath just beginning, the reality of how lucky they were is starting to sink in with the Lords.

"It's almost like my stuff is inconsequential compared to everyone else who have had everything blown to bits," Sergeant Lord said.

Master Sgt. Master Sgt. Cherry Bina, 137th Maintenance Group, Oklahoma Air National Guard, was also deeply affected by the tragedy but she had a uplifting attitude.

"Our house is damaged, but thankfully no one was hurt," she said. "Our dog and my Harley motorcycle survived. Now we are just trying to dig out."

Moments after a deadly EF-5 tornado struck in Moore, Team Tinker moved into action providing help to state agencies, affected residents and the Oklahoma National Guard. Base personnel also helped clear on-base debris caused by the storm. Additionally, many reservists answered the call to help fellow unit members and people in the community.

More information on disaster relief efforts can be found at the tornado relief website, <http://www.tinker.af.mil/relief.asp>.

Tornado Support

- 35 diesel-generated lights for search and rescue at Plaza Towers Elementary School
- 600 Airmen from Tinker, Altus and Vance AFB volunteered May 24.
- More than 105 people offered temporary housing
- Gerrity Fitness Center set up as temporary shelter
- "Adopt-a-Family" implemented allowing Tinker members house affected families
- Search and Rescue Team operated with unified team performing technical rescue operations
- More than 30 reservists volunteered for recovery and cleanup efforts in the past two weeks
- Several firefighters from Tinker assigned to Oklahoma Task Force One

Tinker reservist survives monster tornado

“We didn’t think we were going to make it out alive”

by Senior Airman Mark Hybers

507th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

What started out as a sunny, routine day for one member of the 507th Force Support Squadron and the estimated 250 staff and patients at the Moore Medical Center took a sudden turn for the worse on Monday, May, 20, as a mammoth 1.3 mile wide tornado bore down on them.

Senior Master Sgt. Jennifer Nikki Johnson, a 19-year reservist and a nurse at the Moore Medical Center for just over three years had just left her office in the north tower and headed to the family clinic to help train a new nurse.

Johnson, who has recently moved to the education side assisting with the Center’s transition to the electronic medical records system quickly, reverted back to nurse and wingman.

“I had only arrived at the clinic about 10 or 15 minutes prior to the tornado sirens sounding,” said Johnson. “Once the sirens go off, the hospital calls a code black and that’s when we all jump to action and start our disaster preparation.”

Johnson spent the next several minutes helping other staff members escort patients downstairs. In the cafeteria, she noticed that her coworker was nowhere to be found. Once she was certain all patients in the area were secure, she made out for the north tower to find her coworker.

“I was a bit worried because I couldn’t find her, but then she called

me to see what was going on,” said Johnson. “She never heard the code black.”

The two met up and ran back to the cafeteria to check on the status of the patients and staff members before making their way into the medical

“Once we got over there we started pulling the little children through a hole in the wall...” - Senior Master Sgt. Johnson

center’s chapel. In what seems like an eternity of running back and forth, checking on everyone, Johnson and her coworker finally made their way back over the north tower. They knew they had run out of time.

“We did a quick head count,” Sergeant Johnson said. “There were 28 of us down there between the bathrooms and an enclosed stairwell.”

And then out of nowhere, Johnson realized that she had not seen or heard from one of her other coworkers.

“Right after code black sounded, the power went out and locked all of the sliding doors closed,” she said as she pauses and started crying. “We didn’t know he was out there. He leaned up against a pillar under an awning against the east wall outside and rode it out.”

Obviously shaken up, Sergeant

Johnson went on to say that her coworker managed to escape the monster tornado with only minor scratches to his head.

“I think if he had been on the west side of the building it would have been a different story,” she said. “The vehicles in the parking lot on that side of the building were swept up against the building and some were actually inside the building.”

At 3:21 Johnson sent her husband and mother a text message to let them know that there were 28 people in the north building in the bathrooms and stairwell and to tell them that she loved them.

“We didn’t think we were going to make it out alive,” she said.

Once the tornado hit the building she remembers hearing a lot of praying from the people around her and there were a lot of children screaming on the other side of the wall in an adjacent bathroom. She remembers vividly the tornado was so loud with the wind and objects crashing on the other side of the walls but could still hear the children screaming over all of it.

Johnson and the other 28 people sheltered in place narrowly escaped the disaster. She said there was a doctor’s office on the northwest side of the building that was completely taken out and she was on the other side of the wall.

See Survive on page 10

The Moore Medical Center stands in complete ruin after an EF-5 tornado ripped through the city May 20, 2013. All patients and staff members managed to walk out of the destruction with minor injuries. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Mark Hybers)

President lands at Tinker AFB, surveys tornado damage in Moore

By Maj. Jon Quinlan

507th Air Refueling Wing public affairs

President Barack Obama landed at Tinker Air Force Base on his way to Moore, Okla. to survey the tornado devastation and meet with victims and first responders here May 26.

The president shook hands and spoke with some Tinker AFB employees, families, and first responders on the flight line here before traveling down to Moore, while encouraging people to continue to help.

Many Team Tinker members where personally affected by the EF-5 tornado that swept across Moore on May 20. For Tinker employees alone, over 165 homes were lost, over 200 homes were damaged with families displaced and over 130 homes were damaged but habitable, according to base officials.

At a press conference in Moore, the president highlighted that he is behind them every step of the way.

“When we say that we’ve got your back, I promise you, we keep our word,” the president said. “We’ve seen incredible outpourings of support from churches, from community groups who are helping folks begin to recover. People here pride themselves on the ‘Oklahoma Standard’, being able to work through disasters like this, and to come out stronger on the other side. And that’s what we’ve been seeing this week.”

While standing with Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin and other state and federal officials, the president spoke about the efforts ahead.



President Barack Obama greets Tech. Sgt. Lindsay Newton May 26, 2013, at Tinker Air Force Base. The president landed at Tinker AFB on his way to Moore, Okla., to survey the tornado devastation and meet with victims and first responders. Tinker AFB employees who were personally affected by the May 20 tornado and base first responders had the opportunity to meet the president. Newton is assigned to the 507th Maintenance Squadron. (U.S. Air Force photo by Maj. Jon Quinlan)

“Our hearts go out to you...this is a strong community with strong character. There’s no doubt they will bounce back, the president said. “But they need help.”

In addition to Oklahoma National Guard, federal and state workers, more than 600 Airmen from Tinker AFB, Altus AFB, and Vance AFB, all in Oklahoma, volunteered to assist residents in recovery.

“I was humbled but glad to help our fellow Oklahomans in their time of need,” said volunteer Maj. Cody Whit-

tington, 507th Air Refueling Wing executive officer. “It really is all about giving back to the community that has supported the military for so many years.”

Obama’s signing of a disaster declaration within hours of the storm has helped speed aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. More than 450 FEMA personnel are working on the ground in Oklahoma and they, along with volunteers have delivered 43,000 meals, 150,000 liters

See President on page 9

President Barack Obama exchanges kind words and listens to stories from Airmen at Tinker Air Force Base who either lost or had severely damaged homes after a devastating tornado wiped out several communities recently. The president surveyed the area with Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin on Sunday, May 26, 2013. The president, Fallon and Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett spent about three hours in Moore surveying the devastation. (U.S. Air Force Photo by Senior Airman Mark Hybers)



President from page 8

of water and thousands of cots, blankets and tarps, according to FEMA representatives.

Tech. Sgt. Lindsay Newton, 507th Maintenance Squadron, met with the president here at Tinker, but she wishes it was under different circumstances.

“I was thankful to be given the chance to meet the president and I’m amazed by the support of the community,” she said. “Our home was damaged, but we are fortunate compared to some folks that lost everything or loved ones. I’m amazed at all of the donations and support everyone has provided. I know that Oklahomans are really pulling together now and a lot of progress is being made towards clean up and recovering.”

(Federal Emergency Management Agency Public Affairs contributed to this report)



President Barack Obama waves to the crowd at Tinker AFB after surveying the damage to Moore Okla after being hit by a massive tornado May 20, 2013. Obama recently issued a major disaster declaration for Cleveland, Lincoln, McClain and Pottawatomie counties. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Mark Hybers)

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For information give us a call or click on the photo to send an email (web version only).



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Airman 1st Class Tracy Barnhill, 137th Maintenance Group surveys the damage of her mother's house after devastating tornado hit the homes of those living in Moore, Okla., May 20, 2013. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Mark Hybers)

Survive from page 6

"It was so loud and lasted so long. It was probably a minute and a half before it was finally past us," she said.

As soon as the noise and banging stopped, Johnson and her coworker went right into action taking a head count to make sure everyone was ok.

They all then made their way out of the building pushing aside the rubble that lay in their path. Johnson said she expected major damage outside, but what she didn't expect was how quickly the fire department and ambulance first responders had already arrived on scene.

"When we came out of the building they were already there waiting to help anyone and everyone they could," Johnson said. "I'm just shocked at how fast they got there. Everyone from the fire and ambulance crews to everyone that worked in medical center did such an amazing job. They all deserve so much credit."

Once all 28 were outside, Johnson

said she noticed the 7-11 convenience store across the street had been completely blown away. She was not able to get across the street because live power lines covered Telephone Road.

"We noticed Agapeland Learning Center on the other side of the road was also leveled, so we ran over there to help," Johnson, once again crying, said. "Once we got over there we started pulling the little children through a hole in the wall of what was left."

The winds were estimated at over 200 mph when the deadly tornado hit the Moore Medical Center, but miraculously no one from the learning center was severely injured. Johnson credits a lot of her fast response to her medical and military training.

"You switch gears and get the things done that you need to get done until you have the time to decompress," she said. "Then you hug the ones that you almost lost."

When asked if Sergeant Johnson has had time to decompress, she started crying again and said "no...no."

Good to excellent for member of 513th

by Staff Sgt. Caleb Wanzer

513th Air Control Group Public Affairs

When Master Sgt. Jay Harris was appointed as his squadron's fit to fight program manager three years ago, exercising wasn't a part of his daily routine and his fitness scores were just above passing.

"When I took over as the [970th Airborne Air Control Squadron] fitness leader three years ago, I couldn't run a mile if someone put a gun to my

around with."

Harris didn't let up and kept improving during a deployment to Southwest Asia last year, running an Air Force-sponsored half marathon. After his redeployment back home, he heard about the Oklahoma City Marathon in late April and decided to do the 13.1 mile race again in his hometown.

"I was planning on doing the half marathon at the Oklahoma City race, but my training was going so well back in February that I decided to run the full marathon," he said. "I thought if I'm ever going to do a full marathon, it has to be now."

Just a few hours after the race began, Harris crossed the finish line.

"I was one of those guys three years ago whose average fitness test run time was 12:35, which was barely making the minimum for my age group," he said. "My latest run time is 10:13, and my test scores have gone from just passing to excellent."

For those still struggling with their run times, Harris encourages them to start small.

"If I was on a treadmill or track, I never looked at my pace," he said. "I'd make small goals; try to run for 2 songs, then 3 songs."

Before he knew it, Harris was losing count of the songs playing through his headphones and had to start counting miles. Harris is now setting his sights on the weight room after reaching his marathon goal.

"Never say never, but I'm not planning on another marathon just yet," he said. "I think my new summer goal is to bench 400 pounds."

"Like the 507th ARW on Facebook"



Master Sgt. Jay Harris, 970th Airborne Air Control Squadron, poses with friends and running partners. Pictured left to right: Mandy Kierbow, Barbie VanOrsdel, Jay Harris, Ashley Smith and Shawn Kilbourne. (Courtesy Photo)

head," Harris said. "I thought it would be pretty hypocritical if I tried to hold people to standards I couldn't meet."

He decided he had to make a change to his lifestyle.

Harris started small. A one-mile run on the turned into two miles after a couple weeks, which led to 10 miles in a relay race a year later. It wasn't an easy road, and he didn't do it alone.

"Shawn Kilbourne, his sister, girlfriend and I ended up starting a support group to run together," Harris said. "Shawn helped me out a lot. It's a lot easier when you have someone there with you. Running can be boring, so it's good to have a buddy to joke

May 2013 Promotions: Congratulations to the following 507th Air Refueling Wing members

To Airman First Class:
AMN MCCALIP, DAKOTA A. 507 MSG
AMN ONCO, JOEY W. 507 AMXS
AMN SCHULZE, RYAN M. 507 CES
AMN WILLIAMS, DANIEL D. 465 ARS



To Senior Airman:
A1C BAISLEY, CLAYTON A. 35 CBCS
A1C BLAINE, JOSHUA T. 507 MXS
A1C PARKER, RACHEL M. SRA 507 AMXS



To Staff Sergeant:
SRA ANDRUS, REBECCA L. 507 AMXS



To Technical Sergeant:
SSGT BJORKLEY, MICHAEL E. 507 AMXS
SSGT HENRY, JUSTIN A. 507 AMXS
SSGT MILLS, ROBERT L. 507 MXS
SSGT WAY, JOHN D. 507 AMXS



To Master Sergeant:
TSGT MORA, PATRICIA A. 507 FSS
TSGT PHAM, PHU V. 35 CBCS
TSGT SCHELL, RANDY L. 970 AACS
TSGT TATE, JUSTIN S. 970 AACS



To Senior Master Sergeant:
MSGT HOPKINS, JUSTIN D. 507 OSF
MSGT RICHISON, KEVIN R. 72 APS



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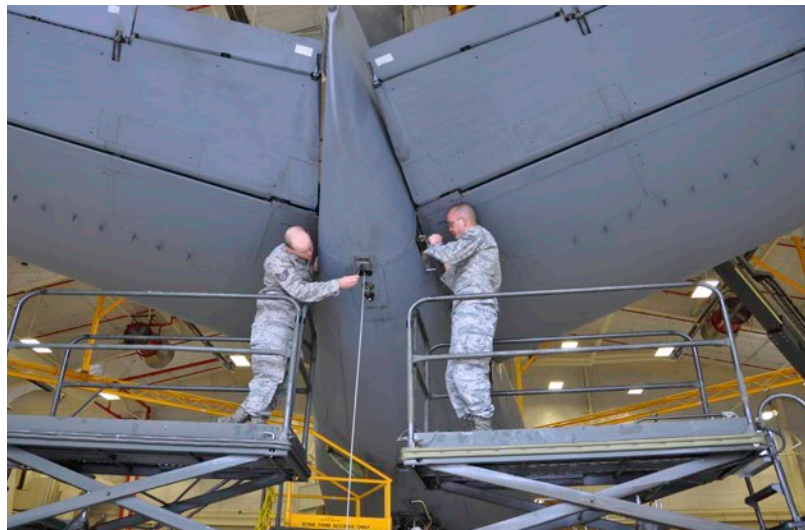
Senior Airman Jason Dowell, right and Staff Sgt. Tom Maness are bleeding the brakes on a KC-135 Stratotanker to ensure there is no air in the lines during a recent Unit Training Assembly here at Tinker AFB. Dowell and Maness are both members of the 507th Maintenance Squadron. Members from the maintenance squadron take advantage of drill weekends to get caught up on course work and get as much hands-on training as possible. There are members performing maintenance on several areas of the aircraft as it sits in the hangar. (U.S. Air Force photo by Lt. Col. Kim Howerton)



Left: Master Sgt. Robert Sellers, 137th Oklahoma National Guard Maintenance Squadron performs routine maintenance on the inside of a KC-135 during a recent Unit Training Assembly. Members from the 137th and 507th Maintenance Squadrons work alongside one another during UTA weekends to perform maintenance and train on the KC-135 Stratotankers. Right: The 507th Air Refueling Wing welcomes Tech. Sgt. Shannon Febela, the sexual assault response coordinator to the team. Febela coordinates the response to the sexual assault and places particular emphasis on victim support and safety. She will track services provided to 507th victims until the victim no longer requests advocacy support. (U.S. Air Force photos by Lt. Col. Kimberly Howerton)



Lt. Col. Bradley Garcia, 507th Maintenance Squadron commander welcomes Master Sgt. Cameron Dinger, 507th MXS and 20 other Reservists that returned home from Southwest Asia here May 13. The 507th ARW Reservists served five months supporting on-going air refueling operations in U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. Over 130 Reserve Airman returned in the last two months. (U.S. Air Force photo by Maj. Jon Quinlan)



Staff Sgt. Matthew Pearsall, left and Tech. Sgt. David Shafer work together on the tail of a KC-135 Stratotanker during a recent Unit Training Assembly. Pearsall, 507th Maintenance Squadron and Shafer, 137th Oklahoma National Guard Maintenance Squadron demonstrate the reserve, guard association. (U.S. Air Force photo by Lt. Col. Kimberly Howerton)



Stratotanker in mist: Maintainers from the 137th and 507th Maintenance Squadron's prepare a KC-135 for a routine aerial refueling mission on a foggy morning recently. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Mark Hybers)

Welcome home 507th!



Recently promoted Tech. Sgt. Robert Mills hugs his wife upon return from a deployment to Southwest Asia, May 13, 2013 here. Mills' return home is perfect timing as the two are expecting their first child soon. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Mark Hybers)