

June 2015

RABBIT TALES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE 513TH AIRBORNE AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE GROUP

Thumper veteran takes command of 970th AACS

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INSIDE: Reserve White loses in base championship // Okie pilot connects with Tulsa students

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All photographs are Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated.

513TH UPDATE

Upcoming events

- Sunday – 1430 – Group CC Call (552nd OG Auditorium)
- Sunday – 1500 – Wingman Event (Base bowling alley)

Survey for November UEI

Take a few minutes this UTA to complete the IG’s survey!
This is your chance to tell HQ AFRC/IG what you think about any issue.
Use the survey link below:
<https://www.research.net/r/513ACG>

Fit to Fight MVP’s

Lt. Col. Joseph Jones
Unit: 970th AACS
Score: 99.1%



TSgt Robert Nelson
Unit: 513th MXS
Score: 98.6%

Promotions for June

Congrats to this month’s promotees!

- Senior Airman** Alyssa Ramirez (513th Maintenance Squadron)
- Staff Sgt.** Haley Sherman (513th Operations Support Squadron)
- Staff Sgt.** Stephen Tritten (970th Airborne Air Control Squadron)
- Tech. Sgt.** Edward Grimes (513th Operations Support Squadron)
- Tech. Sgt.** Robert Nelson (513th Maintenance Squadron)
- Master Sgt.** Crystel Doty (970th Airborne Air Control Squadron)

Cover photo

513th Air Control Group Commander Col. David Robertson hands the 970th Airborne Air Control Squadron guidon to Lt. Col. David Cavazos on May 2 at the 970th auditorium. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Caleb Wanzer/Released)



Fit to Fight hall of fame



Team Tinker

513th ACG



1.5-Mile Run

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

Pushups

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

Situps

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

1-Mile Walk

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



Thumper veteran takes command of 970th AACS

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

Lt. Col. David Cavazos assumed command of the Air Force Reserve's only Airborne Warning and Control flying squadron on May 2 in a ceremony at the 970th Airborne Air Control Squadron at Tinker Air Force Base.

The ceremony, presided by 513th Air Control Group Commander Col. David Robertson, marked the end of Lt. Col. Brent Vander Pol's two-year term as commander as well as his military career.

"Lt. Col. Vander Pol had to lead through some of the darkest days of the 970th, between sequestration and the possible shutdown of the unit," Robertson said. "The good news is, things

are looking up. We have a bright future ahead of us, and that says a lot of Vander Pol and his leadership."

During Vander Pol's remarks after receiving a Meritorious Service Medal for his time as the 970th commander, he thanked the men and women of the squadron for their support and excellence.

"It has been an absolute pleasure to serve with all of you," Vander Pol said. "I really appreciate all the hard work you've done. This change, this moving along, it's a good thing."

After receiving the 970th guidon, Cavazos' encouraged the reservists of the squadron to continue the mission with excellence.

"Go fly that metal on the ramp better than anyone else in the world," he said. "Con-

tinue to be you, and thanks for what you do."

Cavazos previously served in the 513th Operations Support Squadron as the director of operations. He first came to the 513th in 2008 as the group's chief of safety and has held positions in the 513th OSS and 970th AACS. He earned his commission after graduating from the Air Force Academy in 1998 with a bachelor of science in engineering mechanics. He is now a senior pilot with more than 3,500 flight hours.

During the ceremony, Robertson said he has faith in the squadron's newest commander.

"I have the utmost confidence that Lt. Col. Cavazos is going to lead the 970th very, very well," he said.



Distance-learning PME demands greater commitment

By Master Sgt. Shanda L. De Anda
AFRC Public Affairs

The Air Force’s new enlisted professional military education distance learning courses are demanding and require more study time.

That’s according to a memo from the Air Force Barnes Center of Distance Education at Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

“The new EPME is a game changer,” said Chief Master Sgt. Cameron Kirksey, command chief for Air Force Reserve Command. “Distance learning courses are intentionally more rigorous than previous courses. We know our Citizen Airmen are up for that challenge.”

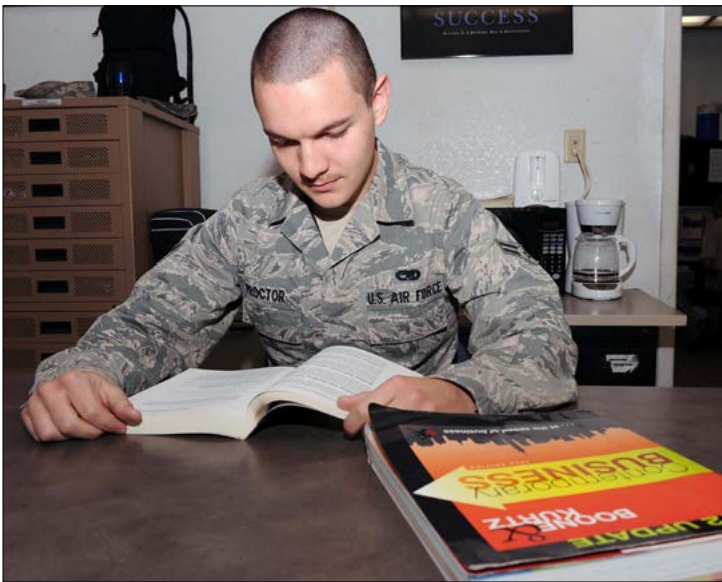
The memo helps enrollees gauge the commitment required by providing a guide of the time courses may take to complete. It also stresses adjusting as individual needs dictate to “master the material before taking the test.”

“Allow yourself plenty of time to study and digest the material before you test,” said Senior Master Sgt. Thomas Lohsandt, Headquarters AFRC first sergeant.

Lohsandt attended an early in-residence Airmen Leadership Experience at the Senior NCO Academy and accomplished version 6 during the built-in, eight-day window to

complete the prerequisite. “Our Airmen are now being offered DL courses earlier in their career, and the concepts they are introduced to are built on and applied during the in-residence portion of PME.”

Chief Master Sgt. Imelda John-



(U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Christine Griffiths/Released)

son, AFRC Enlisted Force Development chief, agrees.

“What Airmen are getting out of the DL course before the in-residence course is a familiarity with the actual content of the new courses,” Johnson said. “It’s more of a strategic-type level of thinking. Most of our members are going earlier in their career, and they’re not quite as prepared if they would go to the course without doing the DL first.”

In addition to the increased rigors of DL courses, there are also

changes in the onus of responsibility for attendance and enrollment in the courses.

“Enrolling in the proper time-in-service window and completing courses on time is the member’s responsibility,” said Eric Devoursney, AFRC PME program manager.

“However, the biggest challenge may be ... and really it’ll be more for the NCO Academy and SNCO Academy ... is that there used to be individuals who had a hard time with the DL and they had the fallback of going in-residence.

“Now, you have to complete the DL if you’re going in residence,” Devoursney said. “That’s going to hinder some people. ALS has remained the same. Airmen can do either DL or go in residence.”

These EPME DL courses are intentionally more rigorous than previous ones and reflect the increased leadership challenges and expectations for enlisted leaders. Students are encouraged to approach these courses as they would a college course.

“I would say treat it just like any other distance learning course, like an online bachelor’s degree,” Johnson said. “Give it the same amount of time and energy and focus you would an advanced degree. It will require the same kind of effort.”



Senior Airman Sheena Fixico

Unit: 513th Maintenance Squadron
Job title: Pneudraulic Mechanic
Hometown: Wewoka, Oklahoma
Civilian Job? Sales Associate at good ‘ole Wally World
What did you want to be when you grew up?
I wanted to be a dentist. =)
Little-known fact about you: My favorite color is green.
Best part of your job: The people I work with make it my favorite part. Some cool guys.
Favorite memory from your time in the 513th?
Playing some bball with the guys in the shop.
If you had superhero ability, it would be:
To fly.
Watched any good TV shows or movies recently?
Pitch Perfect 2.



Captain Dick Guerrero

Unit: 970th Airborne Air Control Squadron
Job title: Senior Director
Hometown: Choctaw, Oklahoma
What did you want to be when you grew up?
A rich beach bum.
Little-known fact about you: I’m not Mexican and I used to be an English teacher.
Favorite team: My daughter’s softball team, the Home Run Honeys.
Best part of your job? Camaraderie.
If you had superhero ability, it would be:
Everything Superman, Spiderman, the Hulk and Wolverine have...all of that.
Watched any good TV shows or movies recently?
Yes.

Fly through it

Okie pilot connects with Tulsa students through battle with cancer

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

When Maj. Donna Mae Williams returned home from the hospital after complications from her first round of chemotherapy in late April, she felt less than invincible.

Williams, a pilot assigned to the 465th Refueling Squadron at Tinker Air Force Base, found out she had breast cancer while deployed to Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, earlier this year.

“I thought it was just a swollen lymph node,” she said. “I’m so glad I decided to go to the flight doctor to have it checked out.”

After receiving her first round of chemotherapy here, she was forced to spend a weekend in the hospital because of her struggling immune system. When she got home, she noticed a package waiting for her from the 4th grade class at Kendall-Whittier Elementary School in Tulsa.

Inside the package were letters, drawings and pictures from the students encouraging her in her fight against cancer and thanking her for her service. In one letter, a student told her to “fly through it,” which has become her personal motto.

“Through their letters, they gave

me inspiration,” Williams said. “The package couldn’t have come at a better time.”

Although she said it took a while for the students to understand she was in the Air Force and not the Army, they were very inspired by what she had accomplished.

“They told me how awesome it was that I was a pilot and had kids,” she said. “I think it was a symbiotic thing, because they’ve supported me in a way that has also inspired me.”

Williams traded letters a couple times with the class over the next month and eventually decided to drive over to see them in person. The class’s teacher, Stephanie Anderson, said the class exploded with excitement when she told them Williams was coming for a visit.

“Normally they’re not that receptive to people,” Anderson said. “I can’t really describe their reaction. There was just an immediate response from them.”

In the days before Williams came to visit, Anderson bought Styrofoam airplanes for the children to decorate and modify while learning about the principles of flight.

“They each got one foot of mask-



Maj. Donna Mae Williams, a pilot assigned to the 465th Refueling Squadron at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., throws Styrofoam airplanes with 4th grade students from Kendall-Whittier Elementary School on May 20 in Tulsa, Okla. Williams visited the students after corresponding with them about her battle with cancer and career as a pilot in the Air Force Reserve. (Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Caleb Wanzer/Released)

ing tape and one piece of cardstock paper,” she said. “That was the only adaptation they got to use for their plane.”

When Williams walked in to the classroom on May 20, she was greeted by a classroom full of excited students. She spent more than an hour with them, answering their questions about everything from how planes fly to whether she plays video games.

Anderson said the student’s

friendship with Williams has opened their eyes to a whole new realm of possibilities.

“Some of the students are second-generation Americans who don’t think they can even join the military,” she said. “They’re a whole group of students who often get overlooked. Some actually thought they had to pay to be in the military, not that they’d get paid.”

Williams said that she has been just as inspired by her young friends

as they have. She found that hearing from the students has reminded her how she can continue to have a positive impact in others’ lives.

“If I can, in a living example, show them that even in the face of adversity I can have a positive attitude, they can do the same,” she said. “When I was in school, I was influenced by someone talking to me about aiming high, so I’m thankful to have an opportunity to do the same thing for them.”

Reserve White loses to Med Group in base flag football championship



Med Group's Tre Williams tries to weave past Reserve White's Patrick Ridlon and Larry Mansell during the Spring Flag Football league's championship game on May 21. Med Group won their third consecutive spring championship, shutting out Reserve White, 20-0. "We had a bitter taste in our mouth after losing 24-0, so we made it our mission to win," said Med Group coach Zhamar McAdory. (Air Force photo by Kelly White)

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

Season 9 of the base Spring Flag Football League concluded late last month with two out of three Reserve teams making the playoffs but falling short in their bids to win the championship. Reserve White had the league's best record during the regular season at 9-0, while Re-

serve Gold secured the fourth and final playoff spot with a 5-4 record. Reserve Red missed the playoffs with a 3-6 mark. Led by 513th players Jim Gasaway and Brian VanCuren, White defeated Gold for the second time this season in a nail-biter 13-7. Gold featured several 513th players including Jay Harris, Randy Schell, Rob Doty, Joe Brown, Dan Gibb, Joe Huizar,

T.J. Milliken, Ryan Clary and Will Dykes. White's win over Gold earned them a berth in the base title against their long-time arch rivals Med Group, but for the third spring in a row, Med Group defeated White in the SFFL championship 20-0, less than a month after White routed the medics 24-0. All three teams look forward to the fall season this September.

Where are they now?

CMSgt Tina Long (2003-2007)

– What years and in what positions did you serve at the 513th?

I was a proud member of the 513th ACG from Dec. 1995 through July 2006 as an Evaluator/Instructor Air Surveillance Technician. I also held duty titles of Surveillance Superintendent, Resource Advisor, Superintendent of Exercises and Plans and Operations Superintendent.

– What's your current job?

Currently I'm the 413th Flight Test Group Superintendent, stationed at Robins AFB, GA. The 413th FTG is responsible for providing qualified aircrew and associated support personnel to conduct functional and acceptance check flights on non-airworthy aircraft upon completion of depot-level maintenance. It is comprised of six geographically dispersed units that fly 13 distinct mission design series aircraft in order to accomplish its goal, returning mission-ready aircraft to the warfighter.

– What was one of the biggest challenges you faced while assigned to the 513th?

Standing up a unit from scratch is and will always be one of the most difficult challenges I've encountered in my career but also very rewarding. Although many of the faces have changed over the years, I'm still proud of all your many accomplishments. You've looked adversity



straight in the eye and continue to prevail time and time again!

– What is your favorite memory of the 513th?

So many memories, so little time... During 6 days of non-stop flying, maintenance generated 14 sorties in order to provide 173 hours of continuous sensor coverage and command and control without a single air or ground abort. This was accomplished with three crews and a minimal maintenance footprint launching out of Incirlik AB, Turkey...I'm fairly certain there's a decoration that states this. It was awesome witnessing the hard work and dedication of all involved. We worked hard and played hard...

some memories are best left as is... and then there's the chicken story, imbedded in my memory forever!

– Do you have any advice for current members?

Keep fighting the good fight and cherish the camaraderie and memories of your time with the 513th and the military...it all goes by faster than you think!

– Where do you live now?

Randogg and I currently reside in Greensboro, Georgia and plan on calling this home into retirement. It's located half way between Atlanta and Augusta, just south of Athens. If you're ever in the area, please join us for a round of golf!



The 513th AMXS and MXS said goodbye to Lt. Col. Alan Priest, the Chief of Maintenance for the 513th ACG, during the May UTA. Priest has accepted a position back at Whiteman AFB in Missouri. (Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Caleb Wanzer/Released)

The 970th had a goodbye of their own last UTA, bidding farewell to Lt. Col. Brent Vander Pol after his retirement and transition of command to Lt. Col. David Cavazos. Vander Pol opted for a more "relaxed" retirement ceremony including boom boxes and a LOT of SAPR lip balm. (Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Caleb Wanzer/Released)

