

July 2017

RABBIT TALES

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE 513TH AIR CONTROL GROUP

BALTOPS:

513th knocks out
second large exercise
of 2017

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INSIDE:

AF turns to crowdsourcing for ideas // New retirement system calculator

RABBIT TALES

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Rabbit Tales is a production of the 513th Air Control Group Public Affairs office.

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All photographs are Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated.

513TH UPDATE

Upcoming Events

Saturday – 1000 – Green Dot Training
(970th AACS Auditorium)

Saturday – 1300 – AF Training Course
(552nd OG Auditorium)

Saturday – 1400 – MSgt Mackay Retirement
(970th AACS Auditorium)

Saturday – 1530 – Cow Bell
(970th AACS Lounge)

Sunday – 1400 – Enlisted Call
(970th AACS Auditorium)

Thursday – 1730 – Opening Reserves Softball Game
(Champ Field)

Aug. 5 – 1500 – 513th ACG Change of Command
(970th AACS Auditorium)

Cover Photo

Aircraft maintenance and aircrew Reservists from the 513th Air Control Group stand in front of a NATO E-3A Sentry on June 14 at NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen, Germany. The Airmen are part of the nearly 100 Reservists supporting BALTOPS 2017, which involves 50 ships and submarines and 40 aircraft from 14 member nations. (U.S. Air Force photo/2nd Lt. Caleb Wanzer)



Promotions

Congrats to our July promotees!



SrA Ashley Autaubo
(513th Maintenance Squadron)

SrA Roderick Ward
(970th Airborne Air Control Squadron)



SSgt Nicholas Lucas
(970th Airborne Air Control Squadron)



TSgt Travis Flanery
(513th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron)



MSgt Christopher Parker
(513th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron)

MSgt Edward Miller
(513th Maintenance Squadron)



SMSgt Justin Sproles
(513th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron)

Air Force posts new challenges on crowdsourcing idea website

Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- Air Force officials have posted a new set of topics (in the form of challenges) on the Revitalizing Air Force Squadrons crowdsourcing/idea website after closing out the first set of challenges June 19, 2017.

The site averaged more than 3,000 views per day with more than 16,000 total votes on the first set of challenges.

"We received over 600 ideas from Airmen across the Air Force, which included ideas such as displaying squadron identity on uniforms, ways to help us increase focus on the core mission and improving family support," said Chief Master Sgt. Robert Stamper, the Revitalizing Air Force Squadrons chief. "Users voted and helped us identify the top ideas."

The top-voted ideas have been submitted to Brig. Gen. Stephen Davis, the Revitalizing Air Force Squadrons team lead, and the Revitalizing Air Force Squadrons Core Team. The team is reviewing ideas for assignment to the appropriate subject matter experts for further action.

"Some of the highest-voted ideas we received from Airmen



Air Force officials have posted a new set of topics (in the form of challenges) on the Revitalizing Air Force Squadrons crowdsourcing/idea website after closing out the first set of challenges June 19, 2017.

pertained to uniform changes and the desire for outward displays of squadron identity," Davis said. "We have already provided information from these ideas, along with similar data from our field visits, to the Air Force Uniform Board

The ideas and results from the first set of challenges can be found here: <https://www.milsuite.mil/revitalize>.

A second set of challenges has been posted, which includes the topics of higher headquarters support to squadrons, centralized/decentralized support to squadrons, job-specific training, and improving feedback.

"We are looking for Airmen to provide their ideas on how to get after some of the issues we've been hearing about during our recent field visits," Davis said. "We have

also kept the Open Ideas Forum, which provides Airmen the opportunity to submit ideas on any topic related to revitalizing squadrons."

The CAC-enabled milSuite website provides an online presence for Airmen to offer ideas on how to revitalize Air Force squadrons. Airmen are encouraged to address specific topics presented in the form of challenges and to help identify the best ideas by voting, commenting and sharing. The top-voted ideas will be presented to the Revitalizing Air Force Squadrons team and then to Air Force senior leaders.

This effort directly supports Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein's focus area number one – revitalizing Air Force squadrons.

For technical support with the site please contact milSuite at milsuite@mail.mil.

DOD Launches Retirement System Comparison Calculator

Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. -- The Department of Defense officially launched the Blended Retirement System (BRS) comparison calculator Tuesday, providing BRS opt-in eligible service members their first opportunity for an individualized comparison of retirement systems. The comprehensive tool, in combination with the mandatory BRS Opt-In Course, will assist the nearly 1.7 million opt-in eligible service members and their families make an informed decision on whether or not to elect the new retirement system. The BRS goes into effect on Jan. 1, 2018.

"We have designed an all-in-one calculator that is intuitive to use and takes into account the unique financial situations of our active duty, National Guard and Reserve service members," said Tony Kurta, performing the duties of undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness. "The calculator presents to service members the information needed to make an effective comparison. The calculator will provide service members the ability to compare estimated benefits between their current retirement plan and BRS prior to making this important decision."

Service members can adjust 12 inputs to reflect their personal situ-

ation and planning assumptions to see how changes to their career and savings will impact retirement benefits over the long-term. With a simple click, service members can change any of the inputs and re-run the calculations as many times as needed. The comparison calculator provides personalized estimates based on a service member's individual information, career progression, pay and bonuses and retirement options. The all-in-one calculator was designed for the Total Force and can be used by active duty, National Guard and Reserve service members.

The official DoD comparison calculator is the only calculator endorsed by the DoD for supporting a service member's Blended Retirement System opt-in decision.

"Service members may use any calculator they feel can aid them in the decision making process," said Kurta. "However, only the DoD BRS comparison calculator has been validated by the department as complying with all DoD and BRS policy and tested for accuracy."

The comparison calculator is intended to be used in conjunction with the mandatory BRS Opt-In Course, which launched Jan. 31. The opt-in course is focused on comparing the current legacy military retirement system (often

referred to as the high-3 system) and the new Blended Retirement System, along with elements on financial management and retirement planning for service members. Service members are encouraged to take the Opt-In Course prior to utilizing the BRS comparison calculator. The decision whether to opt into the BRS is a completely personal one and the DoD takes no position on which system a service member should elect.

"While the calculator is a valuable resource," said Kurta, "it should not be the only resource used in making an opt-in decision."

Service members are encouraged to use all resources available to them in the decision making process, to include completion of the BRS Opt-In Course, utilizing the BRS Comparison Calculator, accessing the online BRS resource materials and scheduling time with a personal financial counselor or manager. Service members can get free, personal support from an accredited personal financial counselor or manager through their installation's Military and Family Support Center. Search online at <http://militaryinstallations.dod.mil> or <http://www.jointservicessupport.org/spn>.

The calculator can be found at <http://militarypay.defense.gov/Calculators/BRS/>.

2 for 2 in '17

513th wraps up second large exercise with a shining record

By Staff Sgt. Alexandra M. Longfellow
NATO E-3A Component Public Affairs

NATO AIR BASE GEILENKIRCHEN, Germany -- BALTOPS 2017 is the 45th edition of the annual multinational, maritime-heavy exercise offering high-end training. The exercise involves 6,000 military personnel, 50 ships and submarines from Allies Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States as well as NATO partners, Finland and Sweden and more than 50 aircraft.

Originally the largest naval exercise in Northern Europe, BALTOPS this year is designed to enhance coordination and cooperation with air forces for the first time.

Nearly 100 men and women of the 513th Air Control Group (AFRC) from Tinker Air Force Base, OK, USA, representing the only Reserve US AWACS organization flew into NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen, Germany, June 2 to participate in BALTOPS with the E-3A Component.

“What’s unique about this team is that we are 99 percent reservists,” said Lt. Col. James J. Matthey, 970th Airborne Air Control Squadron Director of Operations. “Most of

our reservists have taken time away from their civilian employers to sharpen their combat skills. Most of our warfighters have between 10-20 years working with the AWACS. That is a heck of a lot of combat-ready resources that we bring to bear in support of the Combined Forces Air Component Commander and Joint Force Commander.”

The 513th ACG successfully provided Command, Control, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C2ISR) for three major exercises over the past two years. Last year, they looked to United States Air Force in Europe (USAFE) and NATO for the opportunity to add more “arrows in their quiver” and sought out BALTOPS as their exercise of choice for 2017.

“We selected GK because it is an E-3A base,” Matthey said. “Our maintenance personnel have integrated seamlessly with NATO maintenance keeping us fully mission capable throughout the duration of the exercise. The deployment for us provides invaluable, international training for our pilots, air battle managers, surveillance technicians, mission system technicians and datalink operators.”

“The fact that we are here, in Eu-

rope, working with NATO sends a message,” Matthey said. “We are committed to the collective security of all nations and we are extremely proud and motivated to participate side-by-side with our partners in NATO—the first peacetime military alliance the United States entered into post World War II. The

world’s geopolitical landscape has changed dramatically in the years the 513th ACG has been in existence. We must continue to understand, anticipate and get out in front of regional and global threats. A strong working relationship between all NATO allies at the tactical and operational levels is a precursor

to a strong and enduring defence.” The joint multinational live training exercise BALTOPS, which concluded June 16, was designed to enhance flexibility and interoperability through a series of combined tactical manoeuvres and scenarios involving NATO’s Allies’ and Partner assets.

An aircraft tow vehicle backs out an E-3 Sentry Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft flown by Reservists from the 513th Air Control Group on June 7, at NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen, Germany. Nearly 100 Reservists from the 513th are deployed in support of the BALTOPS 2017 exercise, which involves 50 ships and submarines and 40 aircraft from 14 member nations. (U.S. Air Force photo/2nd Lt. Caleb Wanzer)



Aircraft maintenance Reservists from the 513th Air Control Group stand in front of a NATO E-3A Sentry on June 14 at NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen, Germany. The Airmen are part of the nearly 100 Reservists supporting BALTOPS 2017, which involves 50 ships and submarines and 40 aircraft from 14 member nations. (U.S. Air Force photo/2nd Lt. Caleb Wanzer)





Lt. Col. James Matthey, the detachment commander for BALTOPS, places a 970th patch ceiling tile in the Air National Guard's building at NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen.



Maintenance Airmen from the 513th Air Control Group watch as an aircraft tow vehicle connects with a U.S. Air Force E-3 Sentry on June 7, 2017.



Maj. Cody Chitwood and Master Sgt. Randy Schell, both assigned to the 970th Airborne Air Control Squadron, monitor air activity June 8, 2017, on board an E-3 Sentry Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft over the Baltic Sea as part of BALTOPS 2017.



Maj. Larry Jackson, a mission crew commander assigned to the 513th Operations Support Squadron, steps off an E-3 Sentry Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft June 1, 2017, after landing at NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen, Germany in preparation for missions supporting BALTOPS 2017.

A U.S. Air Force E-3 Sentry taxis past a NATO E-3A Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft on June 7, 2017, at NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen, Germany. The aircraft and nearly 100 Reservists from the 513th Air Control Group are deployed in support of BALTOPS 2017, which is the first time a U.S. E-3 Sentry has supported a NATO exercise in 20 years.



Master Sgt. Brian Finley, a jet engine specialist assigned to the 513th Maintenance Squadron, performs an inspection of an E-3 Sentry engine on June 12, 2017.



Senior Airman Chris Ogden, an aircrew flight equipment specialist from the 513th Operations Support Squadron, inspects an oxygen mask on board an E-3 Sentry.



Maj. Brad Keen, a pilot assigned to the 513th Air Control Group, and Master Sgt. Kim Robertson, a flight engineer with the 513th Operations Support Squadron, monitor instruments and gauges June 8, 2017, on board an E-3 Sentry Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft during a mission in support of BALTOPS 2017.

