

December 2018

# RABBIT TAILS

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT CONTROL GROUP

## Operation Holiday Spirit Turns 20

(page 6)

4K UHD TV AI ThinQ

\*AI TV

Le futur de la TV est ici.

Écran IPS

Une technologie de pointe pour une expérience de visionnement optimale.

Technologie HDR activée 4K

Profondeur de couleur et contraste pour une expérience de visionnement optimale.

Grande gamme de couleurs

Une reproduction des couleurs plus proche de la réalité.

INSIDE:

From the Top: Are you ready (II)? // Major changes to medical good news for reservists



# RABBIT TALES

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All photographs are Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated.

Mission: To provide combat-ready AWACS Citizen Airmen to Fly, Fight & Win

## 513TH UPDATE

### Upcoming Events

Saturday – 1800 – Reed Conference Center  
**513 ACG Christmas Party**

Sunday – 1500 – Fannin Hall (Bldg 282)  
**Group Commander's Call**

January 5-6  
**January UTA**

January 5 – TBD  
**Col England's Retirement Ceremony**

### Promotions

Congrats to our December promotees!



**SSgt** Samantha Humphrey  
(970th Airborne Air Control Squadron)



**TSgt** Nathan "Carlos" Elliott  
(970th Airborne Air Control Squadron)

**TSgt** Christopher Ritter  
(513th Maintenance Squadron)

**TSgt** Erika Spencer  
(970th Airborne Air Control Squadron)



**MSgt** Victor Zavala  
(970th Airborne Air Control Squadron)

### Tinker to be new B-21 Raider maintenance hub

By Daisy Grant  
Staff Writer, 72d ABW Public Affairs

Tinker Air Force Base has been selected as the maintenance hub for the B-21 Raider — a new Air Force bomber expected to be delivered in the mid-2020s.

Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson announced the decision Nov. 16 in a media opportunity at the base. She said Tinker AFB was selected because of its experience and expertise in large aircraft maintenance and the quality of its workforce.

"We made that decision because Tinker Air Force Base has the people and the experience and has shown its ability to be able to provide sustainment to some of our most important aircraft," Wilson said. "I saw that here today."

She said she does not know how many jobs sustainment of the fleet will create at Tinker AFB, but projected it would be comparable to the maintenance of the KC-46 aircraft the base is taking on — about 1,300.

The rest of the story can be found [here](#).

### Fit to Fight MVPs

**Maj Jose Rodriguez**  
Unit: 970 AACS  
Score: 99.8%



**SSgt Brian Bogue**  
Unit: 970 AACS  
Score: 98.7%

Vision: Experience, Expertise, Teamwork: Citizen Airmen employing diverse talents as game-raising mission partners

# Are you ready (II)?

Are you ready? I posed this question to you this time last year. At the time, I wanted to express to you that we were undergoing a major change in the way we conduct training – shifting from “just-in-time” training to a training regimen ensuring CONTINUOUS READINESS. We subsequently executed two mandatory UTAs at the beginning of this year to expeditiously correct to the new course and then we spent much of the year establishing the new training battle rhythm. Additionally, for the flyers we shifted the focus of our tactics and intel briefs toward some of our peer adversaries.

You might recall that this shift in focus was to address the reality that going forward our operations will be more aligned to address the state actor than the terrorist organization. Rather than being able to count on a relatively predictable rotation schedule to the same location, we need to be ready to go at a moment’s notice to a contested location and operate immediately upon arrival against a rival who can bring the fight to us.

The year has borne out this “new” reality (what’s old is new again). In the past twelve months, tensions with North Korea escalated, then de-escalated. The Chinese navy confronted a US destroyer in the South China Sea causing it to maneuver to avoid a collision. Raptors inter-

cepted Russian TU-95 bombers approaching our ADIZ. Our allies intercepted Bears when they approached Japanese airspace and even penetrating South Korea’s ADIZ. Indeed, we must be ready!

Like you always do, you’ve met the challenge. You’ve made the necessary changes. You are ready...ready to confront any foe....under any conditions...at any location... and at any time. BUT, I started this article off by mentioning we must be continuously ready. That’s not once and done, put a check in the box, and move on to the next task. It’s long term.

If we’re going to do this long term, we need to take care of ourselves by recharging our batteries so we can hit it hard again. This month, enjoy time with your family and friends. Drink some egg nog, bean your buddy with a snow ball, or enjoy a great meal with someone special. Start it off by joining your squadron friends at the holiday party. Enjoy the season and we’ll see you back here in January, READY to protect this great nation.

Be Safe and Happy Holidays,



**Col. Steven "Spoon" England**  
*Deputy Commander, 513th Air Control Group*

# Major changes to medical policies good news for Reservists

**By Tyler Grimes**  
*Air Force Reserve Command Public Affairs*

When Col. John Buterbaugh took the helm as the command surgeon at Air Force Reserve Command in late summer 2018, he wanted to make some bold changes to improve processes for the 70,000 Reserve Citizen Airmen serving across the nation and around the world.

In an Aug. 28 letter, Buterbaugh outlined four initiatives to increase medical readiness across the command including, eliminating the medical case backlog, removing the mental health requirement differences between the active duty Air Force and Reservists, providing more full-time medical staff to local units and increasing decision-making ability on medical cases at the wing and squadron levels.

The current Reserve medical system is out of step with the needs of the mission and the Airmen,” Buterbaugh said in the letter. “This has led to the long backlog of cases, task saturation on the (unit training assembly), and decreased quality of medical administrative care of the members. Ultimately this has negatively affected medical readiness and has decreased the ability of the AF Reserve to take the fight to the enemy.”

Of the four initiatives, aligning the mental health requirements with the active duty Air Force has seen the most progress and affects the highest number of Reservists, according to Buterbaugh. The standards are now the same and some of the mental health issues requiring a waiver or were disqualifying people from the Reserve have been eliminated. As major of a policy change as this was, lead-

ership was able to move quickly to get it approved at the Air Force level.

“This didn’t just affect the Reserve, it affected the Guard as well,” he said. “Once they had signed off on the way it was written, it was voted on by the Air Force Medical Corporate Board.”

The policy change was then added to and published in the Medical Standards Directory. With the new policy in place, Citizen Airmen who currently have waivers for certain mental health issues can now go through a process at their local medical units to have the waivers removed.

The goals of the policy changes are to increase the number of Reservists who are medically ready to deploy, retain more healthy members in the Reserve by eliminating unnecessary barriers and make it easier to recruit people from active duty into the Reserve.

“This is a huge win for the Air Force Reserve and the Guard too,” he said. “People transferring into the Reserve and the Guard were affected by this.”

One of test sites for moving the participation wavier process to the local level is the 315th Airlift Wing at Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina. There, Master Sgt. Hope Lapoczka, Aerospace Medicine manager, is working with her team to implement these changes.

“By having a participation waiver granted it gives the members’ squadron and leadership an opportunity to ensure their wellbeing while they are going through a sometimes difficult process,” Lapoczka said, “especially when someone is going through a mental health related waiver. To some members, the Reserve is their family and their only support system, when you take that away it can have

a heavy effect on that member’s wellbeing. Overall it will increase our ability to complete the mission effectively across the wing and keep a close eye on our fellow Airmen.”

She said the policy changes have had secondary positive effects on the Reservists as well.

“In the past we have had participation waivers denied for members whose full case processing took sometimes over two years,” she said. “This has caused the member to have two bad years towards retirement. Also, it helps relieve financial burdens from not having the monthly Reserve income that they were used to and for some members this is their primary source of income. Some members are on orders so often that they don’t maintain a full time civilian job and rely heavily on military orders. If that type of member is denied a participation waiver for a disqualifying condition, it becomes a sudden loss of income.”

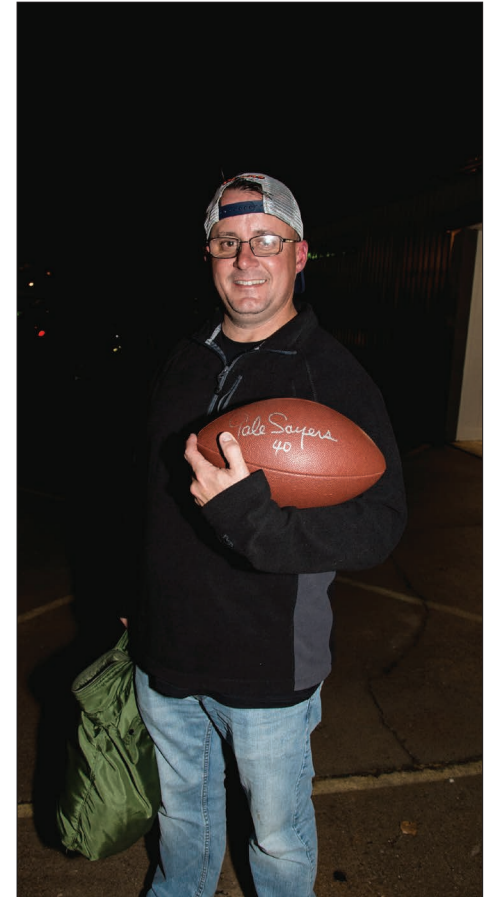
At Travis Air Force Base, California, another test site, Col. Henry Schwartz, 349th Aerospace Medicine Squadron chief, said the ability to process participation waivers has added to the amount of work he and his staff has to do but it is a positive change.

“It transiently increased our workload as we dig through our backlog,” Schwartz said. “However, the satisfaction of being able to get a valued Reservist back in the fight quickly is huge. The process has resulted in improved moral among the entire staff here at the unit.”

These changes along with hiring more full-time medical staff to eliminate the medical case backlog are in motion to enable Reserve Citizen Airmen to serve and succeed.



# Operation Holiday Spirit marks 20 years of helping families



**By MSgt Andy Stephens**  
513th Air Control Group Public Affairs

On Nov. 30, the 20th anniversary of the Operation Holiday Spirit steak supper brought together Air Force reservists from Tinker AFB's 513th Air Control Group and 507th Air Refueling Wing as well as Air National Guardsmen from the 137th Special Operations Wing.

"In the last 20 years, Opera-

tion Holiday Spirit has assisted 444 Reserve and Guard families in need," said Mr. Ralph Hawkins, 513 ACG Executive Officer. "Where else can people get together for the holidays, enjoy a fantastic meal and make a difference in their military community? So far for this year's event, we raised more than \$20,000, but have yet to tally up all the auction proceeds. We often see

additional contributions come in after the event, so I'm hoping we broke our record."

The record for the most proceeds was the 2015 OHS dinner with \$39,371. Proceeds from the steak dinner and an auction of donated items yield the funds that support Airmen in need. Volunteers from across all three organizations provide OHS with time on the grill to make up the

steaks and baked potatoes and serve a crowd – which, for this year's event, was more than 350 Airmen and their families.

The auction was comprised of signed sports memorabilia, dinner and entertainment at local venues, club-level tickets for sporting events, with the year's expected top auction item was a guitar signed by Country and Western musician Toby Keith.

More than 50 items were donated to raise funds for the OHS fund and Hawkins said he was proud of everyone who played a part in making this year's event a success.

"From the Airmen who donated items for auction or time on the grill to the folks who won their bids, everyone played a part in creating a fun and memorable event," he said. "Everyone

showed the love for our Airmen and the community we've built together. We're stronger together than standing alone."

This year's event was hosted by the Del City Veterans of Foreign Wars/American Legion Post 73, who also provided a ceremonial posting of the colors. If you want to follow OHS on Facebook, their link is [facebook.com/OperationHolidaySpirit](https://www.facebook.com/OperationHolidaySpirit).



# November in Review



*Left/middle right: Reservists from the 513th Air Control Group gathered for a Thanksgiving feast on Nov. 8 in the new 513th operations building at Tinker.*

*Bottom left/right: The University of Oklahoma Softball team toured Tinker on Nov. 28, which included static displays of a KC-135 from the 507th Air Refueling Wing and an E-3 Sentry hosted by members of the 970th Airborne Air Control Squadron and 513th Operations Support Squadron.*

