



"BANDAGE 33"
United States Air Force Reserve
by Lieutenant Colonel Warren F. Neary, 2014

“BANDAGE 33”

BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL WARREN F. NEARY, 2014

Bandage 33 was an aeromedical evacuation mission flown by the 651st Expeditionary Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron out of Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. The team of Citizen Airmen, Captain Adriana Valadez and SrA Amanda Pena from the 433d Airlift Wing, and Lt Col Kathleen Sprague and MSgt John Kley from the 514th Air Mobility Wing were on a routine mission when they were diverted into Mazar-e-Sharif to pick up a critically wounded Airman. That patient was TSgt Zach Rhyner, an Air Force combat controller who had received the Air Force Cross for saving the lives of his 10-man Special Operations Team during a brutal ambush in 2008 and was back in the fight. The Bandage 33 team picked him up and continued with their mission. En route, Rhyner’s condition worsened, prompting Valadez to call for immediate diversion into Bagram Airfield. The aircraft encountered severe turbulence on approach, making it difficult to apply pressure to Rhyner’s wounds. Undaunted by the shaking, Valadez and Pena strapped themselves to the side of the litter, making it possible for Valadez to apply pressure through the landing, taxi, and transportation to the hospital, thus saving Rhyner’s life. On an average day, there are more than 60 Reserve aeromedical evacuation teams providing support to combatant commands and saving the lives of wounded warriors.

AIR FORCE RESERVE

The Air Force Reserve is a combat-ready force, composed of more than 70,000 Reserve Citizen Airmen, stationed locally at over 60 locations throughout the United States and serving globally for every Combatant Command in air, space and cyberspace.

We are a cost-efficient and mission-effective force, providing the nation with operational capability, strategic depth and surge capacity, both overseas and here at home. The Air Force Reserve’s wide-ranging operational capability serves the diverse needs of every Combatant Commander, whose requirements are as varied as the geographic and functional areas they support.

Air Force Reserve Command directly supports the homeland with capabilities, including aerial firefighting, aerial spray, and weather reconnaissance, better known as the “Hurricane Hunters.” Our relationship with other federal agencies, including the National Weather Service and US Forest Service, demonstrates how federal, military and civilian organizations can work together to support the entire nation.

The majority of our Reservists serve alongside our active duty counterparts in association constructs. Approximately two-thirds of the Air Force’s associations are with the Air Force Reserve. Integrating through associations delivers significant taxpayer value, both in cost savings and improved mission effectiveness, by sharing aircraft, equipment and facilities with the active duty.

Value is also gained from “Airmen for Life” as the Air Force Reserve retains the experience and training cost of a member’s active duty service. As over 75 percent of our Reserve Citizen Airmen serve part-time, this combat-tested experience stays in a highly cost-efficient force, available whenever the nation calls. Further, the nation benefits from the intrinsic value gained by a member’s civilian experience in a variety of career fields, from pilots and nurses to space and cyberspace professionals.

AIR FORCE RESERVE MISSION

Provide Combat-Ready Forces to Fly, Fight and Win.

MISSION SETS

The Air Force Reserve currently performs about 20 percent of the work of the Air Force, including traditional flying missions and other more specialized missions, such as Weather Reconnaissance, Aerial Fire Fighting, Aerial Sprayv and Personnel Recovery.

WHERE AIR FORCE RESERVISTS ARE CURRENTLY SERVING OR DEPLOYED

Afghanistan, Bahrain, Djibouti (Horn of Africa), El Salvador, Ethiopia, Germany, Guam, Guantanamo Bay, Honduras, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Niger, Pakistan, Peru, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, South Sudan, Spain, Thailand, Turkey and Uganda.

