

# CITIZEN AIRMAN



  COMMUNITY  
♡ PRIDE ♡  
RUNS DEEP FOR  
GUAM RESERVISTS





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## FROM THE TOP

## CHIEF'S VIEW

# GREAT POWER COMPETITION DEMANDS A RESILIENT, EXPERIENCED AND ACCESSIBLE RESERVE

The developing strategic environment demands a resilient, experienced and accessible force that is responsive, agile and lethal...all attributes of our Air Force Reserve. "At no time in our nation's history has the Air Force Reserve advantage of surge capacity and strategic depth been more critical." These words opened Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Allvin's, Intent Message to the Air Force Reserve earlier this year. In this Intent Message, the CSAF charged us to prioritize four fundamentals to guarantee success in meeting these strategic demands: Surge Capacity, Strategic Depth, Force Mix Optimization and Warrior Ethos.

The CSAF's Intent Message could not come at a better time, as each of these priorities will play a role in how we align with Great Power Competition (GPC) changes. At the Air and Space Forces Association Warfare Symposium in February, Secretary Kendall unveiled 24 decisions, many of which will influence the Air Force Reserve. Each of these decisions are designed to achieve a more competitive posture and are centered on how we develop people, generate readiness, project power and develop integrated capabilities. Our ongoing TASKORD priority of *Transforming for the Future* has already put us in a position to adapt to these decisions. And while there are always risks associated with change, the Air Force Reserve is all in with these re-optimization decisions and is already moving towards implementation.

To further enhance our surge capacity, we will continue to advocate for purposeful use of mobilization authorities. Recent Le-

vant operations prove that the Air Force Reserve is *Ready Now* as crews and tails were mobilized within 72 hours to fill critical airlift and aerial refueling missions. Since early October, nearly 1,400 Citizen Airmen have answered the needs of our allies and RegAF partners, providing over 68,000 man-days of support. We will continue to provide this capacity to maximize combat effectiveness and relevance to the joint force.

Reserve strengths and resources strictly aligned to Air Force Core Functions will ensure strategic depth. We remain focused on critical missions consistent with the Air Force Future Operating Concept through legacy platform enhancements and advocacy for new weapons systems. We continue to fight for concurrent modernization and proportional fielding for our equipment, infrastructure and training to ensure we are embedded in future force design.

Force mix optimization will be a key element in balancing the ever-increasing costs of military personnel and modernization. To meet the demands of GPC, your senior leaders are committed to a calculated effort in determining the optimal integration between the Regular and Reserve components. Equally important will be finding the ideal balance between our full-time and part-time Reserve force. As the DAF begins to restructure, the Air Force Reserve will be looking at ways to optimize our force structure to maintain capacity while building capability.

As a member of the Air Force Reserve, the warrior ethos is already instilled in every one of you, as evidenced by your willingness to serve. However, it is more important than ever that we ensure our Airmen are mentally, physically and emo-

tionally prepared for the rigors that will come with operations in the western Pacific. This highly contested environment will be far different than what we have previously faced, and your tough-mindedness, motivation and vigilance will be tested more than ever. We will prepare for the demands of this conflict, both in readiness and resilience through increased exercise participation and standardized formal training.

One of the decisions, Wing-Level Organization and Support, reoptimizes Department of the Air Force (DAF) Wings into standing Combat Wings capable of building and maintaining readiness to execute wartime functions. Deployable Combat Wings, In-Place Combat Wings and Combat Generation Wings, along with Base Commands, will be identified and the Air Reserve Component (ARC) is prepared to offer forces under this new presentation model. Due to the unique nature of some of our ARC installations, like those that rely heavily on contract, civilian and community support, we will determine the resources required to support this change.

Along with Wing-level restructure will come MAJCOM Optimization. Overlapping MAJCOM roles, responsibilities and authorities resulted in conflicting priorities between readiness and modernization, slowing the decision process. The solution establishes Institutional MAJCOMs as enterprise integrators for capability modernization, capability acquisition and sustainment, human capital and readiness. In addition, 10 combatant command-aligned Component MAJCOMs will be codified from the existing structure. This restructure will prioritize a deliberate integration at each layer of the Air Force. Air Force Reserve Command will continue to underpin all of the Institutional MAJCOMs and continue to provide operational forces using existing authorities and funding.

A few other decisions we would like to highlight include Exercises for Speed and Scale and Weapons System Prioritization. Under Exercises for Speed and Scale, the DAF will begin undertaking exercises focused on aligning with the demands our forces face during rapidly escalating crises. PACAF will work close-

ly with INDOPACOM and Partner Nations to ensure alignment with the National Defense Strategy. As always, AFRC will coordinate with key stakeholders from planning to execution to ensure maximum Reserve participation and effectiveness in these exercises. We will also continue to expand upon our AFRC-led exercises like Rally in the Pacific.

The DAF's ability to effectively sustain fielded weapons systems is instrumental in optimizing forces for GPC operations. Weapons System Prioritization will require development of an enterprise-level prioritization model for both fly and non-fly weapons systems. It will provide implementation guidance to ensure organizational focus on sustaining required capabilities. We maintain Air Force Reserve fielding and sustainment must be proportional and concurrent. As the CSAF charged the Reserve to meet surge capacity requirements and maintain strategic depth, we must work closely with HAF/A3 and supported MAJCOMs to ensure we can meet his charge.

As the DAF moves into implementation, senior leadership is focused on deliberate assignment of component roles and responsibilities to ensure optimization across the Total Force. AFRC is the most diverse MAJCOM in the DAF. The Air Force Reserve touches nearly every mission and balancing manpower across these missions will be our greatest challenge as we move forward. An incremental approach, combined with a clear understanding that additional manpower and equipment may be needed, gives us the best chance for a smooth transition.

As the strategic environment evolves, the DAF will continue to evaluate and adjust to ensure readiness for Great Power Competition. The cumulative effects of these changes will enhance our capabilities within the Air Force Reserve as well as the capabilities of the Total Force. These changes will streamline interoperability across the Joint Force and guarantee our success in the future fight. We appreciate your continued service and as always, we are committed to keeping you informed every step of the way.





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**On the cover:** Air Force Reservists assigned to the 44th Aerial Port Squadron at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, are deeply connected to the community they serve and are always ready to answer the nation's call at a moment's notice. Shown here are 44th APS members Capt. Maria Chaco, Staff Sgts. Noah Camacho and Jon Paul Crisostomo and Senior Airmen Elenice Leon Guerrero, Narissa Pitter, Dawson Arceo and Lori Okada. For the story, see page 6. (Tech. Sgt. Sofia Oropesa)



TECH. SGT. SOFIA OROPESA

**6**



STAFF SGT. JAMES FRITZ

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Airmen from the 44th Aerial Port Squadron during Operation Iron Thunder, a recent Pacific Air Forces power projection exercise, on Andersen Air Force Base, Guam. Opposite page: Nearly 90% of the members of the 44th APS hail from Guam or neighboring islands within the strategically crucial Second Island Chain.

# GUAM'S ONLY RESERVE SQUADRON IS DEEPLY CONNECTED TO THE COMMUNITY IT SERVES AND ALWAYS READY TO ANSWER THE NATION'S CALL

— By Teodoro Rivera

In the vast expanse of the Pacific, where the horizon seems to stretch endlessly and nestled amidst the azure waters of the Pacific Ocean, lies the 44th Aerial Port Squadron, Air Force Reserve Command's lone squadron on the island of Guam.

Operating under the 624th Regional Support Group, headquartered at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Hawaii, the 44th APS stands at the forefront of this strategic outpost. Tucked away on Andersen Air Force Base and a tenant of the 36th Wing, this diverse group of Citizen Airmen serves as a vital cog in the U.S. military's presence in the Indo-Pacific region, operating at the strategic forward edge of American power.

With their squadron motto, "Banidan I Isla, Minetgot Enteru I Tano," resonating proudly in the Chamorro language as "Pride of the Island, Strength of the Land," the 44th APS stands as a combat support force of about 180 people.

Notably, 90% of its members hail from Guam or neighboring islands within the strategically crucial Second Island Chain, extending from Japan to Micronesia. This squadron, deeply rooted in the Pacific, carries a profound cultural awareness that goes beyond geography.

"Our connection to the region transcends borders, infusing the unit with an unyielding sense of responsibility and tight-knit community spirit," said Maj. Benjamin Guerrero, 44th APS commander.

This cultural bond, cultivated across the immense Pacific landscape, was illustrated by the cohesive strength displayed in response to the devastating Typhoon Mawar that struck Guam in May 2023, highlighting their military prowess and resilience stemming from a shared cultural heritage.

Typhoon Mawar, a Category 4 storm with wind speeds of more than 130 miles per hour, plunged the island into darkness, displaced thousands and unleashed widespread devastation. Critical infrastructure buckled, leaving everyone without electricity. About 80% of the population lost access to running water.

"Because of the devastation, the 36th Wing quickly sought volunteers to support recovery efforts," Guerrero said. "Additionally, Joint Region Marianas – Task Force West was looking for volunteers as they stood up their operations to support humanitarian relief efforts across Guam."

In response to the crisis, the 44th APS rapidly mobilized a group of volunteers, gathering a force of 50 to meet the urgent need. Their involvement became crucial in bolstering the recovery efforts of the 36th Wing and Joint Region Marianas – Task Force West. The squadron's multifac-

eted initiatives were pivotal in delivering life-sustaining supplies to island residents and restoring critical infrastructure for the island and the Department of Defense.

"Airmen from the 44th APS, assigned to the 36th Contingency Response Group under the 36th Wing, delivered meals to displaced residents in shelters, coordinated logistics and distributed essential supplies to aid stations, and participated in base recovery efforts," Guerrero said. "They also partnered with FEMA's Rise Up program, rebuilding more than 150 roofs on homes devastated by the storm."



Following the typhoon, three Airmen from the 44th APS were activated to assist Joint Region Marianas – Task Force West. They coordinated airlift mobility for the U.S. Army Pacific and the Defense Support of Civilian Authorities. Working in collaboration with federal agencies like FEMA, their primary mission was to facilitate the delivery of essential generators crucial for restoring the water supply to the island's residents. In addition, they played a significant role in distributing Meals Ready to Eat to displaced residents, reaching across 19 villages on the island.

"Typhoon Mawar also damaged the 734th Air Mobility Squadron's passenger terminal, which would prove critical for evacuating dependents and receiving recovery personnel," Guerrero said. "With the terminal inoperable, we converted our own facility into a continuity of operations site."

Within 24 hours after the all-clear, the 734th AMS started processing passengers and resumed operations, which was crucial in speeding up the recovery of Andersen AFB.

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Airmen from the squadron earned seven Army Achievement Medals and two Navy Achievement Medals due to their exceptional leadership in successfully executing the mission.

Throughout the year, the 44th APS supports the 36th Wing at Andersen AFB and, by extension, Pacific Air Forces. Reservists from the 44th APS are heavily involved in Operation Christmas Drop, Operation Cope North, Valiant Shield and other Pacific Air Forces and United States Indo-Pacific Command operations.

“The squadron has consistently supported air mobility movements for exercises and contingencies,” Guerrero said. “From hub-and-spoke exercises to supporting president of the United States travel and humanitarian missions like the Maui wildfires, the 44th APS ensures the smooth flow of personnel and cargo throughout the vast Pacific theater. Our people have served as subject matter expert exchange trainers with regional allies and important security partners, including the Philippines, Palau, Pohnpei and Papua New Guinea. They have provided logistics support for Bomber Task Force and Dynamic Force Employment operations like Iron Thunder and Iron Riptide, remaining a vital element of PACAF’s power projection capabilities.”

In support of the “set the theater” logistics requirement for Agile Combat Employment, one of the PACAF commander’s top priorities, 44th APS members have integrated with the 554th Red Horse Squadron and constructed K-Span buildings, supporting PACAF’s ACE Project Management Office to build the resiliency needed to stage War Reserve Material.

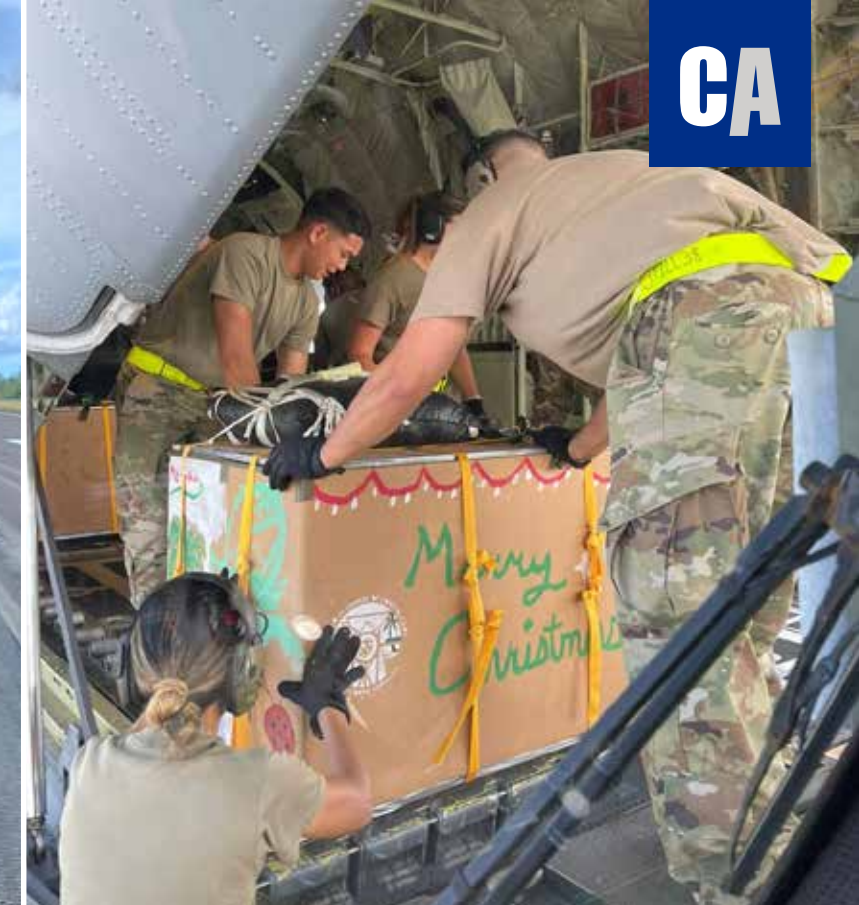
The 44th APS also recently augmented the 36th CRG by supporting various missions across the Pacific Area of Responsibility.

“We truly have a Total Force team ... active duty, Guard and Reserve all working as one,” said Col. Richard McElhaney, 36th CRG commander. “Without the man-day assistance from the 254th Air Base Group and the 624th RSG, particularly the 44th APS, we could not execute our part of the PACAF strategy and ACE theater response requirements. These incredible Guard and Reserve Airmen are critical to our ability to execute our mission and are no longer manning assets. They are part of our family.”

The 44th APS’s diverse contributions paint a clear picture: they are more than cargo handlers and logistics specialists. They are Citizen Airmen who are deeply connected to the community they serve, ready to answer the nation’s call at a moment’s notice. They are a patriotic, mission-ready force that is up to the task when called to support and augment their active-duty counterparts.

“The focus of the 44th APS is to execute the AFRC commander’s task order by preparing combat-ready Airmen who can integrate, lead and deploy when called upon, thus ensuring the United States’ ability to project power, respond to emergencies and forge strong partnerships across the vital Indo-Pacific region and the globe,” Guerrero said.

*(Rivera is assigned to the 624th Regional Support Group public affairs office.)*



Opposite page: Airmen from the 44th APS along with Soldiers from the U.S. Army Reserve’s 3303rd Mobilization Support Battalion during joint training. Clockwise from upper left: Senior Airman Matthew Iseke spots a Palau foreign national partner as they move equipment during Valiant Shield 2022. Airmen from the 44th APS load bundles onto a C-130 as part of Operation Christmas Drop. OCD is PACAF’s annual humanitarian mission that delivers relief supplies to remote islands in the Pacific. Members of the 44th APS assist in offloading Typhoon Mawar relief supplies on Andersen Air Force Base, Guam.





# AFRC LOOKING FOR WAYS TO IMPROVE

# CHILDCARE



# FOR RESERVISTS

— By Bo Joyner

For some Air Force Reservists with small children, finding the right childcare solution when performing military duty can be a challenge, particularly on Unit Training Assembly weekends.

While most Reservists rely on their spouse, partner, parent or other relative to provide childcare during UTAs or other periods of military service, for some Citizen Airmen, that is not an option.

That leaves Reservists to find their own non-DoD affiliated childcare in many instances, and the cost can be prohibitive.

“We want to make sure Reservists know about all of their childcare options, especially the Air Force Home Community Care (HCC) Program,” said Dr. Janice Barnes, the executive of Air Force Reserve Command’s Community Action Board.

The HCC Program is the primary Air Force-provided and Air Force-funded childcare option available to Reservists on drill weekends. Under HCC, carefully-vetted childcare providers look after children in their homes, both on-base and off.

The program has been around for 13 years and is now offered at 86 Air Force installations. In fiscal 2023, the HCC program provided 97,501 hours of childcare to 882 families at a cost to the Air Force of just under \$1 million.

For many Reservists, like Capt. Sierra Campbell-Timberlake, the HCC program has been invaluable.

“My son was born in 2012, and ever since he was 6 months old, I’ve used Air Force in-home childcare on UTA weekends and even during some of my annual tours,” the traditional Reservist who serves as the officer in charge of the 482nd Military Personnel Flight at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Florida, said during a recent interview. “I started using the HCC extended care while enlisted as a Senior Airman ammo troop and have used it throughout my Air Force career to present day working in the MPF as a captain. It’s always been free for me, and I’ve used several different providers across two states and every one of them has been professional and well-run. It’s so important for a mother to feel comfortable and confident that their child is being well cared for. And that’s always been the case for me.”

Campbell-Timberlake said the key for her is to make sure she signs up early before each UTA because the HCC program options often fill up fast.

Unfortunately, not all Citizen Airmen have had the same childcare experience as Campbell-Timberlake. In fact, it’s rare, but not unheard of for Reservists to leave the military because they can’t find an acceptable and affordable childcare arrangement.

“Childcare costs almost \$500 for two 12-hour days when not provided by the Department of Defense,” one Reservist who responded to a recent Reserve Command childcare assessment said. “That is my entire drill pay, not including the price of gas. I’m essentially working for free to be away from my baby, which is not fair to either of us.”

“We are both military, so it’s getting to a point where one of us will more than likely have to leave the military due to the financial burden of childcare,” said another. “It’s almost impossible to have kids while mil to mil or even being in the military due to the cost of childcare.”

“My spouse and I are both Reservists,” said a third. “We cannot both be present during UTA weekends because one of us has to stay home with the kids, ultimately hindering our progression in the Air Force.”

“It’s no secret that Air Force Reservists are experiencing challenges in securing childcare where the Reservist feels confident their children are in safe, quality care and can then engage fully in the military mission work,” Barnes said. “Our senior leaders are definitely aware that there is a problem, and we are actively looking at finding solutions.” Barnes said the main issues Reservists have reported are access to care, affordability of care, and the impact of childcare difficulties on the Reservist, their family, mission accomplishment and retention.

AFRC’s Community Action Board is one of several entities currently looking at opportunities to improve childcare throughout the Air Force Reserve. ARC Athena and the Air Force’s Women’s Initiative Team are also currently pursuing options and solutions for the childcare problem for service members, especially Reservists.

AFRC has conducted a pair of childcare assessments in recent years, one late in 2021 and the other in early 2023. The 2023 event found that most Reservists (33.9%) rely on a spouse or partner to provide childcare during unit training assembly weekends. Second on the list were parents or relatives (27.6%). Commercial childcare centers were used by 10% of respondents and 5.2% used non-Department of Defense affiliated childcare in a home. DoD childcare options were used at a



An Airman and her child attend a recent ARC Athena event. (Staff Sgt. James Fritz)

low rate with 5.5% using a DoD Child Development Center or Youth Center; 3.8% using DoD off-base Home Community Care and 3.6% using DoD on-base HCC childcare.

Reservists generally don’t have to pay for HCC childcare on UTA weekends or they pay considerably less than non-HCC childcare...when the care is available. At most bases, Child Development Centers, which serve children between six months and five years of age, and Youth Centers, for children ages 5 through 12, are not open on UTA weekends, and, in some parts of the country, the DoD struggles to find enough providers who keep children in their homes, whether on-base or off.

Of the 267 respondents in the 2023 survey who said they pay a fee for childcare, 67.4% said they pay \$100 or more per child per UTA for care, and 33.7% said they pay \$200 or more per child per UTA.

“It’s often thought that it would be ideal if active-duty Child Development Centers and Youth Centers would be open on all UTA weekends and there were plenty of DoD-certified Home Community Care providers available so all Reservists would have free or affordable childcare while on military duty,” Barnes said. “But unfortunately, neither is likely given Child and Youth program constraints with requirements and challenges with recruiting of HCC providers.”

When asked what could be done to improve childcare for Reservists,

nearly 500 of the 595 respondents of the 2023 assessment recommended having the Child Development Center open on UTA weekends. Other recommendations included providing a childcare allowance or stipend for Reservists with children, generally making childcare more affordable, having childcare

available on pre-UTA Fridays and increasing the availability of childcare information.

“It’s easy for us to suggest the answer to the childcare problem is for Child Development Centers and Youth Centers to be open on UTA weekends,” Barnes said. “The problem is the centers have to have enough children participating to make it financially reasonable to be open and they have to be able to find qualified people willing to work on UTA weekends. It seems like an easy solution, but it’s not always feasible. Additionally, Reservists must pay standard fees to use the CDC or Youth Center.”

Barnes said one of her main focuses is ensuring Reservists know about all their childcare options.

“Our assessments indicate that some Reservists may not know about all of the childcare opportunities they have available to them,” she said, offering the following references for Citizen Airmen:

- Basic Air Force childcare information can be found at [dafchildand youth.com](https://dafchildand youth.com);
- Military One Source offers a national database of caregivers so Reservists can find hourly, flexible and on-demand childcare at [Expanded Hourly Childcare Options for Military | Military OneSource](https://www.militaryonesource.com/childcare).

- The Air Force Child Care Fee Assistance Program was created to provide authorized Air Force active-duty personnel assistance in locating, selecting and offsetting the cost of civilian childcare, when installation childcare is not met. The program is available through Child Care Aware of America: <https://public.militarychildcare.csd.disa.mil/mcc-central/mcchome> or 1-800-424-2246.

Barnes said the childcare dilemma for the Reserve is made even more difficult because of the various Reserve statuses and the fact that Reservists don’t just serve on UTA weekends. “We have traditional Reservists, ARTs, IMAs and AGRs and they all provide different challenges to securing childcare,” she said.

She did say that there are numerous childcare programs for eligible Reservists in an active-duty status that range from subsidized programs to hourly care programs that are tailored to accommodate member schedules, deployments and special needs.

Among the potential solutions the Community Action Board, ARC Athena and the Women’s Initiative Team are looking at are partnering with organizations like the YMCA or the Boys and Girls Clubs of America and wings developing creative childcare solutions.

“Everything is on the table,” Barnes said. “Securing reasonably priced, quality, safe and accessible childcare remains an issue for the AFRC community, and we are working hand-in-hand with ARC Athena and the Women’s Initiative Team to explore all of the options.”





# Resilient And Relentless:

## RECRUITER FACES DEATH, HEALS THROUGH DESIRE TO SERVE

— By Master Sgt. Bobby Pilch

After nearly losing his life and being out of uniform for the past 22 months, an Air Force Reserve recruiter used his time among his teammates at the annual recruiting training event at St. Charles Illinois, in November to fuel his continued recovery and to reflect on why he serves.

Master Sgt. Manuel Salinas was preparing for a big move to Hawaii from Travis Air Force Base, California, in March of 2022 to advance up

the recruiting ladder as an in-service recruiter just before suffering from life-threatening acute pancreatitis due to hypertriglyceridemia, a condition that causes high levels of triglycerides – a type of fat – in the blood.

“I was supposed to go to Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii,” Salinas said. “I had my house up for sale with an offer pending. Life was good and then this happened.”

Salinas initially thought he just had stomach pain. However, he would go on to face death while in a month-long coma and undergo a dozen surgeries to bring him back from the brink.

“All of my organs began to shut down due to the pancreatitis, including my heart,” Salinas said. “Thank God the base emergency medical team at David Grant Medical Center had the wherewithal to realize they didn’t have the capacity to take care of what was happening to me and made the decision to life flight me to UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento, nearly an hour away by car.”

As Salinas described what few details he could remember leading up to and during his medevac flight to UC Davis Medical Center, he somehow found humor in portraying his life-saving trip.

“So they intubate me and place me on what I will call a vessel,” said Salinas, as he could not recall how he was being transported. “The last thing I remember was that there was a guy with a big helmet on, with his visor down, who lifted a plastic flap to hit a red button. I was like, ‘holy crap ... what’s going on?’ I honestly thought I was on the space shuttle due to the medication I was administered before the flight.”

Holding back tears, Salinas described the next 24 hours as told to him later by his family and Dr. Rachel Russo, who was the on-call emergency surgeon at UC Davis Medical Center the night of his ordeal and a major in the U.S. Air Force assigned to the 60th Medical Group at Travis AFB, California.

“Russo, who oversaw me that night, had called my family and one of my best friends, Senior Master Sgt. Cassandra Casul, a fellow Airman stationed at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, at the time, and told them they needed to get to the hospital because I was not going to make it through the night,” said Salinas, with wet eyes and his voice shaking. “Typically, a doctor doesn’t get that wrong.”

*My recovery now is definitely fueled by not just the need, but also by the desire, to put the uniform on and do what I feel I do best in the military – recruiting ... relentlessly.*

— Master Sgt. Manuel Salinas

A month would pass before Salinas would regain consciousness and realize what happened during his trip aboard the space shuttle.

“I opened my eyes to a huge window and saw stars. It was dark,” Salinas said. “As I looked to my right, I noticed individuals wearing long, white lab coats. My initial thought was that I had been abducted by aliens and I am somewhere in outer space. I was tied up with all sorts of tubes and thought they were running tests on me. Once I fully regained my bearings, I became cognizant of what was going on and looked down to see my stomach open and a colostomy bag attached to my side.”

As Salinas’ recovery progressed, he began to engage with friends, family and recruiting leadership, with his mind set on his passion for recruiting.

“The first thing I asked leadership when I saw them was, ‘Did you give my assignment away? Because I still want to go to Hawaii,’” Salinas said.

Prior to his donning the Air Force uniform, Salinas served in the Army for 10 years, five as a recruiter. Recruiting and service to his country run deep in his blood.

“I was coming up on my 10-year mark with the Army when things were going on in my life that prompted me to get out of uniform,” Salinas said. “I ended up getting a

great civilian job at an oil refinery. However, it just wasn’t me. I needed to get back to ‘boots.’ So I joined the Reserve as a traditional Reservist, serving one weekend a month, and followed a path to becoming a recruiter full-time.”

During his three weeks of continued recovery at UC Davis, Salinas’ recruiting instincts and tenacity resurfaced.

“I was trying to recruit the nurses,” Salinas said. “I was asking them, ‘Hey, do you have student loans? We have great repayment programs.’ I am not a healthcare professions recruiter, but I was thinking of how I can help connect these medical professionals to HP recruiters and serve this great nation.”

Despite a tough road of recovery ahead, Salinas never questioned whether or not he would continue to serve and recruit tomorrow’s Airmen.

“I can honestly answer that question with one word – ‘Never!’” Salinas said emphatically. “I’m here because I love serving this nation and being able to put on the uniform is a blessing to me.”

Integral to Salinas’ recovery, his leadership and fellow squadron team-

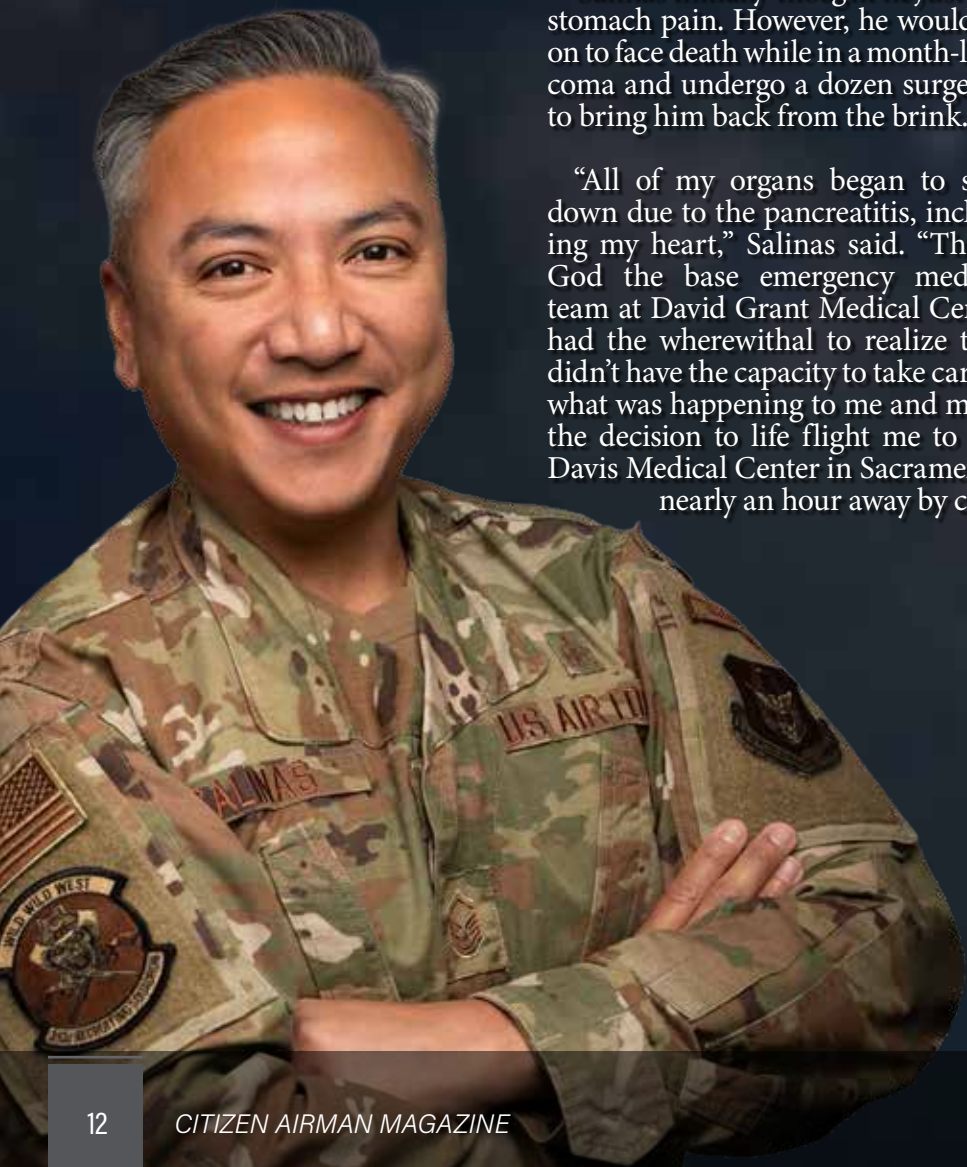
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Opposite page: Master Sgt. Manuel Salinas, a recruiter assigned to the 353rd Recruiting Squadron, March Air Reserve Base, California, poses for his first picture in uniform since recovering from acute pancreatitis. Above: Salinas poses with his trauma surgeon, Lt. Col. Rachel M. Russo, at UC Davis Medical Center. (Courtesy photos)

mates stood by him every step of the way to ensure his rehabilitation and that he could continue to perform his recruiting duties.

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| Title: Caption



Opposite page: Salinas was in a month-long coma and underwent a dozen surgeries. Above: Salinas poses with fellow recruiters at the UC Davis Medical Center while recovering from acute pancreatitis. (Courtesy photos)

“He is someone I have known for a long time and a recruiter who has done so much for everyone else and epitomizes selflessness,” said Chief Master Sgt. Adam D. Eldard, senior enlisted leader with the 353rd Recruiting Squadron at March Air Reserve Base, California. “Once I was initially alerted to what was going on with Manny, I drove over to the intensive care unit. After realizing the gravity of his situation, I contacted the members of our recruiting flight and we prayed for him and made sure his family was taken care of. Several first sergeants, some from other squadrons, flew out to take shifts at the hospital to watch over him and meet with the family. If there’s anything I know about this guy, no matter what condition he was in, he was going to push through and get better.”

Lt. Col. Harold A. Tongson, 353rd RCS commander, had just taken command of his squadron several months after Salinas’ brush with death and ultimately had to make key decisions that could greatly impact Salinas’ future.

“My biggest concern was his overall health,” Tongson said. “I loved the fact that Manny wanted to get back to his recruiting mission. He’s very determined, but sometimes we had to tell him to slow down and throttle back a little bit. However, the overall decision for me to help him retain his role as an Airman and a recruiter was obvious and clear. He is dedicated to his craft and bleeds Air Force. So, let’s do what we can to get him there.”

Fast forward to Nov. 8, 2023, when Salinas, with more than 17 years of

service, reenlisted in front of his fellow recruiters and leadership for the last time by raising his right hand for the Oath of Enlistment administered by Tongson.

“I am beyond blessed to have the leadership I have,” Salinas said. “They saved me and my career. I adapt and overcome whatever I do. I am alive. My recovery now is definitely fueled by not just the need, but also by the desire, to put the uniform on and do what I feel I do best in the military – recruiting ... relentlessly.”

*(Pilch is assigned to the 367th Recruiting Group.)*







Col. Marc McAllister, left, and Col. James Mach in the cockpit of a United Airlines aircraft. Mach was McAllister's boss and mentor while both served at the 927th Air Refueling Wing at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. McAllister is Mach's mentor at United. (Courtesy photos)

# THE STUDENT BECOMES THE TEACHER

## RESERVIST RELISHES ROLE AS HIS FORMER MILITARY BOSS' MENTOR AT CIVILIAN AIRLINE

— By Bo Joyner

It's funny how life comes full circle sometimes. Just ask Col. Marc McAllister, an Air Force Reservist since 2006 who will be starting his new job as the IMA for the Capabilities Division, HQ USAF Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration, at the Pentagon in February.

A pilot by trade, McAllister was flying with the Reserve's 927th Air Refueling Wing and serving as the commander of the 63rd Air Refueling Squadron at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida in 2019 when he learned that his incoming new boss, the commander of the 927th Operations Group, was an active-duty Airman by the name of Col. James Mach.

"To be honest, I was a little worried when I heard that we were getting an active-duty OG commander because I knew he would face many challenges in understanding and effectively leading a part-time force component," McAllister said.

The colonel went on to say that it didn't take long for him to realize that Mach was the perfect person for the job.

"In a very short period of time, it became clear that Col. Mach could see the differences between active and Reserve forces with a true desire to help foster a genuine integration," McAllister said. "Total Force Integration is a great concept that sometimes becomes difficult in execution because it all boils down to the relationship between the commanders on both sides. If there is a good relationship, the TFI will flourish. If not, it doesn't. It's that simple."

Mach, who spent 25 years on active duty – the last three as the 927th OG commander, said he cherished the time he spent as a Reserve operations group commander.

"I wish I had the opportunity to serve with a Reserve or Guard organization earlier in my career," he said. "It would have broadened my perspective and influenced my effectiveness with duties and responsibilities while working at Air Mobility Command, U.S. Transportation Command and the Pentagon on Air Staff. I gained an appreciation for the challenges faced by our Reserve force and its members, which are far different than us on active duty."

McAllister served under Mach for three years and said he learned a tremendous amount from his former boss.

"Col. Mach and I spent many hours discussing leadership, life and family," he said. "Together, we were able to operate very effectively with our active-duty counterparts as well as within our own organization. He taught me so much over a three-year period that I credit many of my own successes to his teachings."

"Col. McAllister was a true professional at all times during our tenure together," Mach said. "We openly communicated, challenged each other with personnel and operational issues and always ensured the best for our people and our mission. I trusted him as a leader and gave him support with the direction he wanted to take the squadron. I served as his mentor and still do today."

Early in 2022, McAllister moved to a new Reserve position at U.S. Indo-Pacific Command headquarters at Camp H.I. Smith, Hawaii.

"I didn't think our paths would cross again until I received a call from him in the summer of 2022 telling me that he was retiring and had received a job offer from the same airline where I am employed," McAllister said. "I was ecstatic with the news and wanted to explore the opportunity to mentor him because I knew this new career would be significantly different from anything he was used to."

As an airline union representative, McAllister took Mach under his wing and mentored him in the same fashion that Mach had mentored him in the military.

"I was also fortunate that as a line check pilot, or training captain, I was assigned to conduct Jim's initial aircraft training," McAllister said. "Just as he was my instructor, now I have become his teacher in the ways of safe airline flying. It is an interesting reversal of roles that could only happen as a Citizen Airman."

"Our union supports a mentorship program for all new pilots and they encourage using mentors as a resource," Mach said. "Marc is my resource, my mentor. So while in the military, I served as his mentor and still offer and execute those services as he continues his military career, he reciprocates that service for me with the airlines. It's the old 'when the student becomes the teacher' story, although while I was the teacher as an ops group commander, so very often I found myself being the student, learning the way of the Reserve."





# RESERVE HYPERSONICS BULLPEN TAKING AIR FORCE HIGHER, FURTHER, FASTER

— By Lt. Col. Shannon Mann

A group of individual mobilization augmentees are moving faster than the speed of sound to help shape the Air Force’s hypersonics program.

In September 2023, operational crews from Air Force Global Strike Command and Air Combat Command gathered at Edwards Air Force Base, California to participate in hypersonic weapon familiarization training. Developing systems that operate at more than five times the speed of sound is a priority research and development area for the Department of Defense, and the Air Force Reserve is coming to the table with its own novel approach to support active-component demand signals and AFRC priorities in developing hypersonic science and technology.

The Air Force Reserve team of IMAs, known today as the Individual Reserve Strategy Office (ISO) Reserve Hypersonics Team Bullpen, formed in 2018 when a small group of Air Force Reservists with civilian expertise in hypersonics started meeting informally under the leadership of Maj. Gen. John Olsen, who then was assigned as the mobilization assistant to the commander of the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center.

Another member of the group, Col. Lance Baxter, worked as a government civilian as the director of the

Hypersonics Combined Test Force, and as a branch chief for the Hypersonics Systems Test Branch at Arnold AFB, Tennessee. Joined by nearly a dozen other IMAs with experience in hypersonics, the group knew they could create synergy through their experiences working in the Reserve, industry and academia to propel the force in this critical competency.

Baxter explained that while his IMA and civilian positions were directly focused on hypersonics, it wasn’t until he was assigned to the Air Force Research Laboratory as an IMA that he was brought into another aspect of the Air Force’s efforts in hypersonic science and technology. That’s when he knew that he and his fellow IMAs could facilitate, accelerate and ensure the Defense Department had broader access to hypersonics expertise.

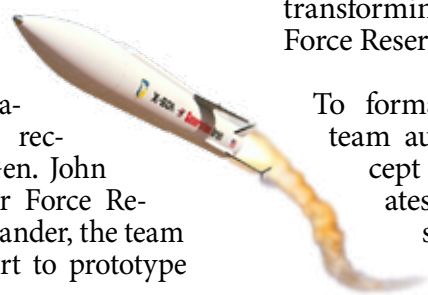
“The communities were disconnected and often difficult to bring together,” Baxter said. “There is a significant number of full-time government, civilian, military and contractors working in hypersonics, but there is no one deliberately connecting the various scattered equities in hypersonics that are separated by organizational, geographic, security, contractual and/or bureaucratic barriers.”

And so, the Reserve Hypersonics Team was born.

Aware of the informal hypersonics group, the IMA Strategic Review Team saw the strategic value of organizing a collective team of experts and sought out an opportunity to formalize and replicate the Reserve Hypersonics Team model.

In November 2022, as part of the IMA Strategic Review Team’s recommendation to Lt. Gen. John Healy, chief of the Air Force Reserve and AFRC commander, the team included a line of effort to prototype bullpen teams.

Based on its interactions with the Reserve Hypersonics Team, the IMA Strategic Review Team had a model that demonstrated some IMAs had education and/or civilian work experience in areas valuable to national security that transcended their specialty codes and units of assignment. The Reserve Hypersonics Team was structured to connect the Defense Department, industry and academia hypersonics communities. The IMA Strategic Review Team designed the bullpen concept to replicate this structure and provide IMAs with high-demand skill sets a dedicated Reserve billet where they can apply their unique talents to critical and emerging DoD mission sets for a period of time before returning to their core career field.



“The Reserve Hypersonics Team offered to partner with us and let us dig into how they were doing business,” said Col. Kay Beigh, program manager for the IMA Strategic Review Team and chief of the Individual Reserve Strategy Office. “We are taking what they have done, formalizing the organizational structure so we can replicate it. The ISO is establishing two other bullpen prototypes to place IMAs in change agent positions, transforming the Air Force and Air Force Reserve for the future.”

To formalize ISO bullpens, the team authored the bullpen concept of operations which creates four or five strategic, mission-area focused bullpen teams that would serve as change agents for roughly three to five years.

The ISO has also partnered with the active-duty Pathfinder initiative by establishing one enduring bullpen, providing an IMA billet to Pathfinder-board selected Reserve Airmen. While the ISO is prototyping the Reserve Hypersonics Team bullpen, emerging ISO bullpens will tap into the exceptional talent of officer and enlisted members, cementing the Reserve’s role as brokers of crucial subject-matter experts in emerging and critical fields.

“ISO bullpens create a network that wouldn’t have a way to come together via the active-component construct,” said Maj. Sharon Messina, Reserve Hypersonics Team chief of staff. “The level of talent the program offers

would be cost-prohibitive, difficult to source and even harder to develop on a three-to-four PCS cycle. Our IMAs are actively working in the field, and we can provide support across the DoD enterprise without traditional stovepipes, and can also foster partnerships with our international allies.”

Messina, along with her colleagues on the Reserve Hypersonics Team, are working hard to educate, facilitate and advance hypersonics. In August 2023, the team engaged with the Joint Hypersonics Transition Office at the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Crane, Indiana.

Team members provided technology updates and threat assessments, as well as identified top issues facing the government and industry. The team is prototyping “Warp Speed Collaboration,” an effort that uses their talents to rapidly answer questions and identify solutions to problems that have long plagued the field.

In addition, the Reserve Hypersonics Team and Joint Hypersonics Transition Office have worked together to identify workforce development opportunities and K-12 outreach efforts that target the next generation of hypersonics professionals.

From collaboration circles to the classroom to the flightline, Reserve Hypersonics Team members are actively engaging in multiple areas of hypersonics. Team member 2nd Lt. Javier Urzay supported the hypersonic weapon familiarization training at Edwards in September 2023.

As a core member of the team and IMA lead for space-based detection of hypersonic weapons at Space Systems Command, he served as an assistant instructor teaching fundamentals and tactics for operational crews of the B-1, B-2, B-52 and F-15E.

“This training increased operational readiness and familiarized multiple Air Force communities with advanced hypersonic weapons,” said Urzay, who holds a PhD in aerospace engineering and has more than 20 years of experience in research on hypersonics, supersonic combustion and rocket propulsion.

“Establishing bullpens and utilizing the unique skillsets of IMAs is in direct alignment with the chief of the Air Force Reserve’s vision for Reservists to be ready now and postured to transform for the future,” Beigh said. “The ISO Reserve Hypersonics Team offers a prime example of how IMAs are responding to strategic priorities and creating synergy to unite and mold the landscape for our nation’s most pressing demand signals.”

*(Mann is a member of the IMA Strategic Review Team.)*



Active-duty aircrews train alongside members of the Reserve Hypersonics Team at Edwards Air Force Base, California in September 2023. The team is the first “bullpen” prototype to launch that delivers IMA talent to support active duty and AFRC priorities to meet the nation’s most critical needs. (Courtesy photo)







Maj. C.W. Lemoine and his rescue husky Luna spread cheer to their community. When the 403rd Wing's new Inspector General isn't investigating and resolving complaints for wing Airmen at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, he volunteers 40 to 50 hours a month working as a reserve deputy with the St. Tammany Parish Police Department patrolling the streets and answering calls for assistance and visiting Louisiana communities with his therapy comfort canine. (Courtesy photo)

# TRASH TO TREASURE: CITIZEN AIRMEN, RESCUE DOG BRING JOY TO COMMUNITY

— By Lt. Col. Marnee A.C. Losurdo



The proverb, “One man’s trash is another man’s treasure,” rings true for one Citizen Airman. Maj. C.W. Lemoine and his rescue husky, Luna, can often be found spreading cheer throughout their community.

When the new inspector general for the Reserve’s 403rd Wing at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, isn’t investigating and resolving complaints for wing Airmen, he volunteers 40 to 50 hours a month working as a reserve deputy with the St. Tammany Parish Police Department patrolling the streets and answering calls for assistance. Luna, who he adopted in 2020, goes on patrol with him and is a therapy comfort canine visiting special needs children, patients in cancer centers and nursing homes, and attends community events as part of the department’s outreach program.

In December alone, the dynamic duo visited Abita Springs Elementary School, Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Treatment Center, Pontchartrain Senior Health Care Center, and STARC West, an assisted living facility for adults with developmental disabilities, which Lemoine said is important to him because his brother has cerebral palsy and requires 24-hour care.

“She is a trash bag dog. Her entire litter was found in a dumpster behind a gas station in Arkansas,” said Lemoine, adding that Luna was rescued by Cajun Tales Adopters in December 2020. “I came across her ad online and decided to foster her.”

At the time, Lemoine, a Mandeville, Louisiana native, said his two dogs, ages 12 and 14, were not fans of the new puppy.

“They didn’t like her, so I thought it might be best to bring Luna back,” he said, adding that during the drive to the adoption center, Luna, a very quiet dog, cried the whole time. “The adopter said to give her more time, so I did, and as soon as we got back

home, she stopped crying. Keeping her was the best decision I ever made.”

Lemoine’s oldest dog passed away from cancer in June, and a month later, he had to say goodbye to his other dog who succumbed to degenerative back disease.

“It was hard losing my boys, so Luna has been a light for me,” said Lemoine, who is not only a commercial airline pilot, but also operates his own YouTube channel with 400,000 followers, is an author of 12 books, and races cars. “She’s my adventure dog. She’s been to the Daytona races with me and even flown in a helicopter.”

It was Luna’s chill demeanor and exceptional people skills, which prompted Lemoine to do something positive with her to help others. He applied for and was approved for a \$2,000 grant through the National Police Association. The grant funded a canine unit vehicle with a dog kennel in the back and training to certify Luna as a therapy comfort canine and Lemoine as her handler. Working with the public information officer, Lemoine and Luna represent the St. Tammany Parish Police Department as part of their community outreach.

His canine friend also goes on patrol with him, and she visits the other full-time officers, which he said helps them decompress from the stress of their jobs.

“It’s been awesome; people love her,” he said. “There are people out there who are experiencing rough times, and if you can make their day brighter it makes your day brighter too.”

The major knows a few things about setbacks and challenges. He began his Air Force Reserve career in 2006 and flew F-16 Fighting Falcons at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Florida, before transferring to the U.S. Naval Air Station Air Reserve Base New Orleans in 2012 to get closer to home

to help his father who had a deteriorating health condition. He flew VFA-204 Hornets from 2012 to 2016, but due to an illness of his own, he was temporarily suspended from flying. He transferred back to the Air Force Reserve in 2018 and flew T-38s as adversary air for the F-22 Raptors at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida. Hurricane Michael leveled the base in October 2018, and his unit was moved to Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, and closed in 2022, forcing Lemoine to look for a new job.

“When you are going through tough times and you are able to turn it around to help someone else, it helps you. Acts of service can sometimes save you,” he said. “It’s amazing for me to watch Luna interact with people and see how it changes their demeanor. You see the impact you have, and it makes it all worth it.”

Col. Shawn Mattingly, 403rd Wing deputy commander, who hired Lemoine, said he couldn’t think of a better person to fill such a critical position in the IG office.

“Major Lemoine brings an incredible background and unique skillset to the IGQ role,” he said. “He exudes a character of volunteerism and truly wants to help Airmen and his community.”

Lemoine is grateful for the opportunity to serve at the 403rd.

“As the IGQ, my goal is to help people and make them feel like they have a voice, that they are being heard, and that I care,” he said.

Whether as the IG, an airline pilot, a social media influencer, or a reserve deputy police officer, Lemoine is here to serve, and when he can, it will be with the help of his side-kick Luna.

(Losurdo is assigned to the 403rd Wing public affairs office.)





# RESERVE OPPORTUNITIES AT THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE UNIVERSITY

— By Lt. Col. Jason Parsons

At the National Intelligence University in Bethesda, Maryland, some of the country's top intelligence and national security professionals, including Air Force Reservists, are sharpening their skills to provide the Joint Force with a decisive edge in the Great Power Competition.

Rapid advances in warfighting technology and the widespread introduction of artificial intelligence and machine learning present dramatic challenges to today's Total Force intelligence professionals. As the academic hub for the country's intelligence community, NIU is determined to make sure America's intelligence professionals are poised to meet these challenges.

NIU graduates conduct advanced research and apply history to inform national interagency policies while earning rigorous advanced academic degrees. Students do not pay for tuition or books, they receive personalized

instruction from experienced faculty from around the intelligence community, and they discuss cutting-edge challenges in Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility classrooms to enable comprehensive research on the nation's greatest intelligence challenges.

As the intelligence community's only accredited degree-granting program, NIU offers full-time, monthly and evening programs to support the busy lifestyles of Citizen Airmen across the country and around the globe. Through NIU, Reserve Airmen are rising to the challenge.

Air Force Reserve Maj. Rachel Ringgenberg, Hannah Johnson and Traci Arnold are on track to graduate NIU's full-time master's program in June of this year, completing one year of personalized learning and research while earning Intermediate Developmental Education and Joint Professional Military Education credit.

"NIU's curriculum has helped to strengthen my critical thinking skills and develop a deeper understanding of the intelligence roles in policymaking," Ringgenberg said. "This will enable more informed and strategic decisions in future leadership positions in an evolving global environment."

Ringgenberg participates in a specialized China concentration while conducting thesis research on the People's Republic of China's future military and intelligence activity in Cuba to inform national policy and security strategy.

Johnson said that her time at NIU has made her "more informed and knowledgeable about threats the United States may face in the future and how to navigate and advocate within the national security enterprise. Now I'm able to speak with confidence to advocate for Total Force Airmen and more accurately comprehend and explain the threats Total Force Airmen may experience in the future."

She went on to say that her fellow students are truly the best part of learning at NIU. "I've made lifelong friends out of this program," she said.

Arnold is applying her expertise as a former missileer and commander of the 920th Communications Flight, Patrick Space Force Base, Florida, while preparing a thesis



to address how the Air Force can conduct Agile Combat Employment while defending allied logistics from adversary attacks.

Arnold explained that access to classified materials is essential to her research. "Unclassified resources alone would be missing a huge component in answering my thesis question," she said. Arnold is also a student senator at NIU, representing her fellow classmates directly with NIU leadership.

"Not only am I getting an education from experts in their field, but I'm in the heart of the capital and have information and history at my fingertips," Arnold said.

In addition to the full-time master's program, Airmen can earn their Bachelor of Science in Intelligence (BSI), Master of Science in Strategic Intelligence (MSSI), Master of Science and Technology Intelligence (MSTI), or post-baccalaureate Certificate of Intelligence Studies at locations worldwide.

In addition to NIU's main campus at the Intelligence Community Campus in Bethesda, Maryland, there is the European Academic Center in RAF Molesworth in the United Kingdom (with sites in Ramstein Air Base and Stuttgart, Germany); the Quantico Academic Center at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia; the Southern Academic Center at

Tampa, Florida, with satellite centers at Liberty, North Carolina, Key West, Hurlburt Field and Miami, Florida, and Dayton, Ohio; the NSA Academic Center at Fort Meade, Maryland (with classes at Fort Eisenhower, Georgia); and National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency's West Campus in St. Louis, Missouri.

NIU's flexible two-year programs allow Reservists to participate in a format optimized for their unique professional and personal lives.

Monthly program students should seek their first O-6 commander's endorsement. They may even request command approval to utilize drill and summer annual tour to participate in the program in a paid status and, in some circumstances, travel reimbursement.

Staff Sgt. Stephanie Kirk leveraged her enrollment in the monthly program to enhance her on-the-job expertise while assigned to the 512th Intelligence Squadron, Fort Meade, Maryland, earning accolades from the commander of the 315th Cyber Operations Squadron and the Cyber National Mission Force Joint Task Force III commander.

"I was able to tailor my coursework in the Master of Science and Technology Intelligence degree program and enroll in courses that enhanced my skills and knowledge that apply to my work in cyber as an Air Force Reservist as well as my area of responsibility – China/Chinese military – in my civilian position," she said.

Kirk is completing cutting-edge thesis research into technology transfer laws and regulations to prevent adversary access to vital national security technologies.

Finally, NIU offers opportunities for independent research through the Research Fellowship program and publication through the National Intelligence Press and the American Intelligence Journal.

Regardless of which format best suits a Reservist's needs, NIU offers a wide variety of options to help Total Force Airmen sharpen their intelligence and analytical knowledge to lead and prevail in today's complex intelligence environment.

Reservists interested in more information and application instructions should visit <https://niu.edu/admissions/>.


*(As a Reservist, Parsons serves on the faculty at the National Intelligence University and is a career intelligence and space operations officer. As a civilian, he is currently a civil servant at the U.S. Embassy in Berlin's Office of Defense Cooperation.)*



Above: Staff Sgt. Stephanie Kirk is completing cutting-edge thesis research into technology transfer laws and regulations to prevent adversary access to vital national security technologies at the National Intelligence University. Opposite page: Maj. Rachel Ringgenberg, Hannah Johnson and Traci Arnold are on track to graduate NIU's full-time master's program in June. (Courtesy photos)







Parting Shot: Tech. Sgt. Kiara Plish, 911th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, participates in a training exercise on a C-17 Globemaster III at Pittsburgh International Airport Air Reserve Station, Pennsylvania, in January. AES is responsible for transporting and providing medical care to injured patients while in-flight, ensuring their safe evacuation and delivery to medical facilities. (Staff Sgt. James Fritz)

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*At Citizen Airman magazine, we are always looking for great stories about Citizen Airmen with interesting or unusual civilian careers and how those careers complement or contrast their Reserve job. If you have an unusual or interesting civilian career and think it would make a good story, please send an e-mail to [HQAFCR.PAO.Operations@us.af.mil](mailto:HQAFCR.PAO.Operations@us.af.mil) with a brief description of your story idea.*