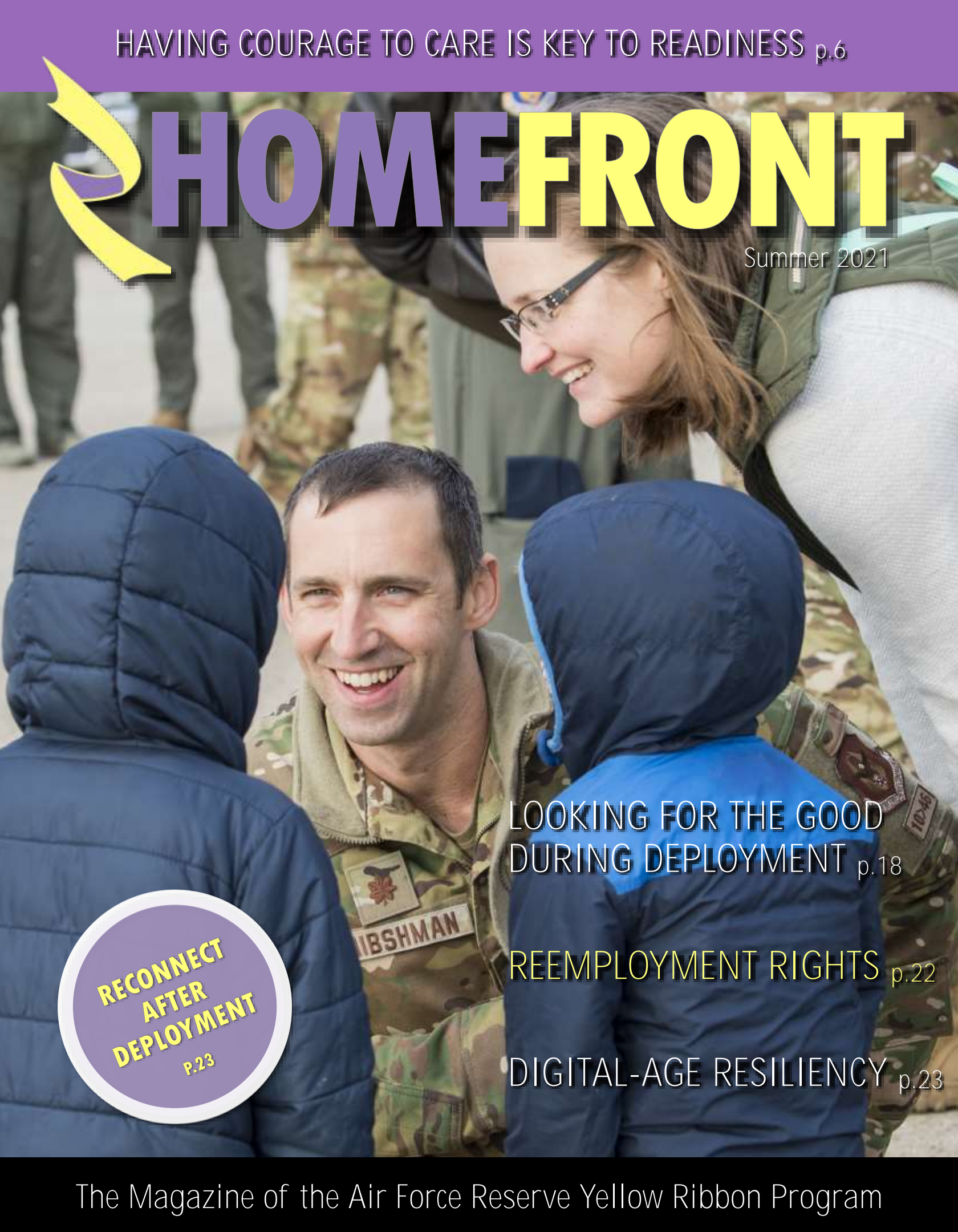


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HOMEFRONT

Summer 2021



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HOMEFRONT

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WING YELLOW RIBBON REPRESENTATIVES

Andrews (459 ARW)

Capt Lynette Faulk
716-236-3630

Barksdale (307 BW)

SMSgt Joshua Gray
318-469-9198

Beale (940 ARW)

MSgt Xavier Bryant
530-634-1918

Carswell (301 FW)

SMSgt Nathan McReynolds
817-782-6940

Charleston (315 AW)

Capt Julia Lesage
843-963-7667

Dobbins (94 AW)

MSgt Melissa Walker
678-655-9356

Dover (512 AW)

MSgt Erica Weatherspoon
302-677-5586

Duke Field (919 SOW)

SMSgt Anthony Chavez
850-883-6474

Grissom (434 ARW)

SMSgt Jarred Gentile
765-688-2475

Elmendorf (477 FG)

Capt Jeffrey Boyle
618-799-7221

Hickam (624 RSG)

SMSgt Andre Valentine
808-449-7232

Hill (419 FW)

SMSgt Tamara Wass
801-777-0700

Homestead (482 FW)

Capt Augusto Reyes
786-415-7307

Keesler (403 AW)

TSgt Dishau Jeanjacques
228-365-3550

Lackland (433 AW)

SMSgt Kay Lachney
210-925-9741

Luke (944 FW)

MSgt Daniel Pottinger
623-856-2495

MacDill (927 ARW)

SMSgt Keith Gardner
813-828-7781

March (452 AMW)

MSgt Eliana Martinez
951-655-7722

Maxwell (908 AW)

TSgt Gabrielle Bates
334-953-2219

McChord (446 AW)

Capt Jeffrey Boyle
618-799-7221

McConnell (931 ARW)

MSgt Alexandra Rector
316-759-6675

McGuire (514 AMW)

MSgt Anthony Gallela
609-754-3068

Minneapolis (934 AW)

1st Lt Burl Holland
612-414-2203

Nellis (926 WG)

MSgt Jessica Rayl
702-652-6139

Niagara Falls (914 AW)

1st Lt Shamiqna Mason
716-236-6339

Patrick (920 RQW)

TSgt Tiffany Kallal
321-494-6030

Peterson (302 AW)

SMSgt Nick Kundert
719-556-7359

Pittsburgh (911 AW)

MSgt Joseph Bridge
412-474-8509

Schriever (310 SW)

SMSgt Nick Kundert
719-306-4578

Scott (932 AW)

Capt Jeffrey Boyle
618-799-7221

Seymour Johnson (916th)

MSgt Jonathan Silvestri
757-329-9759

Tinker (507 AW)

MSgt Stephanie Charkowski
405-734-8453

Travis (349 AMW)

MSgt Jerome Latona
707-424-3503

Westover (439 AW)

CMSgt Ryan Hellyar
413-557-3397

Whiteman (442 FW)

MSgt Ulisses Cortez
660-687-7752

Wright-Patterson (445 AW)

MSgt Angela Potchik
937-257-5645

Wright-Patterson (655th ISRW)

SMSgt Bob Ewest
937-257-8023

Youngstown ARS (910 AW)

MSgt Skye Tancer
330-609-1715

AIRMAN & FAMILY READINESS CENTERS

Andrews AFB, MD
240-857-7058

Barksdale AFB, LA
318-456-1807

Beale AFB, CA
530-634-2863

JB Charleston, SC
843-963-4400

Lackland AFB, TX
210-925-3650

Dobbins ARB, GA
678-655-5004

Dover AFB, DE
302-677-3120

Duke Field / Eglin AFB, FL
850-883-6474

Fort Worth (Carswell), TX
817-782-7435

Grissom ARB, IN
765-688-4812

Hickam AFB, HI
808-448-0212

Hill AFB, UT
801-775-2422

Homestead ARB, FL
786-415-7329

Kessler AFB, MS
228-376-8253

Little Rock AFB, AR
(501) 987-2667

Luke AFB, AZ
623-856-8324

March ARB, CA
646-641-8419

Maxwell AFB, AL
334-953-9018

McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ
609-754-8229

MacDill AFB, FL
813-828-7781

McChord AFB, WA
253-982-2755

McConnell AFB, KS
316-759-2589

Minneapolis ARS, MN
612-713-1516

Nellis AFB, NV
702-679-0879

Niagara Falls ARS, NY
716-236-2097

Patrick AFB, FL
321-494-5980

Peterson AFB, CO
719-556-2944

Pittsburgh ARS, PA
412-474-8544

Randolph AFB, TX
210-652-9340

Robins ARB, GA
478-926-2912

Robins AFB (HQ AFRC)
478-327-1294

Schriever AFB, CO
720-847-1643

Scott AFB, IL
618-229-7556

Seymour-Johnson AFB, NC
919-722-8761

Tinker AFB, OK
405-734-6278

Travis AFB, CA
707-424-1616

Tyndall AFB, FL
662-434-4484

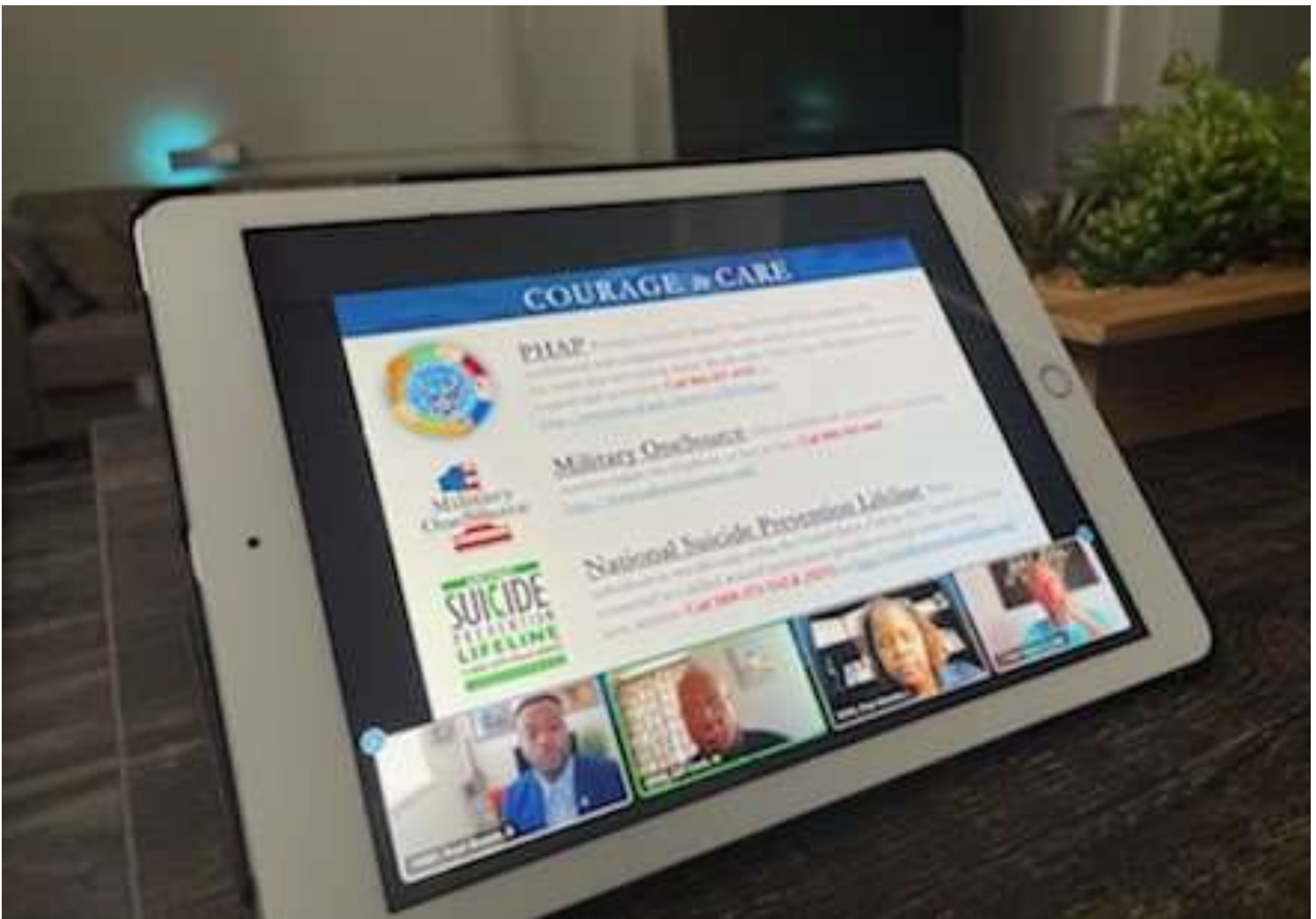
Westover ARB, MA
413-557-3024

Whiteman AFB, MO
660-687-3530

Wright-Patterson AFB, OH
937-522-4607

Wright-Patterson (655 ISR)
937-257-4714

Youngstown ARS, OH
330-609-1305



HAVING THE COURAGE TO CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER IS KEY TO READINESS

By Staff Sgt. Mary McKnight, 916th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

In preparation to deploy and transition back home, Reserve Citizen Airmen and their loved ones attended a virtual Yellow Ribbon event, April 24-25.

The Air Force Reserve Yellow Ribbon Program promotes the well-being of reservists and their families by connecting them with resources before, during and after deployments.

The event's participants were provided presentations on an assortment of tools to help cope with mental, physical, spiritual and financial fitness.

One of the presentations focused on having the courage to care.

"Now if you saw someone fall on the ground, you wouldn't just walk over them and act as though you didn't see them fall," said Lawana Morales, a nurse care facilitator with the Air Force Reserve Psychological Health Advocacy Program. "You wouldn't walk over them thinking, 'I hope they get it together.' You would offer your assistance, ask if they were hurt or felt anything was injured."

Morales said Airmen and their loved ones should use the same approach when they see someone who is mentally struggling or when they notice someone's personality has changed.

“Saying something opens the door for someone to say, ‘Yes, I am having a hard time,’” she said.

Morales acknowledged that this is easier said than done and that’s why it takes courage to care.

“The thing is to hold ourselves accountable and check in with people,” she said.

Marcellous Cook, who is also a PHAP nurse care facilitator, said a great example of having the courage to care was provided by the event’s keynote speaker, retired Marine, Chad Robichaux.

Robichaux spoke about the post-traumatic stress he experienced upon returning home after multiple combat deployments and how he was saved when his family stepped in to help when they noticed suicidal warning signs.

“It was really unfortunate when he talked about being in the closet with the gun,” Cook said. “With his wife at the door making the simple statement, ‘Don’t you want to fight as hard for your family as you have worked for these other things?’”

Robichaux said that if it wasn’t for the intervention, he might not be here today.

“I think the biggest thing is resilience,” said Master Sgt. Xavier J. Bryant, the Yellow Ribbon Program’s representative at the 940th Air Refueling Wing at Beal Air Force Base, California. “Sometimes as military members we carry this hard exterior, meaning sometimes we cry behind our smiles, when we are going to work or even going home.”

Bryant said it’s important for Airmen and their families to use the many resources available to them such as: key spouses, chaplains, PHAP, Military One Source

and many more as they transition to and from deployments.

While there are many professional resources available, sometimes it’s just as effective to reach out to a friend, said Tech Sgt. Orlando Ballestas, a cyber-operations specialist with the 512th Force Support Squadron at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware.

“At one point, I experienced high anxiety,” Ballestas said. “This one time I felt I could-

n’t cope with it, so I reached out to two of my friends, and that’s how I worked through it.

The incident occurred at night so it was easier for me to reach out to my friends than a doctor or something.”


Ballestas noticed something in himself, but he had the courage to care for himself and seek help.

“Hopefully people will treat themselves as good as they treat their cars,” said Cook. “I

always use that analogy because people tend to take care of

their cars, better than they do themselves. They take their cars to get tune-ups every five to ten thousand miles, get the tires rotated. Well what about us? Aren’t we important?”

Cook said that having the courage to care for oneself has the same theme as the old saying that you can’t take care of someone else if you don’t first take care of yourself.

Airmen and their families are encouraged to have quick access to the following resources: PHAP 866-417-0707; Military OneSource 800-342-9647; National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-8255. Also, they can always call a friend. 

“Now if you saw someone fall on the ground, you wouldn’t just walk over them and act as though you didn’t see them fall. You wouldn’t walk over them thinking, ‘I hope they get it together.’ You would offer your assistance, ask if they were hurt or felt anything was injured.”

Lawana Morales



LOOKING FOR THE GOOD DURING & AFTER DEPLOYMENT

By Tech. Sgt. Monica Ricci, 514th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs

You had a long day and you can think of a million things that went wrong...but what about the things that went well? Looking for the good in life is a skill you have to teach yourself, Lt. Col. Brande Newsome told Airmen during a virtual Yellow Ribbon event Jun. 20.

Newsome is a Reserve Citizen Airman assigned to the Air Force Reserve Medical service

at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia.

"The more you can practice positive psychology, it's contagious," Newsome said. "So the people around you who you're closest to can get that from you, and you may get a little bit of that back from them."

Newsome said you can have gratitude for just about anything—even on deployments.

“There's a lot of things that people can come back and be grateful for, as the time that they spent away, helped them to kind of re-center, refocus, and really take care of the things that they necessarily aren't able to do in the day-to-day world that we live in,” Newsome said.

For example, she said she was grateful to be able to read books during the downtime on her deployment, something she never seems to have time for at home.

Master Sgt. Weifeng Liu, a finance technician with the 439th Airlift Wing at Westover Air Reserve Base, Massachusetts, recently returned from a deployment to Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar. He said that he had to start ‘looking for the good’ on his deployment by finding things he enjoyed doing to pass the time.

“Homesickness was the hardest part of my deployment,” Liu said. “In order to combat homesickness I participated in after-work activities such as running club and ping pong club to keep myself busy.”

Liu said he was motivated to continue that way of thinking after attending Newsome’s session on gratitude. So how can Airmen maintain this positive way of thinking throughout their deployment and beyond? Newsome says: Practice!

“It's just about making a commitment to yourself,” Newsome said. “Sometimes you will have to put something in your outlook (calendar) to say, ‘Hey, I'm going to pause at this time and think about what's going well within the last 24

hours, because I know that I need to make sure I remind myself to do this because it won't happen naturally.’”

She said it is also important to acknowledge the walls and barriers

that impact our ability to express gratitude and look for the good in things. To reinforce that point, she shared the story of father-and-son duo Dick and Rick Hoyt. When Rick was young, Dick was told his son would never be more than a

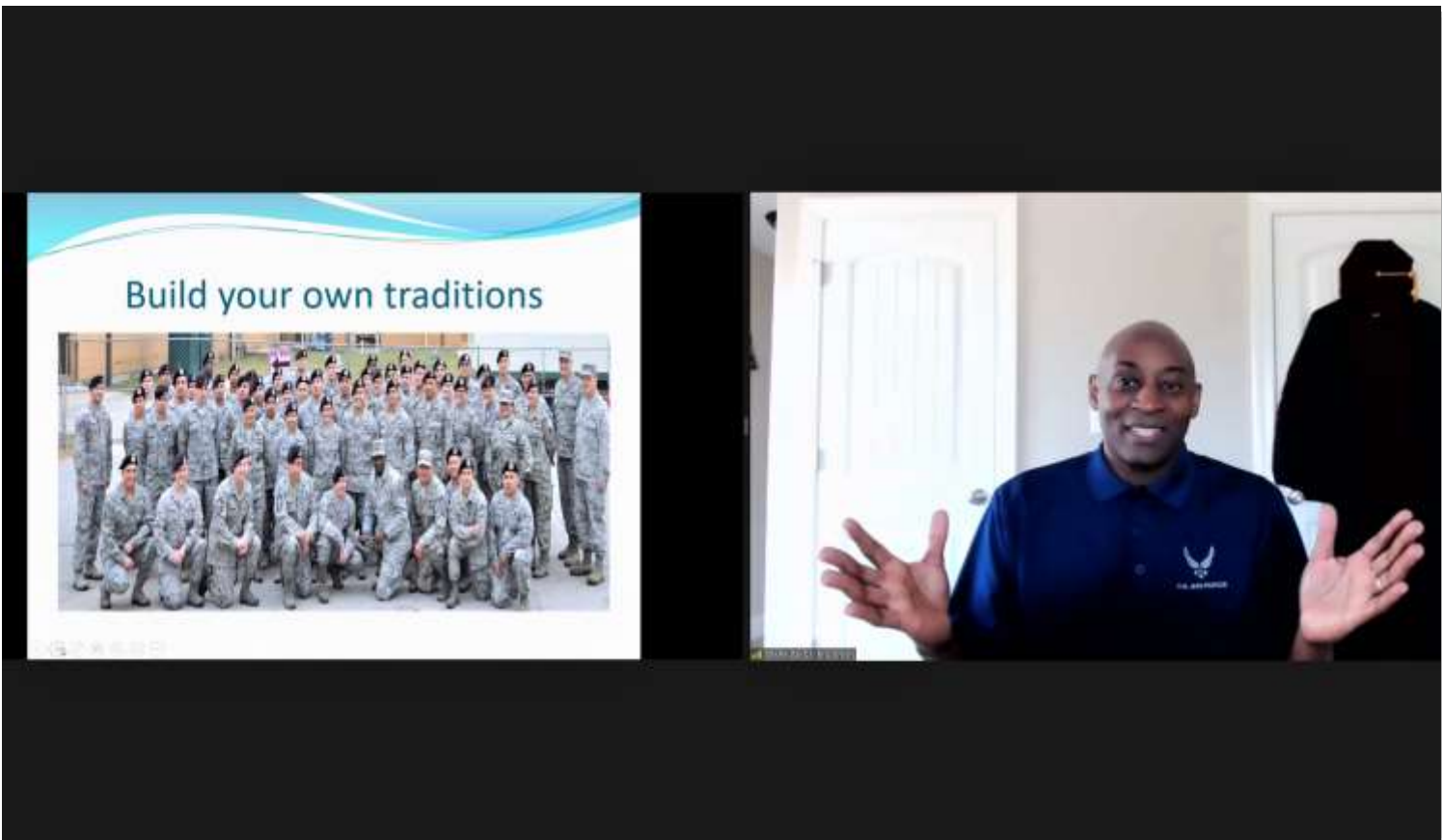
“THERE'S A LOT OF THINGS THAT PEOPLE CAN COME BACK AND BE GRATEFUL FOR, AS THE TIME THAT THEY SPENT AWAY, HELPED THEM TO KIND OF RE-CENTER, REFOCUS, AND REALLY TAKE CARE OF THE THINGS THAT THEY NECESSARILY AREN'T ABLE TO DO IN THE DAY-TO-DAY WORLD THAT WE LIVE IN.”

LT. COL. BRANDE NEWSOME
Air Force Reserve Medical Service

vegetative state due to his cerebral palsy diagnosis. He didn't listen, however, and raised him as normally as he could—even creating a computer Rick could speak through and famously pushing his son through hundreds of road races including the Boston Marathon.

“All the normal hurdles that the day-to-day person has, he had that and then some,” Newsome said. “But each time something presented as a challenge, it was like, ‘OK, we've gotten through something else.’ And that's one thing about building a gratitude and looking for the good: once you realize that you can get around a major feat, it gives you that ability to use that positive psychology to say, ‘this next thing that presents itself, we're definitely getting through this.’”

Newsome ended the session by sharing a video that offered many tips to help foster contagious, positive psychology: say thank you, practice self-care by taking a nap or treating yourself to a favorite dessert, leaving things better than you found them, and being more kind than necessary.



LIGHTEN YOUR BACKPACK

TIPS TO OVERCOME DEPLOYMENT CHALLENGES

By Staff Sgt. Sean Evans, 514th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, N.J.

—Reserve Citizen Airmen and their families received deployment advice from Chief Master Sgt. Eric Smith during a virtual Yellow Ribbon event May 15-16.

Smith, a veteran of five deployments, served as the event's keynote speaker.

He is the chief enlisted manager of command and special staff at Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia.

"We all carry a backpack, and we pick up items such as a spouse, kids, college and all our life experiences and we put them in that backpack. That's called living life," Smith said. "You may pick up more items than you can carry, and that forces you

to put your backpack down."

He provided seven recommendations to help deployers and those returning from deployment decide what they should remove from their "backpacks."

Don't isolate yourself – Make sure you have a support system. Airmen often isolate themselves and fail to reestablish themselves into their environment. Isolation causes a breakdown of communication and a lack of trust. When you start feeling that way, reach out and take isolation out of your backpack.

Tell people how you really feel inside – Some people have two faces; the faces they want you to see and the real one. This should not be the case in personal relationships. Since technology allows us to

communicate frequently, Airmen and their families should use it to tell their loved ones back home how they really feel.

Find inspiration when it's hard to – When Smith returned from his second deployment, he was laid off from his civilian job. He had to pawn his TV, his mortgage was five months overdue and his electric was cut off. Yet he continued to go to school because he knew they couldn't take his education away. He said he tried to find ways to inspire himself and told himself everything was going to be okay.

Engage adversity with determination – When you really want something bad enough and you don't have what you need internally, have external support as well. In this case, Yellow Ribbon is there to support you with the staff and the resources that they have. Smith said that if, "lack of determination is in your backpack, take it out!"

How you see yourself – Where you are today, and what you may become in the future is long-term motivation. Short-term motivation is useful at times, but long-term motivation will get you to your goals.

Never let circumstance define you – We all have different ways of getting there and everyone has special circumstances in their journey. As Henry Ward Beecher once said, "We should not judge people by their peak of excellence, but by the distance they have traveled from the point where they started."

Build your own traditions – If you're married, build your own traditions. If you're single, consider spending time with other people in your unit and build your own traditions. I want you to think about

what traditions your family and friends share with you before you deploy and after you come back. If you don't have one in place, the time is now to start building one.

First Lt. Ronald Fugate, a cyberspace officer with the 914th Communications Squadron, 914th Air Refueling Wing, said he appreciated Smith's advice.

"I have always understood the importance of changing what you can, letting go the things you can't and trying to know the difference," Fugate said. "This is why Chief's message of "take it out" resonated with me so much. We have to lighten our load by letting go of the negative things holding us down."

Smith has spoken at more than 30 Yellow Ribbon events attended by more than 20,000 Reserve Citizen Airmen and their families.

"When I came into the Air Force, we didn't have Yellow Ribbon. We just went straight back to work and people would have problems," Smith said. "The Yellow Ribbon program is there to put resources in place and build up Airman resiliency so they can stay longer."

For Smith, how one responds to a challenge is crucial. Resilience and readiness are strengthened by overcoming the challenges in our lives that impact our readiness.

"If all we see is obstacles, we will never see opportunities within those obstacles," said Smith. "Once you've lightened your backpack, you can travel farther because you're stronger. Pick up your backpack and carry on your journey."

"IF ALL WE SEE IS OBSTACLES, WE WILL NEVER SEE OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THOSE OBSTACLES. ONCE YOU'VE LIGHTENED YOUR BACKPACK, YOU CAN TRAVEL FARTHER BECAUSE YOU'RE STRONGER. PICK UP YOUR BACKPACK AND CARRY ON YOUR JOURNEY."

CHIEF MASTER SGT. ERIC SMITH

THE YELLOW RIBBON PROGRAM IS FOR RESERVISTS & THEIR SUPPORT SYSTEMS



BECAUSE SUPPORT SYSTEMS ARE EVERYTHING





An Airman's Story

FOR COL. ISAAC DAVIDSON, RESILIENCE IS A COMBINATION OF FAITH AND FAMILY

By Bo Joyner, Air Force Reserve Command Public Affairs

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. — As Air Force Reserve Command's Developing Resilient Leaders chief of strategy, Col. Isaac Davidson has conducted considerable research into what makes a resilient Airman ... including a lot of introspection into what has helped him overcome some extremely difficult times in his own life.

Born and raised in the Central American country of Panama, Davidson came to the United States in 1979 at the age of 16 along with his two younger brothers and a younger sister. His dad immigrated to America a few years before, and once he had saved enough money, sent for his wife and then his kids to join him in Brooklyn, New York.

In 1983, Isaac enlisted in the Air Force. Rising in the ranks to technical sergeant, he earned his commission



in 1991 and embarked on a new career as an officer. His brother, Rogelio, enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1982, serving 32 years and retiring as the Department of the Army's Inspector General Sergeant Major; and his sister, Damaris, served 30 years total in the Army as a Reservist in different statuses and attained the rank of staff sergeant. Youngest brother Jaime, six years younger than Isaac, pursued a career in music.

As an artist, promoter and disc jockey of a new type of Spanish reggae music known as Reggaeton, Jaime was an up-and-coming star in New York's music scene. His meteoric rise came to a crashing halt on Feb. 9, 1992, when he was arrested and charged with the murder of Syracuse, New York, police officer Wallie Howard Jr., who was shot to death during a robbery while working a drug operation undercover on Oct. 30, 1990.

"I can remember that call like it was yesterday, although it was really 29 years ago," Col. Davidson said during a recent interview, along with his wife of 36 years, Lidia. "Lidia and I were stationed in Colorado Springs. I was a second lieutenant assigned to the mission support squadron at Peterson Air Force Base when we got the call that my brother had been arrested. From that moment on, it's been quite a journey."

Although he successfully proved he was in Brooklyn at the time of the shooting in Syracuse, Jaime was convicted of playing a part in setting up the drug deal that went bad and was sentenced to three life sentences plus 85 years in federal prison.

Jaime has professed his innocence since 1990 and has had the full support of Isaac and the rest of the Davidson family since his arrest. With the help of his family, Jaime fought his conviction in the years that followed, without success. Then, somewhat surprisingly, then-President Donald Trump commuted Davidson's sentence just days before Trump's term as president ended in mid-January.

After 29 years in some of the toughest federal prisons in the country, Jaime Davidson walked out of the Federal Correctional Institution in Williamsburg, South Carolina, as a free man on Jan. 20. It should be noted that several members of the Howard family and the Syracuse law enforcement community have condemned the commutation and still believe in Jaime's guilt.

For Isaac and Lidia, their strong Christian faith has been the foundation they have leaned on as they struggled along with, supported and prayed for Jaime throughout the last 29 years.

"This is a story of joy," Isaac said.

"We were so happy when we heard the news that Jaime was coming home, but we were able to get through the last 29 years when things weren't going right because we knew God was always in control," Lidia added. "He gave us strength."

Jaime said having his family's support was critical to his surviving nearly three decades behind bars.

"Knowing my family was always there for me was extremely critical, especially when I was just beginning this journey," he said. "I was a lost and confused 23-year-old young man facing three life sentences plus 85 years. Had I not had

"I CAN REMEMBER THAT CALL LIKE IT WAS YESTERDAY, ALTHOUGH IT WAS REALLY 29 YEARS AGO. I WAS A SECOND LIEUTENANT ASSIGNED TO THE MISSION SUPPORT SQUADRON AT PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE WHEN WE GOT THE CALL THAT MY BROTHER HAD BEEN ARRESTED. FROM THAT MOMENT ON, IT'S BEEN QUITE A JOURNEY."

COL. ISAAC DAVIDSON

my family to talk to, to pray for me, to pray with me, I would never have been able to make it through."

Jaime said he would reflect on the words his mother told him immediately after his trial when times turned really difficult in prison. "She told me, 'a man is about to sentence you, not God. Whatever man gives you, God will take away. Hold on to these words. Your family is going to be with you every step of the way until you are once again free.'"

Isaac and Lidia first met at a Valentine's Day party at the Davidson home in 1981. They married in 1984, just as Isaac was beginning his Air Force career. They have three grown sons and two grandchildren. "My wife has been a Christian from her childhood. I became a Christian through her example," he said. "My faith has definitely helped me deal with Jaime's being in prison all of these years."

"I can remember listening to Isaac and Jaime on the phone over the years, praying for the police officers



Finally free, Jaime Davidson, center, celebrates with his brothers, Rogelio and Isaac, and their wives, Evidelia and Lidia, outside the Federal Correctional Institution in Williamsburg, South Carolina, on Jan. 20. (Courtesy photo)

and their families, for the wardens, for the people he was in prison with," Lidia said. "Isaac told Jaime if he forgave all of these people, it would free him, not physically from the prison, but it would give him the freedom to not feel so bound. And I remember one particular phone call when I told Isaac, 'It sounds to me like Jaime has lost all of the bitterness he has been carrying around for all of these years.'"

Isaac said the first few years were extremely tough on

his younger brother. "There were some attempts on his life and he had to fight just to stay alive," Isaac said. "Thankfully, he made it through those early years and he began to focus his attention on helping others following an inspirational and motivating talk with a prison official."

In the years that followed, Jaime earned praise from prison officials for his dedication to helping others. He mentored and tutored more than 1,000 prisoners to help

them earn their GED certificates. He was involved in several programs aimed at reducing gun violence and spoke to countless young people, encouraging them to be careful whom they associated with and to listen to their parents. He also studied the law and helped numerous prisoners with their cases, and helped raise money for several charitable causes, particularly mass shootings and natural disasters, while incarcerated.

"I'm really proud of Jaime for all of the people he has helped," Isaac said. "There was one 11-year-old girl in particular convicted of murder whom he helped get freed from prison. He really has done a lot of good things for a lot of people over the years."

"When I turned my attention to helping others, I was in my element," Jaime said. "When I was organizing fund raisers, teaching or helping people with their court cases, I felt like I was free. That was a real turning point for me and was crucial to my being able to survive all these years behind the walls."

From a resilience standpoint, the colonel said he has constantly leaned on his faith and his family whenever he has needed help dealing with difficult situations, especially his brother's incarceration. But, sometimes, he had to look for help in other places.

"One time, in particular, we had PCSed from Colorado to Panama," Lidia said. "We were born and raised there, so it was great to be back in our home country. But Isaac, who was a young captain at the time, was going through a time of depression. We couldn't figure out what was wrong. At the time, there was a big stigma associated with depression in the military and people were really hesitant about seeking help. But it got so bad that we had to do something, so Isaac finally went to the emergency room. The doctor didn't prescribe any medication, but he really helped him get through that difficult time. He was exactly what Isaac needed."


Isaac, Lidia and the rest of the Davidson family are currently helping Jaime as he transitions to life outside prison and continues to work to clear his name.

"He has a tough road ahead of him," Isaac said. "He's staying with family now. He still has a tendency to want to go to his room every night just before 9 o'clock because that's what he has done every night for the last 29 years. When he went to prison, there were no cell phones, no flip phones, and now everything is done on a smart phone. The world has changed and he has a lot of adapting to do."

The colonel said he encourages others to turn to their faith both when things are going well and when they are facing difficulties in life. "I would also encourage people not to hold on to hate and bitterness," he added. "It can eat away at both your mental and your physical health. Resilience is all about striving for the optimal me and bouncing back stronger from life's difficult situations."

The Air Force Reserve Chaplain corps enables resiliency by connecting Airmen, civilians and family members to available resources focused on mental health and spirituality, both key pillars of the Comprehensive Airman Fitness program.

"Your Chapel team can assist you with finding ways to practice your faith no matter what your background and belief," said Chaplain (Col.) Charles Towery, AFRC's command chaplain. "Research shows that people who participate in worship, read their faith's scriptures/traditions, and pray/meditate regularly are more resilient people. These people give leaders more of what they want and less of what they don't want. Whether you are Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Orthodox or something else, your Chapel team stands ready to help."

As AFRC's Developing Resilient Leaders chief of strategy, Col. Davidson currently works closely with Brig. Gen. Tanya Kubinec, the command's DRL champion, and Col. Hal Linnean, the DRL co-champion, to chart the course for one of AFRC's three strategic priorities – developing resilient leaders. The other two strategic priorities are prioritizing strategic depth and accelerating readiness, and reforming the organization. 



PRACTICING GOOD NUTRITION BOOSTS PERSONAL PERFORMANCE

Courtesy of Military OneSource

Good healthy and peak physical fitness are key to our military community's force readiness. One of the best ways to build strength and stamina is to eat nutritious foods that will provide your body the energy and nutrients it needs in order for you to perform at your best. Here are some tips on how to build a better diet and improve your overall well-being:

DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN HEALTHY HABITS

Eating healthy usually requires developing new dietary habits, but that doesn't have to happen overnight. Small changes over time can make a big difference. You might begin with some of these suggestions:

Limit your sugar. Water is essential to keep the body hydrated. Replace soda, sugary sports drinks and large quantities of juice with water.

Lower your sodium. High sodium consumption can raise blood pressure, which can contribute to stroke and heart disease. Start reading labels to raise your awareness of hidden sodium. Buy reduced sodium items whenever possible.

Eat lean protein. Reducing fatty red meat and increasing lean proteins such as chicken, seafood, beans, eggs, nuts and seeds can aid in building muscle, losing weight and maintaining a healthy heart.

Choose whole grains. Whole grains are packed with protein, fiber, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals. Whenever possible, eat whole grains like brown rice and whole wheat over refined grains like white bread, pasta and anything made with bleached flour.

Snack on fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables are an excellent source of vitamins and minerals, and their high fiber content can help you maintain a healthy gut. Replace high fat, high sodium snacks such as chips or roasted peanuts with sliced carrots or an apple.

EXPLORE THE FARMERS MARKET

Not all foods are equal when it comes to nutrients. The fresher your produce is, the more nutrition it offers. Your local farmers market is a great place to shop for fresh produce at a reasonable price. Whether it's just a roadside stand or a gathering place for local producers, these farmers markets will help you build a better diet. Find local farmers markets in the United States by searching the National Farmers Market Directory. Some of the benefits of buying local include:

- The food is as fresh as you'll find anywhere. Most produce is brought to market within hours of being picked.
- Eating food grown close to home and recently harvested has many health benefits, including increased nutrients.
- Local farmers grow seasonal foods, which tend to be less expensive and allow you to cook seasonal dishes.
- Farmers — your food experts — can teach you how to use the produce, grow your own food or share some great recipes.

CHECK OUT THE COMMISSARY

Another great resource for eating healthy on a budget is the military commissary, which sells groceries and household goods at an average of 30% less than other markets and stores. Before your grocery run, visit the commissary website, a great network of information where you can:

- Snag simple, healthy recipes for your meal planning or last-minute meal. Narrow your recipe search by selecting Dietitian Approved under the

Browse Recipes section.

- Review the Savings Aisle to see what's on sale for the week and preview the promotional prices before making your shopping list.
- Make your shopping list or order online with curbside pickup by using the My Shopping List tool.

SHARE HEALTHY LIFESTYLE WITH YOUR CHILDREN


Share your nutrition goals with your children and help your family establish healthy habits that include:

Enjoy five or more servings of fruit and vegetables. The Mayo Clinic recommends the 1-2-3 approach — one serving of fruits or vegetables at breakfast, two servings at lunch and three servings as part of dinner or snacks throughout the day. Center your meals and snacks at home around fruits and vegetables, and teach children how to make healthy foods.

Serve whole grain breads and cereals that are high in fiber. Make healthier, less processed alternatives available at all meals and for snack time.

Encourage your children to eliminate sweetened beverages. Sweetened beverages, such as soda and sports drinks, add extra sugar and calories to the diet. Encourage children to reduce juice consumption as well. Drinking water or low-fat milk instead is a healthy choice for the entire family.

As a service member — or part of the military family — you need the right fuel to stay energized. Eating well allows you to perform your job to the best of your ability. These suggestions can get you started on a path to good nutrition and good health.

For more healthy information, check out the Military OneSource Health and Wellness Coaching program, a free resource for eligible service members and family members. My MilLife Guide is also a great way to keep your family's health goals on target. When you sign up for My MilLife Guide as a service member or a military spouse, expert content pertaining to your goals will be delivered right to your mobile device. 



MAINTAIN CONNECTIONS THROUGH VIRTUAL STORY TIME

By Lt. Col. Marnee A.C. Losurdo, 403rd Wing Public Affairs

KEESLER AIR FORCE BASE, Miss.— All the time reservists spend away from home can be challenging for loved ones, especially children. One way to maintain those connections is to use the United Through Reading program.

For 31 years United Through Reading has provided deployed service members an opportunity to be video recorded reading a storybook to their children at more than 200 locations worldwide.

The service is now available through a free app, according to Tonya Wood, a military spouse and mother of two who serves as the programs representative to Yellow Ribbon Program. The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program promotes the well-being of National Guard, Reserve members and their families and communities by connecting them with the resources they need throughout their deployment cycle.

Wood said she knows how difficult military life and separations can be and the impact it has on children. Her husband was active Army for 14 years before joining the Army Reserve two years ago. Her children have experienced a deployment and other separations due to military commitments.


She is not alone. Every year, more than 100,000 military parents deploy leaving nearly 250,000 children at home for up to six months or more, according to the UTR website.

Wood used the UTR program to help maintain those ties between her spouse and children, she said.

“If a child is really young, they may not always recognize their parent upon their return,” said Wood. “We have the technology today that makes it easier to keep in touch, but it’s not always reliable and available depending on the location, and young children don’t always have the attention spans to talk to the parent for an extended period of time.”

With access to Wi-Fi, anyone can use the UTR app to record a story that their child can listen to and watch any time and over and over again. This keeps their mom or dad fresh in their mind, and when the service member returns it helps with reintegration.

In addition to improving family connections, reading to children starting at a young age has proven effective at promoting academic development

To get started, all one needs to do is log in to the UTR site and register. 

RESERVE COMMAND LAUNCHES DIGITAL-AGE RESILIENCY TOOL

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. -- Reserve Citizen Airmen are now able to access Developing Resilient Leader, or DRL, content on demand on any device from the Air Force Connect app.

The DRL Digital Age Learning Content Wall of the Air Force Reserve Command's AF Connect page was designed to be hub for DRL-related information, documents and links. The content will provide resiliency material for AFRC's 74,000 Airmen, with new content added on a scheduled basis for commanders to use and present as needed.

"The AF Connect platform is a great tool to present information to our Airmen," said Jamal Sutter, 413th Flight Test Group public affairs specialist, who helped design the platform. "I just wanted to make sure I could take full advantage of AF Connect's capabilities and create a DRL space that was visually pleasing, easy to navigate and, of course, useful."

The DRL Digital Age Learning Content wall has content broken down into four categories: Digital Force Protection, Unclassified Intelligence, Lead Yourself First and Leadership Development. This will provide Airmen with the resources to develop all facets of leadership and resiliency both professionally and personally.

This new content delivery system is the result of AFRC's Digital Age Learning team led by Brig. Gen. Tanya R. Kubinec, Mobilization Assistant to the Commander, with a cross functional team from the Manpower, Personnel and Services directorate (A1) and about 50 experts from across the command to help her carry out the strategy for growing resilient Reserve leaders at all levels.

"We've centered our strategy around two main



goals – educate and engage," Kubinec said. "Our focus is on promoting both professional and personal resilience for all of our Airmen and their families, with a special emphasis on resilience in the digital age."

The new app is just one step to build resilience in the digital age.

The Air Force Connect app can be found in the app store of most devices by searching for "Air Force Connect."

To stay up to date on the most current information and events in the command, click the notifications tab on the AFRC homepage, and enable push notifications in your device's app settings.

AF Connect includes other functions such as the built-in physical fitness test calculator, phone directories, and access to Common Access Card-enabled sites like the Advanced Distance Learning System and the Defense Travel System using a mobile CAC reader.

UNDERSTANDING REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS AFTER MILITARY SERVICES

Courtesy of the Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 is a Federal law that establishes rights and responsibilities for uniformed Service members and their civilian employers.

USERRA is a Federal law intended to ensure that persons who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, Reserve, National Guard, or other uniformed Services: (1)

are not disadvantaged in their civilian careers because of their service; (2) are promptly reemployed in their civilian jobs upon their return from duty; and (3) are not discriminated against in employment based on past, present, or future military service. The law is intended to encourage non-career uniformed service so the United States can enjoy the protection of those Services, staffed by qualified people, while maintaining a balance with the needs of private and public employers who also depend on these same individuals.

USERRA protects the job rights of individuals who voluntarily or involuntarily leave employment positions to perform service in the uniformed Services, to include certain types of service in the National Disaster Medical System and the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service.

USERRA affects employment, reemployment, and retention in employment, when employees serve in

the uniformed Services. USERRA also prohibits employers from discriminating against past and present members of the uniformed Services and applicants to the uniformed Services.



ESGR informs and educates Service members and their civilian employers regarding their rights and responsibilities governed by USERRA.

ESGR does not enforce USERRA, but serves

as a neutral, free resource for employers and Service members.

ESGR's Ombudsman Services Program provides information and mediation on issues related to USERRA. The ESGR Customer Service Center is available to answer USERRA questions. Specially-trained Ombudsmen are available to assist members of the Guard and Reserve in resolving disputes with their civilian employers related to military service in the uniformed Services through neutral and impartial mediation. ESGR Ombudsmen are volunteers located throughout the United States and its territories.

ESGR's Customer Service Center is available to answer USERRA questions or refer cases to a trained Ombudsman.

Contact the Customer Service Center Monday through Friday (except Federal holidays) from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET by phone: 800-336-4590, Option 1, or by email: OSD.USERRA@mail.mil. 

RECONNECTING AFTER DEPLOYMENT

Courtesy of Military OneSource

Deployment's done. Homecoming's over. Now comes the reality of being back. Establishing the new normal isn't always easy, but a lot of military families have used these proven techniques to help "post-deployment reintegration" run a little smoother.

First thing, relax. Be patient. Nobody has to live up to perfect. Returning spouses often feel out of sync with the family, unsure about how days are supposed to go and are easily overwhelmed. This feeling can take days, even months after homecoming to work itself out.

Keep calm and communicate on. Someone returning from deployment can be tired and disoriented. Expecting them to step back into things immediately can lead to a short fuse for everyone in the family. If the deployed spouse needs time alone, grant it. Everybody needs to respect and communicate with each other.

Got kids? Get prepared. Your family may have to get to know each other all over again. If you have children, you could experience anything from toddler tantrums to teen attitude. Kids are forever testing parents and challenging authority. So be patient. This is normal. Try to spend one-on-one time with each child—and talk, talk and talk some more.


Stay positive. You can't go wrong with focusing on the positive. No one can understand what happened on deployment—and no one can know how hard it was to keep things together at home. But everyone wants to be appreciated. Look at what your spouse is doing right and try not to criticize. Tell your loved one you're proud of what they accomplished and how well they managed.

Make a little time for everyone. If you're the spouse of the deployed person, be prepared. Eve-



rybody will want some of your spouse's time—kids, parents, family members, friends, neighbors. Remember, they've missed your spouse, just like you have. Understand that this is going to happen and make room for it. (But make sure you get your time together too.)

Watch the money. It's easy to go off the rails during celebrations because everybody's been waiting so long for this moment. Try to stay on track with your budget. Once the family's settled in, think about re-examining your finances now that you don't have that extra deployment pay. Military OneSource has financial counselors available.

Know when to ask for help. Coming home can bring major emotional stresses. Remember, someone is always available who knows the ups and downs of deployment. If you or a member of your family is struggling to adjust, get free confidential support anytime from Military OneSource. 



Little things can make a big difference.

Get tips and tools to support our littlest troops.

Caring for kids takes grown-up skills. Do you have the intel you need to power up your parenting? Learn little things you can do every day to raise resilient, healthy kids. And discover all the free resources and support available to military parents and families. Contact Military OneSource or your Family Advocacy Program.



**Together, we keep kids
healthy and safe.**

800-342-9647 | www.MilitaryOneSource.mil/MilParentPower

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