**Editorial | Stop and smell the roses**

Why does it happen all too often that it takes a tragedy or a life-changing event for us to realize what's most important? Trust me, I’ve been there. In the winter of 2004, I had to make the decision to take my father off life support. What carried me through was my faith in God and the support of my family. I think we could all agree that the phrase “stop and smell the roses” means slow down and enjoy life. Take time to enjoy the people you love and care about. That might mean spending more time with your spouse, family, friends and co-workers. It might mean to enjoy your favorite activity more, which could be outdoor activities, reading a good book, taking a walk, gardening, you name it. Spending more time doing any of these things important to our well being. Personally, I enjoy taking walks with my wife. Thankfully, the weather is getting nicer. We tend to throw the term Wingman around a lot, and we should because it works. Just this past UTA I was briefed on a Wingman situation of a friend looking out for their friend which could otherwise have turned tragic. So continue to look out for each other and make sure someone is looking out for you. It’s a good feeling to know that you have a friend who will look out for you and ask the tough questions if they have too. Life becomes so consuming with the issues you’re dealing with, stop and talk to someone. It takes more strength and courage to talk to someone and you will never regret it. Airmen & Family Readiness is a great place to start. Cheryl Kirkwood and her staff are caring people willing to help. They have multiple resources such as Military One Source, Military Family Life Consultants and many others. We also have the Chaplains and their staff and even the USO is willing to help. So I would like to ask you this question - Is life moving faster than you want it to or you just don’t seem to have the time to do the things you enjoyed before? I recommend that you stop and smell the roses – I think you'll enjoy the feeling.

by Col. Kenneth Lute

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**BRIEFS**

**Trespass notice**

As a part of the annual trespass notice, security forces reminds that the Westover small arms range is off-limits to unauthorized personnel. The range is located off Training Avenue. Trespassing on the small arms range is not only illegal, it is also dangerous because of the live gunfire. Questions may be directed to MSGt. Jeffrey Otis in the combat arms section at 557-2087 or the law enforcement desk at 557-3557.

**Month of the Military Child**

The Airmen and Family Readiness Center is hosting an event May 4 called the Month of the Military Child Extravaganza. This will consist of a “meet and greet” with the wing commander, a teen leadership workshop, a children’s mock deployment, lunch, bounce houses, face painting and more. The AF&RC needs volunteers to run this event. Call 557-3024 to sign-up.

**ECARS registration**

The Employee-Certification and Reporting System (ECARS) is coming to Westover. The Environmental Management shop staff will roll out a new requirement in May for all base federal employees to certify that their vehicles comply with the Emissions standards for Massachusetts. An ECARS email will instruct how to enter vehicle information, and certify as required. This is a federal Clean Air Act initiative. More information will be available soon.
SFS AIRMAN EARN TOP AFRC HONORS
by Tech. Sgt. Tigm Huffman

Following a 10-month deployment to Southwest Asia, MSGT. Anthony Giardin Jr., 499th Security Forces Squadron Operations Superintendent, was named Air Force Reserve Command’s Outstanding Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year.

The award caps a string of honors awarded to the 13-year Air Force and security forces veteran, including Westover’s SNCO of the Year and AF Outstanding Security Forces Air Reserve Component SNCO of the Year.

MSGT. Giardin credits his fellow SFS Airmen for his recognition.

“I look at it as a shared award. I wouldn’t be receiving this without a strong NCO corps and good Airmen,” he said.

Before leaving for his recent and sixth deployment, lasting 264 days, the master sergeant was a squad leader in charge of 13 Airmen. Deployed leadership chose him as operations superintendent, and he oversaw about 150 Airmen.

MSGT. Giardin said it was like “going from the frying pan to the fire.” He was accountable for a military working dog unit, law enforcement, security, intelligence, gathering and managing host-nation sensitivities and relationships.

While deployed, MSGT. Giardin and his Airmen gathered intelligence that resulted in the capture of an individual with anti-American beliefs who was surveying the base from a broken-down vehicle. He also built in-roads with the local military through joint training and even found a way to provide female Airmen the opportunity to train in a joint environment, by connecting them with female security members at a local hospital. Most importantly, he said, “everyone came to the table as equal participants.”

He said the toughest part of the deployment was forward deploying Airmen to places like Bagram Airfield, where he knew they would be in harm’s way.

Capt. Bruce Lawler, 499th SFS operations officer, said that operations supervisor is one of the most challenging positions in the career field, but that MSGT. Giardin thrived, which shows true leadership ability.

“He took the lead and got the job done,” said Capt. Lawler.

In addition to excelling in his official duties, MSGT. Giardin helped establish the Wounded Warrior Project in his hometown, Brockton, Mass. He also organized a Wounded Warrior Project auction during his deployment, which raised $4,000 for the non-profit that supports troops wounded in combat. Additionally, he’s a 13-year veteran of the police force, currently serving in Brockton.

CMSgt. Christopher Kellam said that MSGT. Giardin sets the bar high. He puts his Airmen’s affairs before his own, and he has the respect of the men and women of the 499th SFS for that.

“I wish the wing was filled with Airmen like Giardin,” said CMSgt. Kellam. “He’s the epitome of an NCO.”

FY 14 budget: Sequester puts key AF objectives at risk

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- Upon release of the Air Force Fiscal Year 2014 budget here April 10, the service’s senior leaders said the shadow of sequestration in 2013 and ongoing fiscal uncertainty will affect critical programs and objectives for years to come.

While Air Force officials have scrambled to minimize impacts on readiness and people, the bow-wave of reductions, deferrals, and cancellations will challenge the strategic choices made in the FY13 budget submission, said Maj. Gen. E. Gordon Bolton, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Budget.

Under the Budget Control Act, the Defense Department is required to reduce expenditures by $487 billion over the next 10 years with a reduction of $239 billion over the next five.

The general said the FY 2014 Budget Request supports military end strength of 910,400. This includes active component end strength of 373,600, a decrease of 8,686; Reserve component end strength of 570,400, a decrease of 4,800; and Air National Guard end strength of 105,400, a decrease of 300 relative to the Air Force’s FY2013 National Defense Authorization Act-enacted levels.

“The budget reallocates manpower to our highest priorities and sustains, with less-than-desirable risk, our cornerstone programs across the broad Air Force portfolio of mission sets,” Maj. Gen. Bolton said.

According to the general, the FY14 operation and maintenance budget request supports 79 major installations: 72 active duty, two Air National Guard and five Air Force Reserve.

The request also funds flying operations, space operations, cyber operations, intelligence, logistics, nuclear deterrence, search and rescue and special operations activities.

A new multi-year C-5M procurement initiative leverages resources across services; funding six C-135 aircraft, one HC-130, two ME-209s and five EC-135s in FY13, he said.

“Additionally, the Air Force procure MQ-9, nineteen F-16, and three CV-22-Osprey in addition to various upgrades and modifications to the existing fleet,” the general explained.

The Air Force’s space and missile objectives include procuring a fixed price block buy of advanced extremely high frequency satellite vehicles and space-based infrared systems in addition to space situational awareness systems and global positioning systems.

The Air Force FY 14 military construction appropriation, he said, “restores funding to historic levels when compared to last year.”

In FY13, the Air Force requested $1.3 billion for the active, Guard and Reserve MILCON programs, an $880 million increase from FY13.

“We do support Airmen and their families,” the general said, “but the capabilities are at risk as a result of the bow wave between ‘13 and ‘14. Bottom line ... to completely reconstitute the Air Force is going to take some time.”

FY 14 budget: Sequester puts key AF objectives at risk

LRS hauls in major command awards
by Tsgt. George Cloutier

Westover’s 499th Logistics Readiness Squadron has earned two awards, the Daedalian Major General Warren R. Carter Logistics Effectiveness Award and the Air Reserve Component Base Logistics Activity of the Year Award, Air Force Reserve Command recently announced.

“There is an enormous amount of dedication to the unit, especially among the airmen who have been here for some time and paved the way and set the tone,” said Lt. Col. Michael Buoniconti, LRS commander. “These are people who do their jobs quietly, but are extremely dedicated to getting the job done.”

The Maj. Gen. Carter award is presented annually to a unit chosen by the USAF Chief of Staff as having achieved the best supply effectiveness record in the USAF in support of mission aircraft and/or weapons. AFCSC officials present the ARC award annually to the highest performing base level logistics readiness unit as measured by the three areas of direct mission support, innovative management and quality of life programs.

“It really is the workman mentality that makes our squadron so strong and so unique,” said CMSgt. Michael Barna, LRS superintendent. “It doesn’t matter if they are an Airman or a chief master sergeant, they’re going to get their hands dirty and make sure the job is done. Nothing is just delegated down arbitrarily. If something has to get done, people roll up their sleeves and get it done.”

In contrast to other awards which include a common awarding with the civilian contractors,” said MSGT. Victor Markey, vehicle training flight training with the Air Force Reserve Command’s Vehicle Operations Flight (Phoenix Management Inc.),” said Tsgt. David Suchicicki, LRS TMO NCOIC.

“The teamwork between the two drives the success of the mission. They take any chance they can get to get out there and pump gas for it,” MSgt. Bruce Lamay, vehicle operations flight noncommissioned officer in charge. “We’re always volunteering for $5 runs or if someone based on the flight NCOIC, sending people to help them do it.”

“With my guys, there’s no question when there’s a phone call it’s jump in the truck and let’s go,” said MSgt. Joe McComb, fuels flight chief. “We’re always volunteering for $5 runs or if someone needs a hand to get something in.”

“We work hand in hand with PMI (Phoenix Man -agement Inc.),” said Tsgt. David Suchicicki, LRS TMO NCOIC. “The teamwork between the two drives the success of the mission. They take any chance they can get to get out there and pump gas for it.”

MSgt. Chuck Carlin, logistics plans and integration flight NCOIC, said getting 430 people deployed last year “with zero late arrivals in the theater of operations – was the best he’s seen in his career.”

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AIRCRAFT CORRAL AT WILD, WILD WESTOVER

On April 8, Westover had more than 30 aircraft parked on the flight line, including a fleet of A-10s from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., returning from their six-month overseas deployment. Other aircraft also pictured are a C-17 Globemaster III from Charleston AFB, S.C., and a VC-32 presidential support aircraft from Joint Base Andrews, Md. Above left, a C-130 Hercules from Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio, arrives. Far right, a KC-135 Stratotanker flies an approach near the base. In addition to the Patriot Wing fleet, a C-17A Super Galaxy from Dover AFB, Del., was inspected in the ISO dock. Westover’s long runways and northeastern location are among the reasons hundreds of transient aircraft use the base each year. (Photos by SrA. Kelly Galloway)
The soldiers received recognition for their excellent work while at Valentine’s Day, but reconvened to celebrate for the first time, March 9. Beneath the mammoth U.S. flag in Westover’s Basil Linga, the soldiers received recognition for their excellent work while at Kandahar Airfield.

During the ceremony, complemented by an Army musical ensemble, each member received an encased U.S. flag, a welcome home package and a coin from the 655th RSG’s Command Sergeant, Maj. Jeffrey Moote. They also encased their unit guidon, which formally signifies their return home.

At their deployment location, the small band of soldiers maintained base operations for the Airfield, a small city of 30,000 residents. Their work included lodging operations, maintenance for 7,000 structures.

“It was a very big team effort,” said Col. Ernest Erlandson, the group’s commander. “Usually, to run a city of 30,000, the average Army base uses 400 civilian employees. We had 50 people to do it.”

Even though this was his third time, he said redeployment has been an adjustment, just as it is for everyone. You never come back the way you left, he said. He also stressed the importance of taking relationships with loved ones slowly at first because of the need for time to relearn each other.

Col. Stephen Falcone, 316th Sustained Command (Expeditionary) Mission Support Element, said welcoming soldiers home is the best of their deployment and the best part of his job. He understands what it’s like coming home from a deployment.

“It’s always tough transitioning, whether it’s your first time or your fifth time... It’s always an adjustment...,” he said. “You need to realize things get better; hang tough and remember there is always someone to talk to.”

As for Capt. Halfhide, he is taking his third redeployment slowly and enjoying falling in love all over again.

“Developing another routine definitely helps, especially if you can talk to them on a weekly or monthly basis,” he said.

And while he had no words to express it was like seeing his girlfriend at the airport when he returned, he clearly shared the difficulties facing troops coming home from overseas.

“We have fuels, vehicle maintenance, vehicle ops, supply, traffic management office and plans. Because there are six different pieces, it doesn’t lend itself to a catch phrase. All that stuff comes together, though, to support the larger mission,” CMSgt. Michael Barna, LRS superintendent, said the unit touches everything that goes on base. “There isn’t one unit that doesn’t have contact with us,” he said.

“We’re in maintenance. For anyone who has ever picked up or taken a ride in a government vehicle, that was LRS or their civilian counterparts, Phoenix Management Inc., behind the wheel or behind the counter handing over the keys.

“We have about 350 vehicles in the fleet; there are 11 civilians here during the week and there’s 141 military mechanics here on the weekends,” said CMSgt. Victor Markey, vehicle training flight manager. “I have two guys who are both — they’ve helped out a lot with the relationship between the contractors and the reserve.”

Vehicle Ops: Vehicle operations flight Airmen drive the equipment. MSgt. Bruce Lamar, vehicle operations flight NCOIC, cited the flight’s involvement in last summer’s Great New England Airshow.

“We moved over 200,000 people at the air show,” Lamar said. TMO: The Airmen and civilians of the LRS Supply Flight and Travel Management Office are the ones who track down supplies, from aircraft parts to equipment for deployers. They also obtain materials for other bases.

“Westover’s planes have the fuel they need to fly and all the base equipment is gaged up and good-to-go.”

“We distributed 8.6 million gallons of fuel and the air show over 27 sorties and 17 planes,” MSgt. McCormick said.

Plans and Operations: Providing planes with the fuel they need to move downrange is one thing. Providing Airmen with the support they need to move downrange is another. Any Airmen who has every deployed out of Westover is familiar with the Plans and Integration Flight. They coordinate the movement of Westover Airmen to and from the AOR (Area of Responsibility).

“We manage all deployment functions from the biggest of big picture theoretical planning all the way down to one single deployer going out,” said MSgt. Chuck Carlin, Logistics Plans and Integration Flight NCOIC.

Carlin spoke of the particular challenges Plans and Integration faces getting people to their deployments and back.

“We have to catch everything,” he said. “There’s probably a mistake in every deployment at some step. We have to catch it, fix it, talk to the right people at the MAJCOM and make sure it gets fixed.”

”...now you know.”

“TROOP TALK | "How do you explain your military career to your children?"

“I have two younger and two older children. With the younger ones, they understand I’m in the military and serve my country. The older kids understand that I am an air reserve technician and this is my everyday job.”

>> SSgt. Dustin Young 439th Maintenance Squadron

“Both my husband and I serve, and my husband travels frequently. It’s 22 days at a time. We let our kids know that our serving in the military is helping other people — kind of like a police officer helps people.”

>> MSgt. Joe Montanez 439th Maintenance Squadron

“My community is very heavy in veteran activities. My kids are involved in the activities and parades put on by the town, veteran organizations and schools. I had one child born while on a deployment.”

>> MSgt. Joe Montanez 439th Maintenance Squadron

“Just ask ‘When are we going to see Spain again?’”

>> SSgt. Keller Killo 439th Communications Squadron

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I want to know as much as I can: I want to
Alecia-Correa. “I pride myself in what I do,
years, he’s already deployed twice.
Only in the Air Force for three and half
deployed to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.
one of many that he went through while
Squadron, shrugged off his effort as part of

“Majority part was the camaraderie,” said SrA.
Alecia-Correa. “It’s a different type of bond. You
are all away from your family, you’re working the
same hours, you’re working the same ops tempo, so
you come together as brothers and you help push each
other - through no matter
he might encounter while deployed: the
Taliban.
“You’ll always have some anxiety,” he
chuckled. “You still have the thought of
mortars, rockets, crappy food, getting one
day off a week, and working 24 hour shifts!”
Even though American troops have begun
pulling out of Afghanistan, the Taliban is still a threat.
“During the winter it was relatively slow,”
he remembered. “We only had one or two
attacks, but during the summer their attacks
picked up.”
When the Taliban did attack, proper training and a quick response time helped
SrA. Alecia-Correa to keep safe.
“It’s normal procedure,” he said. “Same
ting you went through in basic training -
when you hear that alarm you hit the deck
and you keep your fingers crossed.”

After an attack the mission continues.
“You get to the point where it is just
something you have to deal with. If newly
deployed service members need someone
to talk to there are others who have done it
before,” he said.

For Airmen considering deploying, he
advised that they go with an open mind.
“Every deployment is different, every base is different, and every shop is different.
Take the good with the bad,” SrA. Alecia-
Correa said.
Even though you’re in good company,
homesickness can still happen, he said.
Fortunately, there are a lot of ways to stay in
contact. Office phones may be connected to
Wi-Fi for Skype, email, or Facebook.
But all the Skype and Facebook can’t make up
for being away from family and friends.
After six and half months, SrA. Alecia-
Correa was ready to go home,

“I was excited - really, really excited to see
my family, excited to put on civilian clothes.
Excited to eat real food. I was mostly excited
to see my family. Family is what gets you
through.”

“Pope’s Puns” by W.C. Pope

“Just soak it all up and the best way of doing
it is deploying.”

POPE’S PUNS

by SrA. Alexander Brown

“One day, after getting out of Command-
er’s Call, I’ll never forget a Sgt. Stone who
approached me with an urgent request to
equip blood loaded on a plane to be delivered
to another Afghanistan base,” SrA. Peter

Alicia-Correa remembered. It
was for a wounded soldier. “My
training kicked in, I processed it,
checked it, and then called all
the required people to get the
blood on the next outgoing
plane,” he said. “I found out later that day
that the blood made it in time to save the
soldier’s life.”

SrA. Alicia-Correa, 439th Aerial Port
Squadron, shrugged off his effort as part of
his required duties. This experience is just
one of many that he went through while deployed to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.
Only in the Air Force for three and half years, he’s already deployed twice.
“It was the experience I gained,” said SrA.
Alicia-Correa. “I pride myself in what I do,
I want to know as much as I can: I want to

FACES OF WESTOVER

SrA. Greg Gill
439th Maintenance Squadron

“I enlisted when I was 18,” SrA. Greg Gill said.
“My grandfather was a loadmaster on the C-141
Stallion and I wanted to follow in his footsteps.”
SrA. Gill enlisted as a hydraulic technician and during his first four years he was stationed
at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., where he worked
on KC-135 Stratotankers.
When SrA. Gill left active duty he moved
back home to Connecticut, seeking a full-time position at Westover. “I didn’t want to be
completely out of the military,” SrA. Gill said.
“I came onboard as an air reserve technician last
August.”

Making the change from KC-135 hydraulics to the C-6 wasn’t that big of a difference, he said.
SrA. Gill recently joined the Patriot Guard, a national organization of motorcycle enthusiasts
which attends funerals to honor fallen U.S.
military personnel. “I’d heard about them
through the news,” Gill explains. “And I was
inspired to join to pay respect to fallen veterans
and ride with people who feel the same way.”

SrA. Kelly Galloway

"I was excited - really, really excited to see
my family, excited to put on civilian clothes.
Excited to eat real food. I was mostly excited
to see my family. Family is what gets you
through.”
TAIL TECHS >> During the B drill weekend, Westover sheet metal technicians TSgt. Sam Kirkland and MSgt. Daniel Sullivan work to repair small sections inside the tail section of the C-5 Galaxy. (photo by SrA. Alexander Brown)