

BEHIND THE BADGE

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. AIR FORCE RECRUITING SERVICE

OCTOBER 2019



BEHIND THE BADGE

ABOUT US

Behind the Badge is a digitally published, monthly magazine catering to the recruiting community. It is an official publication of the Air Force Recruiting Service Public Affairs Office.

SUBMIT

Behind the Badge welcomes submissions from all recruiters and those working in the field. Photos, videos, story ideas, commentaries, suggestions and criticisms are all welcome, although publication is not guaranteed.

To submit email us at:
afrrshqpa@us.af.mil

Submission deadline for next issue:
OCTOBER 28, 2019

FROM THE EDITOR



CHRISSEY CUTTITA

Welcome to Fall, football season and the new fiscal year! I recently had the opportunity to join the "back to school" trend by taking residence in an Air National Guard base training center dorm for four days. Every now and then it is good to get into a course that educates you in your career field's latest and greatest. There's never an end to the possibility of growing, professionally and personally.

Many of you are having similar experiences at Annals where you can learn new things, meet new people and celebrate your success stories. After all, every Air Force component exceeded goal fiscal year 2019. Congratulations!

In this edition of Behind the Badge there is an Air Education and Training Command article that includes Air Force Recruiting Service and Det. I's participation in the AETC Fly In, Dallas, Texas. These pages also contain photos from the AFRS educator tour and read an inspiring story from a chief who explains how joining the Air Force changed her life.

There are also two unique accession stories featured in this edition of BTB. One ended in a surprise homecoming for a recruiter's wife at Basic Military Training and in another story, the three family members from Wisconsin all joined at once. Of course there are probably many more amazing stories behind the Future Airmen we see taking their oath in BTB photos.

One of your first sergeants also penned a commentary about how to rethink your way to resiliency. Other articles like these are planned for the future. If you got something in mind, contact Public Affairs.

Thank you again for all your submissions.

ON THE COVER

Air Force Recruiting Service personnel ring the bell to mark another successful fiscal year of meeting Air Force recruiting goals, Oct. 3, 2019, at their headquarters building, Joint Base San Antonio - Randolph, Texas. The FY 2019 goal was met at 114.06 percent. Each recruiting group exceeded the goal as well; 360th RCG at 113.59%, 369th RCG at 123.33% and 372nd RCG at 120.41%. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Chance Babin)



Top, Master Sgt. Dana Bazile and Chief Master Sgt. William Rawls, of the 360th RCG, ring the bell after their group

exceeded fiscal year 2019 goals. Right, Lt. Col. Lara Wilson, 369th RCG deputy commander, rings the bell for her group.



AETC hosts women's fly-in event in the Lone Star

Story and by Airman 1st Class Madeleine E. Jinks
AETC Public Affairs

FORT WORTH, Texas – Air Education and Training Command hosted a fly-in event, Sept. 18-21, 2019, in Fort Worth, Texas, that brought together a small sorority of Air Force aviators ranging from fighter to cargo pilots, boom operators and load masters to special aviation operators.

The AETC Women's Fly-In event took aim at recognizing, valuing and leveraging the differences and similarities which make the Air Force better and stronger, a diversity that is necessary to become a more lethal force.

The fly-in is intended to accomplish that goal by giving networking opportunities designed to enhance professional contributions and motivate the next generation of female aviators.

Approximately 110 participants flew in for the event from places as far as Japan, Hawaii and across the United States. Women of all ages, ranks and career paths had a few minutes together to talk and learn from each other with the goal of gaining a mentor, mentee or a just a fellow aviator who can share knowledge and experience of being a woman in aviation – as they can be few and far in between.

Lt. Gen. Brad Webb, commander of Air Education and Training Command, gave opening remarks and addressed the rated-flyer diversity issue. The general said although he hasn't had much experience flying with women during his career, his goal is to be an advocate for women aviators and listen to their needs.

In addition to Webb, other guest speakers included: Lt. Gen. Jacqueline Van Ovest, Headquarters Air Force director of staff; Maj. Gen. Jeannie Leavitt, Air Force Recruiting Service commander; Col. Samantha Weeks,



An Air Education and Training Command Women's Fly-In Event participant guides a young woman through a virtual reality during the Girls in Aviation Day event held by the North Texas Chapter of Women in Aviation International at the Frontiers of Flight Museum at Love Field in Dallas, Texas, Sept. 21, 2019. These are held across the country, but Dallas is the biggest event with more than 3,000 attendees. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Madeleine E. Jinks)

commander of the 14th Flying Training Wing, Columbus AFB, Mississippi; and Lt. Col. Shelly Mendieta, Air Force Warfare Center Operations director.

Mendieta began her speech with statistics about women in aviation.

"In 2018, there were 465,513 pilots in the U.S.," she said. "24,197, or 5.2%, were women. 66,345, or 20%, of

the Air Force are women. Of those, there are 655 flying pilots, 308 combat systems officers or navigators and 217 air battle managers, 64 fighter pilots, and 40 weapons systems officers."

These statistics show how small of a group women are

FLY IN continued on page 7

AFRS hosts Distinguished Educator Tour



Air Force Recruiting Service hosted a Distinguished Educator Tour for 18 principals, teachers, coaches and community leaders in the Joint Base San Antonio, Texas, area, Sept. 17-20, 2019. The group was informed on various career opportunities their students can have should they choose to serve. They visited pilot training at JBSA-Randolph, medical career training at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston, basic military training at JBSA-Lackland and more.



AFRS sergeant surprises wife at Basic Military Training

Staff Sgt. Travis Mollema, of the 369th RCG, Airman Basic Veronica Mollema and their children pose for a photo after her Basic Military Training graduation, Joint Base San Antonio- Lackland, Sept. 6, 2019. The NCO in charge of Cyber Operations returned from deployment to watch his wife take her final steps to becoming an Airman. The home-coming was a surprise to everyone. Airman Basic Mollema's father was a Marine and she always wanted to serve her country. Below, Mollema poses for a photo with his recruiting team. He has served in the Air Force almost 12 years and has been with AFRS for just over a year. Airman Basic Mollema will serve in the air transportation career field and is currently stationed at Lackland. (Courtesy photos)



Airman Basic Mollema expresses a surprised look when her husband, Staff Sgt. Mollema, showed up at Basic Military Training to watch her earn the the title of Airman at the Coin Ceremony for her graduating class.

A journey from clueless airman to command chief

Story by Airman 1st Class Zoe T. Perkins
71st Flying Training Wing Public Affairs

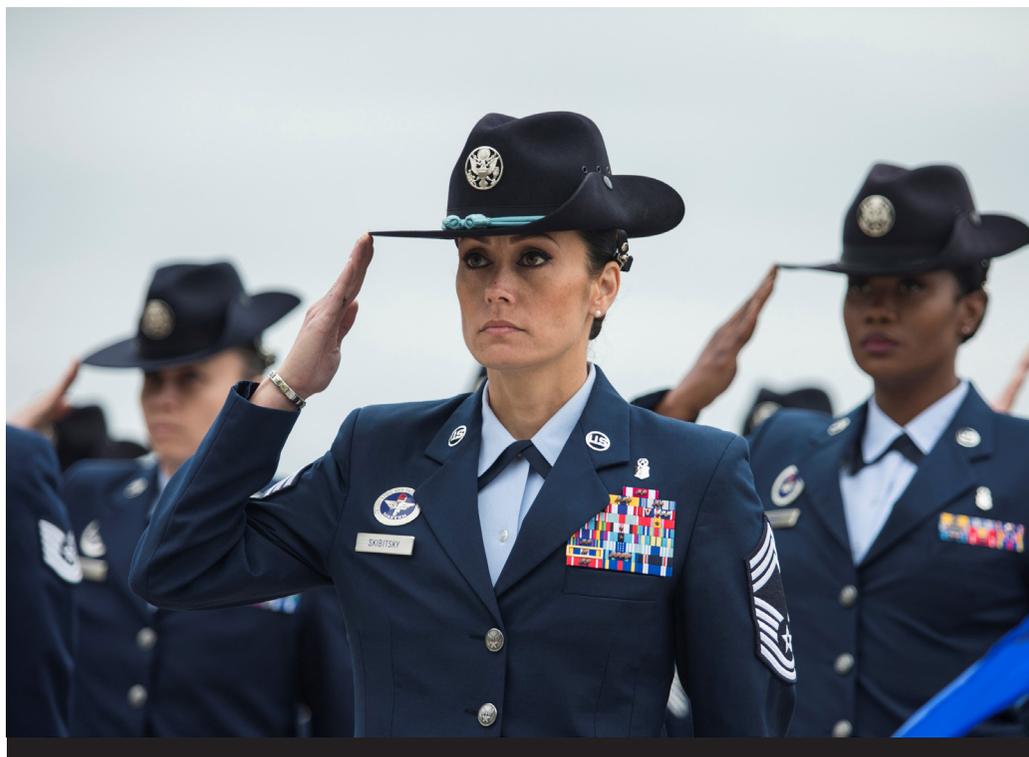
(Note: I met Chief Skibitsky the first time 16 months ago during basic military training. I heard her clicking footsteps approaching my flight to give us some much needed correction in an uncomfortably loud way. Seeing her stripes, even as a trainee, I knew a huge amount of dedication and hard work went into earning those stripes. I had the opportunity to talk with the chief during her visit to Vance Air Force Base recently.)

VANCE AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. -- Chief Master Sgt. Hope L. Skibitsky, now the command chief of the 27th Special Operations Wing at Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico, has had an incredible journey, from leaving for the military at 17 with nothing to her name, to becoming a command chief.

"I have been privileged to have what I consider a great life," said Skibitsky. "But when you stop to think about life in general, you don't know any different than your own."

Growing up in a poor, abusive household, Skibitsky and her five siblings made the most of their situation until they could do better for themselves.

"We were very poor, but didn't know we were poor until people told us," said Skibitsky.



Chief Master Sgt. Hope L. Skibitsky, during her assignment as the 737th Training Group and Air Force Basic Military Training superintendent, JBSA-Lackland, Texas. She is now the command chief of the 27th Special Operations Wing at Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico. (U.S. Air Force photo by Ismael Ortega)

Going to school was very important growing up, said Skibitsky. "Mainly because the greatest examples of adults and parenting and leadership I saw were my teachers. We also got free breakfast and lunch at school, which was a huge deal for us."

She wasn't really interested in the academic portion of school but went every day. "School was the place that

took care of me."

Leaving home at an early age, Skibitsky managed to get by until she graduated high school by staying with friends and moving from place to place.

"I was fending for myself trying to figure out where I was going to be," said Skibitsky. "Eventually I moved in with a preacher's family, the Halls, and they were absolutely incredible. They offered

me room and board to guarantee I was going to graduate high school."

The Halls invested their time in her and took care of her until she graduated. Then it was time to figure out what was next.

"I didn't think college was an option for me. I didn't have the money," said Skibitsky. "So I thought to myself, 'What about the military?'"

Her father retired from the Air Force when she was very young. "I didn't know that much about it, but I knew it was an option," said Skibitsky.

The family she was living with thought it was a great idea. They helped her look into it and drove her to the nearest recruiting office to see about joining.

"I don't remember much of the conversation I had with the recruiter other than asking, 'When can I go?'" said Skibitsky. She was only 17 at the time, so the preacher signed the paperwork as her guardian. "The next thing I knew I was in the Delayed Enlistment Program."

Not long after that, the recruiter scheduled her for the military entrance processing station, and she left for Air Force basic military training.

"I couldn't have been a more clueless Airman when I arrived," said Skibitsky. "I had no idea what my job was, or really

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in the military. Because of that, Capt. Alaina Dent, Sheppard Air Force Base 80th Flying Training Wing T-38 instructor pilot, said she believes it's important for women to stand together.

"This event is significant because it provides us with the ability to connect with women in rated jobs and network with the women around us who are so successful," she said. "To get big things done, we need to reach out and ask for help. If I ever need something, I know I can call any of these ladies and they will be there."

The aviators also participated in a female fitment event during an aircrew flight equipment seminar. A team of an-



An Air Education and Training Command Women's Fly-In Event participant guides a young woman through a flight simulator at the Girls in Aviation Day event held by the North Texas Chapter of Women in Aviation International at the Frontiers of Flight Museum in Dallas, Texas, Sept. 21, 2019. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Madeleine E. Jinks)

thropometric data collection specialists took body measurements of the women to calculate averages and ultimately create uniforms and body armor that are more flattering and functional for the women who wear them, as ill-fitting uniforms can create problems for combat effectiveness.

"I'm just at the cusp of the seating height for the aircraft," Dent said. "I have a different body type than what the flight suit was designed for. With the flight suit being long in my torso area, I've noticed an issue with bunching during my flights. The team is looking to solve these issues that cause discomfort and disadvantages by understanding the range of body types that are actually wearing these uniforms. Because when we look and feel the best, we perform the best."

The final day of the event was spent volunteering at the "Girls in Aviation Day" event held by the North Texas Chapter of Women in Aviation International at the Frontiers of Flight Museum at Love Field in Dallas. These are held across the country, but Dallas is the biggest event with more than 3,000 attendees.

The women volunteered to speak on panels, facilitated flight simulators, assisted with iPad air traffic control games, explained airfield operations, answered questions and, most importantly, served as examples for all the young women attending.

"There are a lot of little girls out there



Lt. Gen. Brad Webb, commander of Air Education and Training Command, gave opening remarks and addressed the rated-flyer diversity issue during the the AETC Women's Fly-In Event in Fort Worth, Texas, Sept. 20, 2019. The general said although he hasn't had much experience flying with women during his career, his goal is to be an advocate for women aviators and listen to their needs. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Madeleine E. Jinks)

who don't know that being in aviation, whether that's as a pilot, flight attendant or a boom operator, is something they can do," Dent said. "Seeing all these amazing women in uniform can really put the image in their head and inspire them."

Young women having these experiences and being able to imagine themselves as a woman in aviation is extremely important, as the Air Force needs as many strong women on the team as possible, no matter which part of the total force – active, guard or reserve – they choose to serve in. Leavitt drove that point home

during her speech.

"Our job is to inspire, engage and recruit the next generation of Airmen," she said. "When we find talent in society, whether that be physical strength, moral strength, mental strength, grit or determination, I want to find the best match, full or part time, in or out of uniform."

She said the service needs to stop making it so complicated when it comes to getting people in the right place at the right time to serve.

"One team. One Air Force. Many components," she said.

Control of thoughts may lead to resiliency

Story by Matthew Gambill, 339th RCS First Sergeant

Controlling one's own thoughts may be the key to resiliency.

While it may seem easier to dwell in solitude far from the drama and temptation that most face each day, it is not realistic. Life comes with adversity, challenges, and choices that often do not go as we plan. Life can often compound and suffocate us when we try to deal with it all at once or alone. We need to pay attention to our thought life, especially the gradual, imperceptible negative changes in our thought patterns that eventually becomes our new norm.

This new normal is not a state we arrive at arbitrarily. A simple thought plants a seed, which if continued to dwell on, will begin to grow into larger and thicker branches of thought. The more time is spent feeding these thoughts, the larger and more substantial that tree will grow. Eventually it can manifest into something so looming, we cannot see past it. This is how a small negative moment can set in motion a series of reactions, eventually forming a thought pattern habit, and becoming our life's new norm. We must recognize that, when our norm focuses on what is wrong in our life, it robs us of the joys in our life.

We have control over our own thoughts, and only us. What a person focuses on matters, and when

you find yourself dwelling on the negative, you do have the power to make a conscious choice to renew your focus. If we spend our time thinking about what is not going right, dwelling on criticism, past failures, mistakes, regrets, moments of anger, hatred, self-loathing, and doubt, we can cloud our own reality, forming a destructive habit to only see those things in life. Breaking old habits and changing our thought patterns is not easy, but it is a choice.

The more we choose to be sad or mad and focus on the negative things, the more ingrained it becomes in our mind. When we find ourselves

unable to shake a negative event, or thought, ask how it is helping you, what you can learn from it and how long will it matter. Most negative interactions lose their significance by the very next day. Of course, we should not ignore that bad things happen in life, but instead observe them, learn from it, and move on. Do not dwell on it. In short, consciously decide on what you want to care about.

In closing, recognize when thoughts are not helping, refocus on what truly matters, and remember that dwelling on what we have no control over is unhealthy. If we choose to make a habit of paying attention to the things in life that bring us joy, and move on from those that do not, we will exponentially increase our ability to be resilient in the face of almost any adversity.



CHIEF continued from page 6

anything about the Air Force for that matter. I just knew I wanted to do it and succeed."

Skibitsky entered basic training without a guaranteed career field and was offered a job as a medic. She accepted and completed her technical training.

"Being a medic was absolutely amazing," said Skibitsky. "I had so many options and opportunities from working in labor and delivery, education and training and even working in an intensive care unit where we worked in the emergency room and performed ambulance runs."

While assigned to Royal Air Force Lakenheath, England, Skibitsky was the NCO in charge of the health and wellness center. After that, she went to Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, to be a military training instructor for several years.

Then it was back into the medical field where Skibitsky worked in labor and delivery, family health and pediatrics. "I even deployed a couple of times," she said.

She added diversity to her job when she became a career assistance advisor for several years, and then served as a squadron superintendent in a medical treatment facility.

"My next assignment sent me back to Lackland Air Force Base to be the Chief of Basic Military Training, which was an incredible opportunity," said Skibitsky. While there, she was offered the position of command chief at Cannon Air Force Base.

"I never once looked up to see what the next step was," said Skibitsky. "I was just trying really hard to be good at whatever position I was currently in."

Skibitsky assumed her current position as command chief at Cannon Air Force Base in August 2018.

"The Air Force has been such a privilege for me," said Skibitsky. "All the things I've learned, all the opportunities I've had, all the people I've met, all the experiences I've garnered. I could never have done any of this without the Air Force."

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See your Air Force Recruiter for more information, mail in the attached card, or call toll free 800-447-4700 (Illinois: 800-322-4400).

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BEHIND^{THE}BADGE DEADLINES

SUBMISSION DEADLINE PUBLICATION DATE

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NOV 4

NOV 25

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DEC 30

JAN 6

SOCIAL MEDIA CAREER CHATS

QUESTIONS ABOUT A CAREER?
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OCTOBER: AMMO
NOVEMBER: SFS/MWD
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IF THERE'S A CAREER
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Maj. Gen. Tom Wilcox, Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center commander, administers the Oath of Enlistment to new recruits during the opening ceremony, Sept. 14, 2019, at the Alpha Warrior Proving Grounds, Selma, Texas. The Air Force won the competition with the fastest overall time. The Army came in second place and the Navy came in third place. The Air Force partnered with Alpha Warrior three years ago to deliver functional fitness training to Airmen and their families. (U.S. Air Force photo by Sarayuth Pinthong)



During the 314th RCS 4th Quarter Training, led by Master Sgt. Olen Gillespie, E Flight flight chief, the team presented Salutes Plaques to local supporters from the City of Long Branch, Delaware. Lieutenant Stanley Mooney, of the Long Branch Police Department, and Derrick Turner, of the Dept of Public Works Supervisor, photographed here, were among those to be awarded for their continued support of the AFRS mission.



Top, Master Sgt. Moises Maramba, of the 369th RCS, receives a light insignia tapping during the Space and Missile Systems Center's August enlisted promotion ceremony held Aug. 29, 2019 at Los Angeles Air Force Base, California. Below, Maramba receives a promotion certificate from Col. Ann M. Igl, 61st Air Base Group commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Michael Wild, 61st Air Base Group superintendent.



Col. Chad Ellsworth, installation commander, congratulates Tech. Sgt. Amos Hard, 66th Air Base Group Command Post controller, on his promotion during the September Enlisted Promotion Ceremony at Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass., Aug. 29, 2019 while Tech. Sgt. Emanuel Rivera, an enlisted recruiter for the 318th RCS, looks on. During the monthly ceremony, seven enlisted members of Team Hanscom were promoted. (U.S. Air Force photo by Todd Maki)



Master Sgt. Napoleon Gifford, 336th RCS recruiter, and Morgan Collins, a DEP member from Brooks County, Georgia, were featured in The Valdosta Daily Times news article commemorating 9/11, published on Sept. 13, 2019. (The Valdosta Daily Times photo by Derrek Vaughn)



Tech. Sgt. Francisco Sandoval and Staff Sgt. Matthew Garza, of the 341st RCS , celebrate the Air Force's 72nd birthday at the Houston Astros game at Minute Maid Park, Texas, Sept. 18, 2019.



DEP members of 341st RCS F, G and A Flight, along with recruiters Master Sgt. Kyle Atkinson, Tech. Sgt. Pedro Palmer and Staff Sgt. Matthew Garza participate in the 9/11 Heroes Run in downtown Houston, Texas. Lt. Col. Elvira De Los Rios, 341st RCS Commander, was a speaker at the event, sharing inspiration with members and also joined them for the 3.1 mile formation run.



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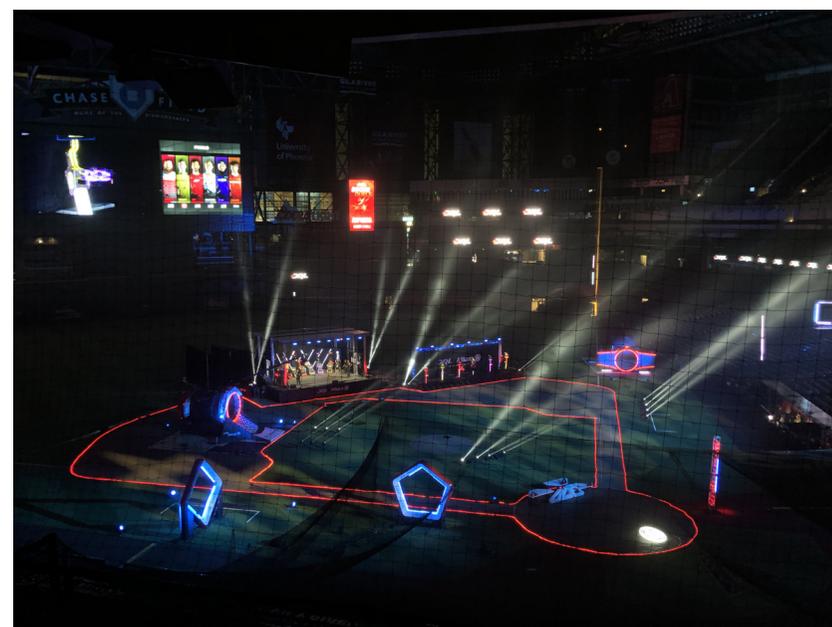
The 362nd RCS F Flight volunteered for the Tempe Beach Park 9/11 memorial honors in California. The flight placed flags throughout Tempe Beach Park. Hundreds of people came out to place 2,977 flags in honor of those who died on 9/11 in New York, D.C. and Pennsylvania. The outside flags of each field represent first responders who died trying to rescue civilians. It is a representation of patriotism and unites the community to pay tribute to nearly 3,000 innocent lives that were lost.





The 362nd RCS conducts a massive DEP swear in with more than 30 DEPpers during the Norco Mounted Posse 35th annual PRCA Rodeo in California, Aug. 25, 2019.

Recruiters from the 362nd RCS represented the Air Force at the Drone Racing League Sept. 8, 2019, at Chase Field, Phoenix, Arizona. It was the DRL's first live audience racing event.



Tech. Sgt. Luther Chase, 333rd RCS I Flight recruiter, delivers a birthday cake to the Punta Gorda Military Heritage Museum to celebrate the Air Force's 72nd birthday and history with 40 high school kids from the community, Sept. 18, 2019 in Florida.



The 333rd RCS "Sharks" cleans up 51 oyster habitat cages that were encrusted with barnacles to help prepare The Brevard Zoo for next year's oyster gardening season in Florida. Tech. Sgt. Berlin Aniciete was the lead for the squadron's community service opportunity held Sept. 20, 2019.





Staff Sgt. Octavio Pope, 333rd RCS physical training leader, runs the Air Force Marathon for the second time at Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio, Sept. 21, 2019. He posted a time of five hours and 54 minutes.

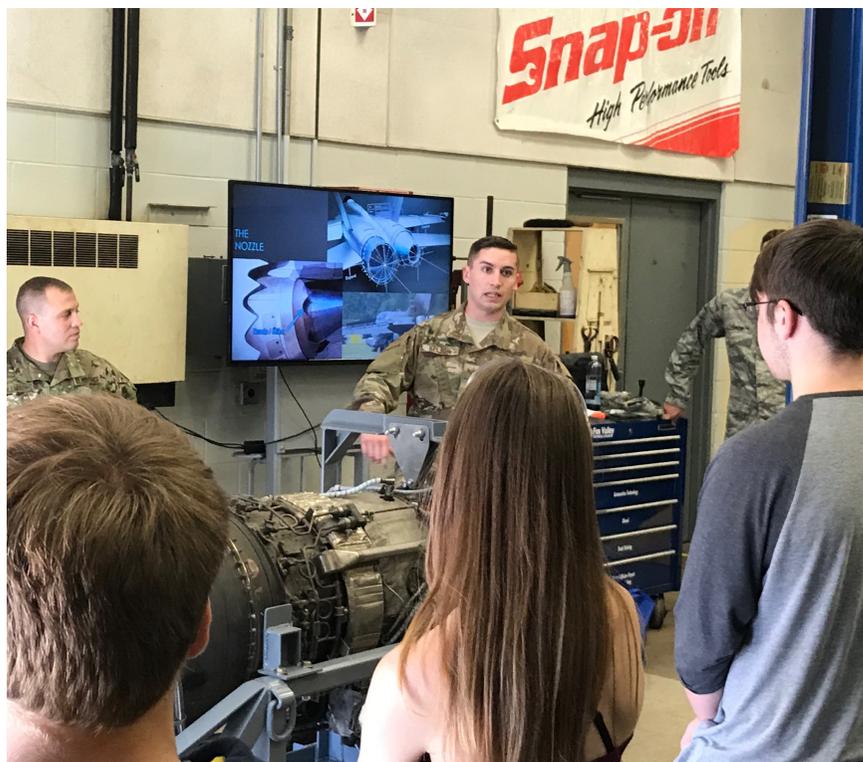


Recruiters from the 333rd RCS take a photo prior to participating in the flag detail for the Miami Dolphins opening home game, Sept. 8, 2019, at the Hard Rock Stadium, Florida.



Tech. Sgt. Shane Vander Kuyl, 333rd RCS recruiter, leads a 9/11 remembrance ceremony with St. Croix Central High School JROTC in the Virgin Islands.

DEPpers from the 347th RCS take a photo after taking the Oath of Enlistment at the Milwaukee Air and Water Show July 27, 2019 in Wisconsin. Below, Tech. Sgt. Steven Wilhem takes a photo with Daniel Nicoson, Jaidyn Nicoson and Syllas Duehring, three family members who signed up at the same time.



Staff Sgts. Tyler Nelson and Adam Coleman with Tech. Sgt. Lisa Wheir, 347th RCS recruiters, conduct a classroom presentation for students at Neenah High School, Wisconsin, Sept. 27, 2019. The J85-GE-5 jet engine photographed is a local marketing asset the 347th uses to highlight opportunities within the mechanical career fields.



After a presentation about the Air Force, Tech. Sgt. Phu Ly, 362nd RCS recruiter, gives Chaparral High School students an opportunity to test their skills on the Air Force PS4 game Nightfall Sept. 18, 2019, in Temecula, California. Airman Basic Justin Zapata, recruiter assistant, helped in providing information to the students about benefits and career opportunities that are available while serving in the Air Force. The game challenged their competency in understanding instruction along with motor skills that would be require in a Special Warfare career. The squadron gave the presentation to five different classes totaling 148 students.



Members from the 131st Army National Guard Montgomery Battalion, 187th Air National Guard, Dannelly Field and the 313th RCS Delayed Entry Program participate in a joint service swear in Sept. 28, 2019, at Troy University, Alabama.