



WARRIOR



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Summer Camp Leadership Lessons



U.S. Air National Guard photo/Capt. Jeffrey Bishop

“Summer camp” – the term of affection commonly applied to annual training at Air National Guard units across the nation, has come and gone for the 131st Bomb Wing here. But in the coming weeks, a number of Citizen-Airmen will trade in their Air Force uniforms – and also their civilian business wear – for the tan shirts of the Scouter.

By Capt. Jeffrey M. Bishop, APR
Chief, 131st Bomb Wing Public Affairs

“Summer camp” – the term of affection commonly applied to annual training at Air National Guard units across the nation, has come and gone for the 131st Bomb Wing here. But in the coming weeks, a number of Citizen-Airmen will trade in their Air Force uniforms – and also their civilian business wear – for the tan shirts of the Scouter.

A Scouter is an enthusiastically involved leader to Cub Scouts or Boy Scouts. And just as Guard members bring lessons from our civilian jobs to benefit our blue-suit roles – and vice versa – there are a number of lessons from Scouts summer camps that these young men-in-the-making can share with all of us. What follows are just three that I gleaned from a recent excursion with my Scout troop:

1) Rely on the patrol method. The “patrol method” is the core concept that holds that a Boy Scout troop is adult-guided but boy-led. Each troop has a senior patrol leader, along with a small number of subordinate patrol leaders who have a discrete span of control within the camp – these compare to commander positions in the military. In a troop, if the adults are running everything and not the up-and-coming boy leaders, then they are working too hard – because they are doing someone else’s job for them. Worse yet, the boys are not able to get from the experience what they need to get from it to develop into tomorrow’s leaders.

Organizations that operate well employ a similar model; in the military, organizationally this is referred to as “centralized command, decentralized execution.” Subordinate leaders receive their mission, vision and top-level direction from senior leadership, and are empowered at a lower functional (or geographic) leadership level to carry out the mission day-to-day. Assuming that all leaders and staff are well trained and qualified in our roles, then the organization runs extremely efficiently and effectively. Maximizing the patrol method model at all levels of your organization will enhance performance, morale and staff development.

2) Be Prepared. Abiding by these two words – the Boy Scout Motto – is like having a Swiss Army Knife in your pocket. It’s helpful to anticipate what you might need in advance, and then do what you can to prepare for that – be it via having the necessary information, coordination, resources, tools or training for any given task.

A Scout won’t hit set out on a hike without a buddy, a plan, a trail

map, appropriate clothing, light nourishments and a first-aid kit. The Air Force and world-of-work parallel is clear: don’t enter a business or operational situation – be it a staff meeting, a client presentation, a conversation with your boss, a mission or any other daily work responsibility – without being similarly prepared.

3) Follow your compass. By this I don’t mean a literal compass – for the most part, today’s Scouts – and our combat weapons systems – navigate by GPS anyway. But rather, ensure your daily practices align with your values.

The Scouts have a number of guideposts including the Scouts Motto (“Do Your Best,”) and the Boy Scouts Slogan (“Do a Good Turn Daily”). In addition to those noted above, Scouts also has twelve points, called the Scout Law, which exist to guide boys through their Scouting careers and beyond:

- A Scout is ...
- Trustworthy,
 - Loyal,
 - Helpful,
 - Friendly,
 - Courteous,
 - Kind,
 - Obedient,
 - Cheerful,
 - Thrifty,
 - Brave,
 - Clean and
 - Reverent

Similarly, the Air Force Core Values – Integrity First, Service Before Self and Excellence in All We Do – exist for this same purpose – to guide the head and the heart, no matter what the situation.

Regardless the source, be they from Scouts, your service, your business, your upbringing, your religious faith or all of the above – the concept of values – a compass to show the way – is clearly not too deep a concept for young boys to learn and to follow. Just as they are for young Scouts, they are equally timeless to provide necessary waypoints throughout one’s career.

What other lessons for the workplace can be gleaned from the Scouting experience? In what way would your organization improve if the principles and values of the Boy Scouts were at work ... at work?

THE WARRIOR

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On the cover

U.S. Air Force photo/
Senior Airman Keenan Berry

Members of Team Whiteman congregate during an intermission between a weapons load competition at Whiteman Air Force Base Mo., July 07, 2015. Airmen from various squadrons spectate as teams compete for the best time.

NEWS BRIEFS



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Please like the Spirit Café on Facebook to stay up to date on special events and tournaments.

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WEATHER

Today	Saturday
Chance of Storms	Mostly Sunny
Hi 88	Hi 90
Lo 68	Lo 71
Sunday	Monday
Sunny	Mostly Sunny
Hi 90	Hi 91
Lo 73	Lo 73

Whiteman maintainers keep B-2 Spirits flying



A B-2 Spirit rests in an aircraft hangar on MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., April 24, 2015. Within 24 hours, a team of specialists from Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., were brought to MacDill to repair the B-2, which had diverted due to an avionics malfunction.

By Airman 1st Class Jazmin Smith
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

Since it first arrived 22 years ago, the B-2 Spirit has been unparalleled in its ability to provide precision air power, thus shaping the mission here at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, to providing strategic deterrence, global power and combat support to combatant and joint force commanders... anytime, anywhere.

Day after day, a multitude of specialty shops under the 509th Maintenance Group work cohesively to keep a fleet of B-2's in flying condition and therefore profoundly supports the mission at Whiteman.

The long hours of on-the-job training, combined with frequent exercises, prepare the Airmen here to respond promptly and efficiently, even in less than ideal situations.

On April 23, 2015, an unprecedented avionics malfunction occurred over the Gulf of Mexico, causing a variety of issues on The Spirit of Georgia.

A team of specialists from Whiteman were immediately brought to MacDill Air Force Base, Florida to service the aircraft.

"To the best of the maintenance group's knowledge, no B-2 has ever diverted for a failure of this type in the history of our aircraft," said Master Sgt. Mark McBride, 509th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron production superintendent. "The maintenance required on this particular fault hasn't been seen before at Whiteman, and our team did fantastic.

"We spend every day learning our jobs and being proficient in doing our jobs," added McBride. "When they set up my team, they gave me experts. They gave



me qualified personnel who were able to think outside the box and find a way to fix the aircraft safely and effectively. She's still flying to this day with no faults whatsoever."

Per procedure, the crew members were debriefed by the team of specialists. What usually takes 10 minutes took them nearly 90 to discuss in depth. The information provided by the pilots during this process, combined with diagnostics, was paramount in determining what issues the team had to face.

"If we ever have a maintenance problem, we always try to bring it back to Whiteman, so this was a pretty unique case for us," said Col. Chase McCown, 509th Maintenance Group commander. "Everyone performed very well, because what they ended up fixing was some very complex maintenance.

"It involved part of the bus system, which is the way the aircraft talks amongst all its different computers and different sub systems, almost like the nerve network of the aircraft," added McCown. "We found some problems in one of the buses that we think contributed to

the whole cascading effect of problems they had with the jet."

During their assignment there, the team adapted to operating in an environment that didn't cater to the B-2. It took a lot of coordination with MacDill AFB and Northrop Grumman over the course of two weeks to return a safe and reliable aircraft back to Whiteman.

Distance was the biggest obstacle, since the team was far from a base set up to support the B-2, said Air Force Staff Sgt. Brian Schroeder, 509th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief. Three members from Northrop Grumman were able to contribute to the mission by performing the more extensive repairs.

"With the difficulty of the maintenance issue that we had to work, we decided that we wanted to capitalize on their knowledge, and they were key in helping us fix it," said McCown. "Northrop was a great asset.

"The willingness of the host to help you goes a long way in how quickly you are successful," added McCown. "MacDill was a great host for us."

Every day the team spends their time learning their jobs and refining the skills crafted on the flightline. They ensured quality repairs and were very professional in the way they conducted themselves.

"Given the complete failure of the avionics systems, my team went tip to tail on every system in the aircraft to make sure that it was not going to happen again and that we were confident in our repair," said McBride.

After conducting four engine runs with numerous built-in tests to make sure the aircraft was worthy of flight, maintainers from the 509th Maintenance Group returned home.

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Five facts you didn't know about VA loans

The Veteran's Assistance home loan is an excellent service offered to veterans looking to purchase a home. The VA home loan can be used to purchase a home or condo. The loan can also be used to build a new home or make renovations to an existing home. There are many additional benefits that come with the VA loan, which are not known by many.

Here are five facts you may not have known about the VA loan:

It is a lifetime benefit. As long as you have paid off your last VA home loan, you may reapply. Qualifications will most likely be similar each time that you apply.

You can rent out the home if you Permanent Change of Station or move. Instead of going through the hassle of selling your home when you move, the VA loan allows you to rent out your previous home.

You can have two VA loans at the same time. This is called the second-tier entitlement benefit. As long as the max entitlement has not been reached, you can apply for a second VA home loan. The second-tier entitlement benefit is mostly used when a veteran is relocating and looking to rent out their previous residence.

You can use your VA loan benefit to buy a business. The VA home loan can

be used to purchase property for a business, but the primary residence must also be located on the property.

You can buy an investment property with your VA home loan of up to 4 units (4plex). A veteran may buy a small complex and rent out rooms, but it is required that the veteran live in one of the units.

Finance your next home with a VA home loan

VA Home Loan Centers helps veterans, active duty, and dependents all over the country obtain the VA home loan benefits. To complete a quick and easy VA home loan application, follow this link: <https://www.vahomeloancenters.org/apply-for-a-va-home-loan/>.



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SecAF visits key operating locations in European theater



U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Joe W. McFadden

Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James speaks to Airmen during an all call at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, June 23, 2015. The secretary completed a visit of installations through Europe June 24, 2015, to meet Airmen, community leaders and allied and partner nation defense chiefs.

By Staff Sgt. Joe W. McFadden

U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa Public Affairs

SPANGDAHLEM AIR BASE, Germany (AFNS) --

Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James completed a multination visit throughout Europe June 13-24.

The secretary met with Airmen, civilians, host nation community leaders, and allied and partner nation military leaders in countries including Germany, Belgium and Poland during her second visit to the continent since her appointment as the service's 23rd secretary in December 2013.

"Having been on the job as secretary of the Air Force for about a year and a half now, I've divided my time between Washington with policy matters and budgetary matters," James said. "But the best part of the job is days like this when I can go out and about and see our fantastic Airmen in action around the country and around the world, especially here in Europe, always working very, very closely with our partners."

The secretary conducted all calls with Airmen stationed at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany; Lask AB, Poland; and Supreme Headquarters Allied Partners Europe in Mons, Belgium. She discussed her three top Air Force priorities, her perspective on legislative affairs in Washington and answered questions from Airmen on topics from sequestration and retirement benefits, to the service's future.

"There are a lot of things going on in the Air Force, and the secretary will be talking about them," said Gen. Frank Gorenc, the U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa commander, before introducing James at an all call. "Here's the challenge to you: as the secretary talks, make sure that if you have a question on your mind you ask it. You have the subject matter expert here to answer the question. If not, we'll get the answer for all of you. One of the things we do in our Air Force is to develop and nurture our most important asset: and that's every single one of you."

Washington update

During each all call, the secretary updated Airmen on her top three priorities: taking care of people, balancing today's readiness with tomorrow's modernization, and making every dollar count.

James noted how international affairs rapidly changed since her 2013 appointment, particularly Russia's invasion of the Crimean Peninsula, the spread of Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, and terrorism.

Throughout these developments, the secretary observed how Airmen continued to serve in higher operations tempos while enduring reduced manning and budgets through sequestration.

Today's Air Force remains the smallest in terms of the numbers of people since it became a separate service in 1947, James said. She added how this downward change could be reflected in Spangdahlem AB's mission: the base supported three fighter squadrons in the 1990s, while it houses just one today.

"You have pulled it all together," James said. "You have been everywhere we have asked you to go, but there are some strains out there, and I worry about those strains and so does General Welsh, and we're trying to work on these back in Washington."

In February 2015, James and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III recommended a proposal to increase Air Force funding by more than \$10 billion above the currently allowed levels under the sequester.

"Sequestration is still the law of the land," James said. "Nonetheless, we have come forward with a proposal for our defense budget that busts sequestration. The whole world has changed; we don't believe this is adequate, and we're going to ask for more."

James said the increased budget would be marked by investments like the F-35 Lightning II multirole fighter aircraft; a new tanker currently under development; the engineering, manufacturing and developing phase of the new long-range strike bomber; and investments in nuclear, space and cyber capabilities.

She added that the budget presented tough choices such as retiring aircraft over time and submitting a new round of potential base closures.

"I tell you this only for situational awareness -- it's not something for you to worry about, because you are the frontlines," James said. "You need to focus on the mission, focus on each other, focus on family and the important things. General Welsh and I, your senior leaders, we

are the ones focusing on the budget and leading. Every year is foggy, it looks messy, but eventually the fog clears and we will move forward and we will execute, particularly on those three priorities."

Yet regardless of any fiscal climate, James reminded Airmen they have the ability and the duty to find and submit better ways to increase efficiency and reduce costs for the American taxpayer. The 'Powered by Airmen, Fueled by Innovation' website and Facebook page as part of Make Every Dollar Count initiative touted by Air Force Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Larry O. Spencer, served as one outlet for Airmen to do so, James said.

"There are big ways and small ways to do this, and everybody has a role to play," she said. "This is one way that all Airmen, regardless of where you are stationed or career field, can input ideas to us, and we will consider them and possibly implement them."

Poland

The secretary visited Warsaw, Poland, June 21-22, for meetings with U.S. Ambassador Stephen Mull at the U.S. Embassy and later with Polish Minister of Defense Tomasz Siemoniak at the country's defense ministry. Between the meetings, she participated in a wreath-laying ceremony at the country's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier alongside Polish air force airmen.

James then visited Lask AB, Poland, spending time with the Airmen assigned to Det. 1, 52nd Operations Group. The Airmen stationed there work to foster bilateral defense ties, enhance regional security and increase interoperability among NATO allies through combined training exercises with periodic rotational aircraft.

"You are truly on the cutting edge of a foreign policy and military approach by the United States against a very worrisome situation from Russia," James said. "This is a small team of people delivering huge results, punching above your weight and doing a magnificent job."

The secretary also met with Polish and U.S. airmen conducting such exercises on the installation including F-16 Fighting Falcon pilots and maintainers assigned to

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SecAF Continued from Page 5

the 480th Fighter Squadron at Spangdahlem AB, Germany, and the South Carolina Air National Guard's 157th Fighter Squadron.

Germany

In addition to her stops at Ramstein AB, Germany, James visited the 52nd Fighter Wing's Airmen and assets at Spangdahlem AB June 22-23. The base remains engaged in numerous joint, bilateral and multilateral exercises and operations including Operation Atlantic Resolve and the current theater security package to reassure U.S. allies in Eastern Europe.

"What you are doing here in Spangdahlem and our partnership with Germany is squarely in the middle of all the most important aspects of what we're now facing around the world," James said during an all call June 23. "I hope you feel a sense of pride and the sense of accomplishment that I feel as I have reviewed this entire wing's contributions in this part of the world."

At the invitation of the USAFE-AFAFRICA commander, the secretary attended a community relations dinner in Wittlich, Germany, June 22, with civic and business leaders from throughout the Eifel region.

The secretary and commander discussed matters relating to the European Infrastructure Consolidation review, which will include the relocation of the 606th Air Control Squadron from Spangdahlem AB to Aviano AB, Italy, and the future inclusion of the 352nd Special Operations Group from Royal Air Force Mildenhall, England, to Spangdahlem AB.

"This place is exploding in a positive way," James said during the all call June 23. "In the years to come, there will be additional assets coming to Spangdahlem, particularly with some special operations assets which will include additional people."

During her all call, the secretary highlighted the

innovative ideas of Spangdahlem AB Airmen, like Tech. Sgt. Kenyatta Clemons, a 52nd Logistics Readiness Squadron phase support technician, and Otmar Schadeck, the 52nd LRS hazardous materials civilian supervisor. Their suggestion of a consolidated green room to obtain and dispose of cleaning supplies reduced 350 man hours and generated thousands of dollars in savings for Spangdahlem AB, which may also be applied across the Air Force, James said.

"Don't let anyone put your idea down, or say that it's stupid," Clemons said after the ceremony. "Don't doubt your idea -- it might be the next best thing, and it might help future generations of Airmen save money."

The secretary's visit concluded with a tour of the 726th Air Mobility Squadron, an Air Mobility Command tenant unit at Spangdahlem AB known as the "Gateway to Europe."

"We're very happy to have her here," said Col. Joe McFall, the 52nd Fighter Wing commander, in his introduction. "She's a champion of the Air Force fighting for us on Capitol Hill and doing battle with Washington. We couldn't ask for a better advocate."

Belgium

The SecAF's visit in Belgium included a stop at Chièvres AB, Belgium, and a meeting with Gen. Philip Breedlove, the commander of Supreme Allied Command, Europe, and an all call with Airmen assigned to Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in Mons, Belgium, June 23.

"I'm so impressed with what you all produce," James said to the Airmen. "The allies around Europe and around the world rely more and more on the United States Air Force, and that's great testimony to all of you."

"Thank you very much for the enormously important work, the hard work and the frequent deployments," James said. "You are shouldering a lot. You are doing a magnificent job. Thank you for always being forward and ready now."

RECYCLE This Paper ...Think Green

B-52s demonstrate strategic reach



U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Benjamin Raughton

A B-52H Stratofortress is marshalled to a stop at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., after a 44-hour sortie July 2, 2015. Aircrew members and two B-52s from Barksdale AFB's 96th Bomb Squadron flew a round-trip mission to Australia where they integrated with Royal Australian Air Force ground forces in the region to conduct an exercise with inert conventional weapons and perform a low approach at RAAF Base Tindal, Australia.



U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Benjamin Raughton

Capt. Eric Bow (right), the 2nd Operations Support Squadron Conventional Plans Flight commander, conducts a premission briefing with aircrew members at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., June 30, 2015.

U.S. Strategic Command Public Affairs

OFFUTT AIR FORCE BASE, Neb. (AFNS) -- Two B-52 Stratofortresses assigned to the 2nd Bomb Wing at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, returned July 2 from a 44-hour, nonstop mission to Australia.

The mission, which was closely coordinated with the Australian Department of Defence, demonstrated the United States' ability to project its flexible, long-range global strike capability and provided unique opportunities to synchronize strategic activities and capabilities with a key ally in the U.S. Pacific Command area of operations.

"These flights are one of the many ways the U.S. demonstrates its commitment to a stable and peaceful Indo-Asia Pacific region," said Adm. Cecil D. Haney, the U.S. Strategic Command commander. "In addition to strengthening aircrew skills and enhancing their familiarity with operating worldwide; combined training and theater security cooperation engagements with our regional allies serve to improve our interoperability and capability to respond to any potential threat together."

During the mission, the B-52s integrated with Royal Australian Air Force ground forces in the region, conducted an inert conventional weapons drop on the Delamere Air Weapons Range and performed a low-approach at RAAF Base Tindal.

USSTRATCOM's bomber force regularly

conducts such training and engagements around the globe. In June, three B-52s deployed to Royal Air Force Fairford, England, where they conducted training flights with ground and naval forces around the region and participated in multinational exercises Baltic Operations 2015 and Saber Strike 2015 over international waters in the Baltic Sea and the territory of the Baltic states and Poland.

In May, two B-52s participated alongside Jordanian forces in U.S. Central Command's exercise Eager Lion 2015. The mission consisted of a nonstop, 30-plus-hour sortie from the continental U.S. to the USCENTCOM area of operations. Previously, in April, four B-52s flew round-trip flights to both the Arctic and North Sea regions. The training mission, Polar Growl, enabled bomber crews to conduct air intercept training with fighter aircraft from the U.K., Canada and the Netherlands.

B-52s also participated in NATO exercise Noble Justification in October 2014, during which the bombers assisted in the exercise's focus of validating the Spanish Maritime Force as the 2015 Maritime NATO Response Force.

USSTRATCOM is one of nine Defense Department unified combatant commands and is charged with strategic deterrence; space operations; cyberspace operations; joint electronic warfare; global strike; missile defense; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; combating weapons of mass destruction; and analysis and targeting.

**THINK
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The Official Whiteman AFB Facebook Page

Living the American Dream



U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Racheal E. Watson

Senior Airman Vadim Poleanschi, a 386th Expeditionary Logistic Readiness Squadron logistic specialist, disassembles an individual protective armor in Southwest Asia, June 3, 2015. Poleanschi joined the Air Force for the opportunity of career and personal progression.

By Senior Airman Racheal E. Watson
386th Air Expeditionary Wing

SOUTHWEST ASIA (AFNS) -- (This feature is part of the "Through Airmen's Eyes" series on AF.mil. These stories focus on individual Airmen, highlighting their Air Force story.)

On Christmas day in 1991, the Soviet flag flew over the Kremlin in Moscow for the last time. People across the country took what jobs they could find, getting paid a fraction of what they made before, as the local currency became nearly worthless. The burden of the country's uncertain direction weighed heavily on the backs of the people.

Senior Airman Vadim Poleanschi, a 386th Expeditionary Logistic Readiness Squadron logistics specialist, felt the burden, whether he understood it or not. Poleanschi was

born after the Soviet Union fell apart in a country called the Republic of Moldova, an Eastern European country landlocked between Romania and Ukraine. He spent his childhood hungry, poor and faced an uncertain future.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, everyday items were expensive and difficult to afford for parts of the population. Education opportunities were limited, forcing many to forgo a better life because they could simply not afford it.

"I saw my parents not eat enough so (my siblings and I) had enough to eat," Poleanschi said. "I didn't realize the full situation until later on, when I grew up."

To give Poleanschi every opportunity life could offer, his parents took the few belongings they had and left their home to chase the American dream and the promise of a better life for their children.

"Imagine coming to a new country with nothing," Poleanschi said. "We didn't have a lot of money, didn't

know the language and didn't know anyone."

Moving to America had its challenges for Poleanschi's parents. The land of opportunity was plenty, but the largest hurdle to jump was the language barrier. At first this made it difficult to secure steady employment, but through perseverance Poleanschi's parents were able to find jobs to support their family.

Poleanschi's parents weren't the only ones who struggled with the language barrier. He had a hard time communicating with his peers.

"As a kid I constantly got into fights because of the things I said," Poleanschi said.

As time passed and various programs helped the Poleanschi family, living in America became easier and the American dream was becoming a reality.

When the time came, Poleanschi entered the labor pool looking for his version of the American dream. He ended up working menial tasks in the fast food market.

"I was working in a fast food restaurant as a manager," Poleanschi said. "I could not progress any further because it was privately owned."

Poleanschi knew he could no longer evolve in the fast food company unless he became an owner, so he branched out again, still chasing the elusive dream.

"I love the idea of always having the extra space to move forward and learn new things, to develop myself and help develop other people," Poleanschi said. "I wanted something that had a lot of opportunity to expand my personal knowledge and be a part of something bigger—one team, one fight."

Looking for future opportunities, Poleanschi decided to join the armed forces, the Marine Corps, in particular. The further he got into the recruiting process, the less he felt the Marines was right for him, ultimately leading him to the Air Force.

"I ended up going in open general because I was disqualified from a lot of jobs due to the fact that I wasn't a citizen," Poleanschi said.

Not being a citizen did not mean he was going to give up on his dreams of bigger and better things. After spending some time in the military, Poleanschi applied to become a citizen at the end of 2013.

According to Poleanschi, he had the same feelings during swearing in as a citizen as he did when he raised his right hand and took the oath of enlistment.

"(Swearing in as a citizen) reinforced my service in the military by saying I am serving the country, I have a loyalty to it, I am also a part of it and I am a citizen," Poleanschi said.

But by becoming an American, he was forced to tear out a part of who he was, literally.

"I brought in my passport and he ripped out every page in front of me, shredded it and put it in a sealed bag," Poleanschi said. "It was sort of like ripping out of a piece of me, because it was my home country and I grew up there."

As one chapter of Poleanschi's life closed, another chapter started, one that finally began his American dream.

"I had the opportunities I had when I came to this country because of someone who put on this uniform, who went where they had to, did what they had to do, for someone like me," Poleanschi said.

His drive is not lost on those around him. Staff Sgt. Toneichia Graham, a 386th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron Expeditionary Theater Distribution Center supervisor, describes Poleanschi as a go-getter, absorbing information like a sponge and taking as many Airmen as he can under his wing to help them with their goals.

Poleanschi's determination has led him to learn to speak five different languages: Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, English and Serbian. He plans to apply for retraining as an airborne linguist. In the meantime, Poleanschi is going to school full time to further his education.

"There are always opportunities; it's just how hard are you willing to work to make things happen," Poleanschi said.

Fighter pilot makes history at USAF Weapons School



Courtesy photo/Susan Garcia

Capt. Kari Armstrong, an F-15E Strike Eagle weapon systems officer with the 389th Fighter Squadron, received more than a diploma from the U.S. Air Force Weapons School at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, June 27, 2015. Armstrong also became the first female F-15E weapons school officer and the second female student in a fighter platform -- after Col. Jeannie Leavitt in June 1998 -- to complete the graduate-level school.

By Susan Garcia

U.S. Air Force Weapons School

MOUNTAIN HOME AIR FORCE BASE, Idaho (AFNS) -- Capt. Kari Armstrong, an F-15E Strike Eagle weapon systems officer with the 389th Fighter Squadron, received more than a diploma from the U.S. Air Force Weapons School at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, June 27. Armstrong also became the first female F-15E weapons school officer and the second female student in a fighter platform -- after Col. Jeannie Leavitt in June 1998 -- to complete the graduate-level school.

While she appreciates the historical aspect of her experience, Armstrong said her vision for the future goes beyond her gender. Her ultimate goals are to be the best instructor she can be and to inspire others to excel in the same way her mentors did. Those goals motivated her to apply to the weapons school in the first place.

Armstrong did not have to put herself through weapons school -- a rigorous school that selects only the top 3 percent of F-15E aircrew, with an elimination rate of 10 percent per class. However, Armstrong had observed and admired the graduates -- also known as "Patches" -- at her unit for some time.

"I realized that the people I wanted to emulate the most happened to be Patches," Armstrong said. "They really summed up the 'humble, approachable, credible' motto of the weapons school. To me, a Patch means being very proficient at your job, but also being willing and available to help those around you."

Her skills and teaching acumen resulted in her selection to the 17th Weapons Squadron's F-15E Weapons Instructor Course on her first application to the weapons school. After arriving, Armstrong soon realized she might be the first female weapons school officer to graduate from the fighter weap-

ons instructor course; however, she could not allow herself to think about that. She had to focus on the 260 academic hours, 28 flying missions and a course designed to contain the toughest operational conditions most students ever see.

"Going through the course, I didn't feel singled out," Armstrong said. "At the end of the day, (gender) doesn't matter in the briefing rooms. All that matters is the quality of your brief, execution and debrief."

The 17th WPS leadership echoed that sentiment. "Captain Armstrong's accomplishments are notable simply because of her ability," said Lt. Col. James Blanton, the 17th WPS commander. "She's a very good aviator and instructor. Regardless of gender, all of our students will be excellent leaders for the (U.S. Air Force)."

Her fellow classmates were essential to Armstrong's success. She advised potential weapons school students to "stay positive and lean on your classmates for support -- look for the little wins."

Small successes during the course are important. They help counter the challenging hours of training and the constructive feedback from instructors.

As she returns to the 389th FS and Mountain Home Air Force Base, Armstrong said she hopes to encourage other weapons school officers to apply for the school. She wants them to know becoming a Patch is an attainable goal; however, "It is not a goal you can complete overnight; it is something you have to work hard at every single day.

"(The weapons school) is challenging, but it's also the best flying I've ever had the opportunity to participate in," Armstrong continued. "Unless you go to a Red Flag, you won't typically see how all the platforms work together. Getting outside your own bubble helps you see the bigger picture of how we all play a role in the overall mission."

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Blast from the past: Last M117 bomb dropped near Guam coast

By Airman 1st Class Joshua Smoot
36th Wing Public Affairs

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE, Guam (AFNS) -- Airmen from the 20th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron -- with the help of 36th Munitions Squadron Airmen -- dropped the final M117 air-dropped general purpose bomb in the Pacific Air Force's inventory June 26 on an uninhabited island off the coast of Guam.

The M117 bomb dates back to the mid-1950s, when it was first used during the Vietnam War.

"I think it's fitting that the last M117 bomb was dropped from a B-52 (Stratofortress) deployed to Andersen (Air Force Base)," said Jeffrey Meyer, a 36th Wing historian. "Loading and dropping the last M117 from a deployed B-52 here is like remembering and honoring the hard work of Strategic Air Command's Airmen from long ago one last time."

The M117 is a 750-pound bomb that can be employed in two different configurations: one which uses a special fin assembly providing either high-drag or low-drag release options; and the other configurations looks similar to the M117R, but uses a magnetic influence fuse, which enables the bomb to function as a mine.

Both the B-52 and M117 were developed and added to the Air Force's inventory in the 1950s and used together extensively during Operation Arc Light from 1965-1973 as part of the Vietnam War. The missions supporting Operation Arc Light launched from Andersen AFB; U-Tapao Royal Thai Naval Airfield, Thailand; and Kadena Air Base, Japan. In addition, B-52 aircrew dropped M117s during Operation Linebacker II from Dec. 18-29, 1972, and Operation Desert Storm from Jan. 16-Feb. 28, 1991.

Although Andersen AFB has had thousands of pounds of M117 bombs in its stockpile since the bomb was used operationally, many munitions Airmen don't get the chance to see those bombs during their career.

"It's an amazing feeling to be a part of the 20th EBS and work alongside such dedicated Airmen who comes to work every day ready to complete the mission," said Lt. Col. Wade Karren, the 20th EBS director of operations. "It's only fitting that these Airmen get to witness

this rare occasion of dropping the last M117 bomb in PACAF."

Dropping the final M117 in PACAF is a small part of U.S. Pacific Command's continuous bomber presence, which was established at Andersen in 2004. The presence demonstrates the United States' commitment to the security and stability of the Indo-Asia Pacific region. Bomb squadrons, such as the 20th EBS, deploy here on a rotational basis, providing a flexible response capability.

"(A continuous bomber presence) is important because it assures and deters our allies in the Pacific and it helps out with the Navy's operations to project power in the region," said Capt. Patrick Walsh, the 20th EBS Department of Weapons and Tactics assistant flight commander.

Dropping live weapons gives pilots the chance to get real-world experience at applying their job skills.

"The abundance of M117 bombs allowed crews to train with live weapons for more than a decade, increasing crew confidence and combat readiness," Walsh said.

Now that the last M117 bomb in PACAF has been dropped, B-52 aircrews and munitions Airmen can focus all of their time on training with newer bombs rather than switching from modern and Vietnam-era bombs.

In addition to dropping the final bomb, the 20th EBS also celebrated their 98th birthday on this day.

On June 26, 1917, the 20th EBS was formed as the 20th Aero Squadron at Kelly Field, Texas. Since the squadron's inception, it has transferred to numerous bases and has supported various missions. In 1993, the bomb squadron moved to Barksdale AFB, Louisiana, where it resides today. The squadron started out assisting in World War I and has been involved in about every war and conflict since then.

"I think it's awesome to be able to drop live weapons on the range out here, especially on our birthday," said 1st Lt. Bryant Curdy, a 20th EBS weapons system officer. "So many B-52 crews have come through Guam and dropped M117s starting in Vietnam, and actually being able to be part of the crew who gets to drop the last weapon out here is not only great training but it's a part of a cool legacy that we get to share."