

WARRIOR

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Conaton visits Whiteman



Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Jason Huddleston

The Honorable Erin Conaton, Under Secretary of the Air Force, has lunch with Airmen at the Ozark Inn Dining Facility during her visit here, Sept. 2. U.S.



ON THE INSIDE

Military Appreciation Day at Mizzou

The University of Missouri at Columbia is hosting a military appreciation day Saturday at Faurot Field. The Missouri Tigers vs. McNeese State Cowboys game will begin at 6 p.m. Tickets cost \$15 and are available for everyone who wants to attend. Bus transportation will be provided. Departure time is 12:30 p.m. at the commissary. Contact a unit first sergeant for tickets or for more information.

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Coping with loss of friends, family

I didn't know them. Not personally, anyway. But when two members of a base with little more than 600 people die, it's hard not to be affected.

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Post 9/11: This isn't your father's Guard

Since the attacks of 9/11, the National Guard has had to make some of the most dramatic changes in its 373-year history, a senior National Guard leader said in a recent interview.

WEATHER

Today	Sunday
Mostly Cloudy	Sunny
Hi 86	Hi 81
Lo 70	Lo 60

Saturday	Monday
Mostly Sunny	Mostly Sunny
Hi 82	Hi 81
Lo 59	Lo 59

Weather courtesy of the National Weather Service

Airman returns to Whiteman as new CC

Airman 1st Class Cody H. Ramirez
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

Brig. Gen. Scott Vander Hamm is an Airman who is familiar with Whiteman AFB, the 509th Bomb Wing, the mission and the community. He has served here previously as a pilot, a pilot trainer and a squadron commander. On Aug. 23, he returned as commander of the 509th BW and is looking forward to the next challenge.

"I'm honored to get a chance to come back to Whiteman for a third time," said General Vander Hamm. "My wife, family, and I are truly honored to be back and to lead the wing, its fine Airmen and the total force team that has been built here."

Q: What were you and your family looking forward to most when you received notification that you were coming back to the heartland?

A: We fell in love with the Midwest. We are looking most forward to reacquainting ourselves with the surrounding communities. We have very close relationships with people in Knob Noster, Warrensburg, Sedalia, Concordia, Clinton and other surrounding communities, and I was personally looking forward to coming back to a place that has little traffic. When I got the notification that I was coming back to the heartland, you couldn't wipe the smile off my face.

Q: What do you expect out of the men and women of the 509th?

A: Excellence. [Maj.] Gen. [Floyd] Carpenter challenged me at the change of command. His words were "be perfect," and that is the expectation in the nuclear mission. There is zero margin for error when it comes to dealing with the weapons that we use today, not only as a deterrent, but to assure our allies that we are handling these [weapons] in the proper manner. What I expect out of the men and women of the 509th is their attention to detail and excellence in all they do. I expect them to work as a team. I cannot be perfect unless we are perfect in every process; so through extension, the 509th needs to remain unassailable in our processes. We need to



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Jason Huddleston

Brig. Gen. Scott Vander Hamm, 509th Bomb Wing commander, greets Airmen during lunch at the Ozark Inn here Sept. 2.

be above reproach in every process that deals with this type of weapon, and that will cascade into everything we do. I expect a lot out of the men and women of the 509th.

Q: In one word, how would you describe yourself?

A: Loyal. I'm loyal to my commanders and that loyalty trickles down. I'm loyal to the men and women with whom I serve at work, my peers, and

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General Lorenz on leadership

By Gen. Stephen R. Lorenz

Air Education and Training Command commander

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFNS) – I have gained a wealth of knowledge during my career, but one point remains at the top of the list ... love your people.

Through Lorenz on Leadership articles and presentations, I have shared countless personal stories. While they always have different themes, one constant is the wonderful examples and lessons from people I have met. Our Airmen are priceless. They are what make our Air Force the most powerful in the world.

Loving your people is a personal tenet I fervently believe in and live to uphold each day. It is core to my passion and drive as a member of the armed forces and is an essential trait for leaders. Our military force's diverse makeup of servicemembers and their families are themselves powerful reminders of the special charge we have been given as leaders in service to our country.

A humbling example of this is the story of Bradley and Sara Sullivan. Eighteen months ago Brad, a captain, was preparing for his first deployment as an F-16 Fighting Falcon pilot. Amidst the flurry of pre-deployment activities, his family received two life-changing announcements. First, he and his wife were pregnant with their first child. Second, Sara was diagnosed with an aggressive form of breast cancer at the age of 28.

Following a number of difficult choices, Brad and Sara moved to San Antonio to begin

her chemotherapy, which would allow Sara to stave off cancer and still allow normal growth of their baby. To their delight, treatment went as planned. However, during the third trimester the pregnancy became increasingly complicated due to the effects of the chemotherapy, and Sara was placed on bed rest. On Sept. 8, 2009, Brad and Sara welcomed their daughter Chloe Grace into their family.

But their struggles were not over. Less than two weeks after Chloe was born, Brad and Sara were back in the hospital. Sara had suffered a massive stroke, thought to be a result of the physical ailments her body received from pregnancy and chemo. Within days of her return to Wilford Hall Medical Center, Sara was on life support and declared brain dead. She passed away shortly thereafter.

One of the many constants that continue to sustain Captain Sullivan is the community and network of unit leadership, friends and family at Randolph Air Force Base. You see, Brad and Sara were warmly welcomed into a unit that accepted them unconditionally and lovingly met every challenge with them as a family.

From the day of Sara's first hospitalization, their family was never alone as friends and family regularly visited. There was an even greater outpouring of support when Sara passed away. Now, as Chloe fast approaches her first birthday, Brad and his daughter are gifted daily with words of support, meals, and anything else required to help them walk in their new life. When difficult decisions had to be made after Sara's passing, Brad had a family liaison officer present or a member of unit

leadership who was fully prepared to present him with all options for his family. All of this is a result of a culture of community, one that begins within our Air Force and reaches out to every member of our families.

Critical to loving your people is knowing them. Not just what they do or their reputation at work, but genuinely knowing them. As leaders and peers, we must invest the time to determine what moves and motivates those around us. It is essential we know names of spouses and children. It is also imperative we understand the perspectives our people share. We must see the view an individual maintains of the world around them. This dictates an investment of time spent with them to hear their stories and life experiences. This stands to strengthen the bond you share with fellow Airmen and allows you to lead effectively.

Inevitably the investment we make in our people is returned. Oftentimes the return comes at a time of crisis, as in the story of Captain Sullivan. It is during this time that we owe it to those around us to focus centrally on what is in the best interest of the member affected.

Loving your Airmen is not a catch phrase, nor does it mean passively asking someone how their day is going. Rather, it is an active process, an investment on the part of leaders and fellow Airmen. You never know when you are going to make a difference, so never pass up an opportunity to reach out to those around you and invest in their lives. Trust me, it is an investment that will pay dividends for the rest of your life.

Coping with loss of friends, family

By Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Rojek

Joint Task Force-Bravo Public Affairs

SOTO CANO AIR BASE, Honduras – I didn't know them. Not personally, anyway. But when two members of a base with little more than 600 people die, it's hard not to be affected.

On Aug. 2, I had to photograph the ceremonial loading and departure of the remains of two 1-228th Aviation Regiment Soldiers who died recently in an off-base car accident.

Even though Army Sgts. Luis Brito and Leodegario Lizárraga didn't die in combat, or even because of it, their deaths were tragic and left unexpected holes in the lives of many.

I was going to write this commentary as a message on safe driving to tell you, the reader, to take care on the road, be aware of your surroundings, etc. While that's all good advice and something to consider while you're on the road here or anywhere else in the world, what's more important immediately after a tragedy like this is making sure you seek help if you need it.

I've lost friends to vehicle accidents throughout the years – car, motorcycle and boat – and it never gets easier. And though my heart still aches that I'll never be able to see those people again – never be able to laugh with them or play X-Box with them or tell them what good friends they were, I always take comfort in the fact that I still have friends with whom I can talk. There are still family members and buddies who will understand my grief, take the time to share memories of our departed comrades, and be there to lean on.

Even if you're not personally affected by a loss, you should still offer up your help. If you're a supervisor, take the time to talk to your troops. If one of your friends or co-workers seems down, take him aside and check up on him. Be good battle buddies and wingmen, and remind your friends that they can talk to you.

When a friend or co-worker does turn to you, don't offer false comforts, though.

According to Mental Health America, "It doesn't help the grieving person to say ... 'You'll get over it in time.' Instead, offer a simple



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Shane A. Cuomo

Co-workers and peers are in the best position to identify when someone is struggling. Having the courage to reach out to another Airman who is having a difficult time is the first and most critical step toward suicide prevention.

expression of sorrow and take time to listen."

Mental Health America's website also states that effective coping includes telling your friends and family how you feel.

As a military member, you may be in a remote location where you feel like you don't have anyone, but one of the great things about being a servicemember is that you do have people to talk to, from chaplains to mental health professionals.

Whether you're looking for advice or just an ear to listen, the military offers resources to help you work through your time of grief and loss. Take advantage of them.

Always remember that asking for help and talking about your feelings are not signs of weakness; those actions are important for your health.

Whenever the military suffers a loss, no matter the mission, location or number of people, it is a difficult period of adjustment. In these times, we must take care of each other, reach out a hand, and most importantly, accept the help.

THE WARRIOR

Editorial Staff

Brig. Gen. Scott Vander Hamm
509th Bomb Wing Commander

Capt. Matt Miller
Chief, Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. Kenya Shiloh
NCO in Charge, Internal Information

Airman 1st Class Torey Griffith
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For more information, call the Warrior office at (660) 687-6123, e-mail: warrior.whiteman@whiteman.af.mil, fax us: (660) 687-7948, or write to us at: 509th Bomb Wing, 1081 Arnold Ave., Bldg. 59, Whiteman AFB, Mo., 65305.

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NEWS BRIEFS

Retroactive Stop Loss claims

Airmen, veterans, and beneficiaries who were involuntarily extended under Stop Loss between Sept. 11 and Sept. 30 are eligible for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay (RSLSP). If your enlistment was involuntarily extended due to Stop Loss, and you have yet to file a claim for RSLSP, the last day to file is October 21, 2010. Go to www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/sto-loss for links to the claim forms and instructions on how to file.

SecDef INVEST Program taking submissions

Secretary of Defense Dr. Robert M. Gates is asking all DoD military and civilian employees for their ideas on how the Department can be more efficient and effective by submitting an idea to the Innovation for New Value, Efficiency and Savings Tomorrow program, or INVEST. Air Force Global Strike Command is encouraging Airmen in the Command to submit ideas for consideration at www.defense.gov/invest. Ideas can be anything—small or large—and ideas can be for the Air Force, a sister service, or the Department as a whole. Only active-duty, Reserve and civilian personnel are eligible to participate. Ideas must be submitted by Sept. 24, and please remember, no classified information should be included in your submission. Award winners will receive cash awards ranging from \$500 to \$1,000.

Don't Ask, Don't Tell surveys

Surveys about the Department of Defense's 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' policy are being e-mailed to randomly selected members. DoD officials say that surveys are legitimate. What might appear to be a commercial source of the e-mails could lead recipients to assume that the e-mail is not legitimate, officials say. However, the survey is an official DoD survey, sent out by a contracted entity. As such, participation in the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" survey is appropriate and encouraged.

Special Needs Support Group

Meetings will be held the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at the Whiteman Chapel Annex from 6 – 7:30 p.m. This group helps bring families with a variety of special needs together and provides peer support as well as pooled resources for helping agencies. For more information or to offer any assistance, contact Master Sgt. Mona Wendzillo at (660) 687-1221.

Semi-annual inventory

The 509th Munitions Squadron will be conducting a 100 percent stockpile munitions inventory. There will be no custody issues or turn-in of munition items from Sept. 7-14. For more information, call (660) 687-8039.

Whiteman Inn

The Whiteman Inn is open 24 hours a day. All active duty, retired, Reserve and Guard members and DoD civilians, including family members of authorized personnel, are eligible for space-A lodging reservations throughout the military. Reservations can be made up to 120 days in advance, space permitting. Call (660) 687-1844 to make a reservation.

We remember



U.S. Air Force photo by Kimberly Groue

Staff Sgt. Tomeka Gordon lights candles for a noon service in the Triangle Chapel at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., in memory of people who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks on 9/11.

Post 9/11: This isn't your father's Guard

By Sgt. Darron Salzer
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. (AFNS) – Since the attacks of 9/11, the National Guard has had to make some of the most dramatic changes in its 373-year history, a senior National Guard leader said in a recent interview.

"We have evolved and we have changed," said Maj. Gen. William H. Etter, the acting director of domestic operations at the National Guard Bureau. "In the past, the guard was a strategic reserve, and just like the name, it was held in reserve, waiting for the big one."

"Like any change, it was kind of insidious and started out small, so we may not have recognized it," he said.

The "big one" that would change the dynamic of the Guard would come in early 2003, when Operation Iraqi Freedom began after multinational forces, led by U.S. forces, invaded Iraq.

"What happened there was such a large demand for (American military) that the guard became a part of going overseas, and we're very proud of that and it's something that we don't want to stop doing," General Etter said.

About three-quarters of the National Guard members have deployed once, and 25 percent have deployed more than twice.

"The guard feels like it's a battle-tested, hardened organization now, with many combat veterans," he said. "With that kind of experience level, it just makes for an extremely professional and capable (organization)."

The changes have been hard, and like with any change, there has been some turbulence along the way, but the guard members are proud of the changes that have been made, General Etter added.

"This has been a nation at war, and we've fought side-by-side with all of the other forces, and I don't think there's any looking back."

"This has been a nation at war, and we've fought side-by-side with all of the other forces, and I don't think there's any looking back."

- Gen. William H. Etter

Acting director of domestic operations at the National Guard Bureau

Because of the Cold War, the guard has often been referred to as a force of "weekend warriors," which is a title that no longer applies, as it gains more respect among active-duty forces.

"I know that as we work together as a team, and we see nothing other than being accepted as an equal partner on the team during the missions that we're on," he said. "Cultures take a long time to shift, but you've got a lot of combat veterans in the guard right now, and they know what they're doing."

When it comes to the future of the guard, General Etter said he is very confident of what the guard is capable of and where it is headed.

"Where we are right now, we feel like we can continue indefinitely," he said. "Obviously nothing in the world stays the same, and if something were to happen to call us someplace else, it'd be a different story. But at the end of the day, we're going to do what we need to do."

Finally, General Etter said the guard is a great value for the country.

"We're accessible, performing a dual mission, and we're proud to serve the governors, the president and the American people," he said. "We'll be there."