

WARRIOR



▶ **PG12** LOAD CREW MEMBER BRINGS HIS CAREER

FULL CIRCLE



▶ **PG14** **TAX EXEMPT**
NEW MISSOURI TAX LAW

▶ **PG4** **YOU BOOZE, YOU CRUISE, YOU LOSE**
WHITEMAN IMPLEMENTS DUI BATTLE PLAN

Weekly commander's message

Greetings, Team Whiteman!

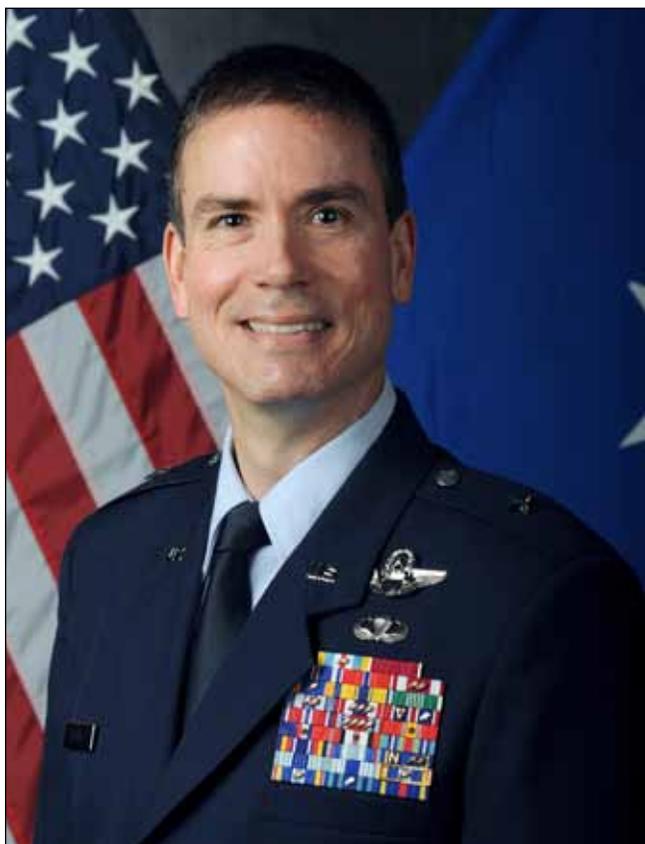
This week, we were privileged to host two phenomenal leaders here at Whiteman! Maj. Gen. Richard Clark, the 8th Air Force commander, visited with many members of our team to learn firsthand how they support our vital strategic deterrence mission. He had the opportunity to fly the B-2 as well, which provided him a new and unique perspective on global reach and airpower! We also had the opportunity to host Brig. Gen. Greg Haase from Headquarters Air Force Total Force Continuum. Brig. Gen. Haase serves as the lead ANG representative within Headquarters Air Force Total Force Continuum, which reports directly to the Chief of Staff and is charged with leveraging the strengths and efficiencies of each individual service component to best support the Total Force. Brig. Gen. Haase witnessed how our Total Force team performs interchangeably on a daily basis, and he was thoroughly impressed with the seamlessness of our operations!

Throughout the week, we also executed critical training in support of our Nuclear Weapons System Evaluation Program. This specific training evaluated our entire B-2 weapons system, including aircraft, weapons delivery systems, weapons, aircrews, technical data and maintenance. We do all this to assess our operational effectiveness, to verify weapon systems performance, and to ensure the reliability of our incredible platform. Once again, our entire team proved why we are America's premier bomber force!

In addition our TFI maintenance and operations teams have been busy supporting local training operations, including generating invaluable training sorties to an out-of-state training range. This weekend we will be providing a spectacular fly-over for the Toledo Airshow as well!

Recently, many of you submitted ideas for naming the new street by the Bowling Center. Our Facilities Board recently convened and chose the submission "Tinian Lane." The 509th Composite Group trained and prepared at Tinian Island in the Pacific and carried out the WWII atomic missions from there. By selecting this name, we are honoring our historical roots and tying our installation closer to our wing's great legacy.

Lastly, our Airmen living in the dorms will soon receive the latest quality of life initiative—a delivery of a new, heavy-duty



concrete "Cornhole" game. Many of our Airmen asked about the possibility of adding such an amenity to their living area, and we were able to make it happen. It should be set up and ready for use within the next week!

Thanks for all your hard work this week! Stay safe, look after one another, and enjoy your weekend!

Defend...Avenger!

Nuke

PAUL W. TIBBETS IV
Brigadier General, USAF
Commander, 509th Bomb Wing

THE WARRIOR

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Brig. Gen. Paul W. Tibbets IV
509th Bomb Wing Commander

Capt. Karl Wiest
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2nd Lt. Matthew Van Wagenen
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Airman 1st Class Michaela Slanchik
Editor

Senior Airman Danielle Quilla
Senior Airman Sandra Marrero
Senior Airman Joel Pfiester
Senior Airman Jovan Banks
Airman 1st Class Jazmin Smith

Photojournalists

The Sedalia Democrat
Layout and Design

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The deadline for article submissions to the **Warrior** is noon Friday. If a holiday falls on Friday, the deadline then becomes 4 p.m. Thursday. Articles will be published on a space-available basis. Submissions does not guarantee publication.

For more information, call the **Warrior** office at 660-687-6126, email Whiteman.Warrior@us.af.mil, fax 660-687-7948, or write to us at Whiteman Warrior, 509th Bomb Wing, 509 Spirit Blvd. Suite 116, Whiteman AFB, Mo., 65305.

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On the cover

U.S. Air Force photo/
Senior Airman Jovan Banks
U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Allen Anderson, an aircraft armament systems mechanic assigned to the 131st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, operates an MHU-83 D/E "jammer" during certification training at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., June 28, 2016. Anderson, after serving more than 20 years in the Air Force, decided to end his career how it began, as a weapons loader.

NEWS BRIEFS

Disposition of Personal Effects

Capt. Justin Baier is authorized to make disposition of the personal effects of Senior Airman Jonathan DeCoe, deceased, 509th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, as stated in AFI 34-511, Disposition of Personal Property and Effects. Any person having claims for or against the deceased please contact Capt. Justin Baier at (614) 395-9918.



U.S. Air Force Eagle Eyes provides service members and civilians a safe, discreet and anonymous option to report criminal information, counterintelligence indicators or force protection concerns.

To submit a web tip go to <http://www.tipsubmit.com/WebTips.aspx?AgencyID=1111> or the AFOSI web page at <http://www.osi.af.mil>

How to report an anonymous tip using a smart phone:

1. Use the smart phone app
2. Manually select an agency
3. Choose USA then Federal Agency then select AFOSI
4. Create a passport, select New Tip and fill out the form with as much information as possible.

How to report an anonymous tip VIA text message:

Text "AFOSI" plus your tip information to 274637 (CRIMES)

Air Force Housing website

Visit www.housing.af.mil to find your new home with the Air Force. This website serves as a one-stop shop for Airmen and their families to obtain information about the housing options and support services available to them at Air Force bases worldwide.

Stealth Lounge

If you are a young Airman, let the Stealth Lounge make your time at Whiteman more fun. Stop by after work to play some pool, darts, foosball, or the newest games on Xbox One or Playstation 4. The lounge opens at 4 p.m. during the week and noon on weekends. There is free dinner every Friday at 4:30 p.m. There are also free premium snacks and Wi-Fi. Come for the free stuff, stay for the fun and friends.

Please like the Stealth Lounge on Facebook to stay up to date on special events and tournaments.

WEATHER

Today	Saturday
Mostly Sunny	Chance of Storms
Hi 86	Hi 86
Lo 67	Lo 66
Sunday	Monday
Mostly Sunny	Mostly Sunny
Hi 91	Hi 93
Lo 72	Lo 74

NEW COMMAND CHIEF

Chief Master Sergeant Melvina A. Smith is the 509th Bomb Wing Command Chief Master Sergeant at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri. She is responsible to the 509th Bomb Wing commander and senior staff on matters affecting health, morale, welfare and proper utilization of over 3,900 enlisted personnel. She also provides guidance on leadership, self-improvement, discipline, job performance and military standards. The chief assumed her current position on June 15, 2016.

Chief Smith grew up in Chicago, Illinois, and entered the Air Force in August 1992. Her background includes numerous leadership roles at the squadron and headquarters levels. She has been stationed at locations in Idaho, Georgia, Louisiana, Japan, Korea, Alabama and Oklahoma. While supporting Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM, she deployed to Baghdad International Airport, Iraq, Manas Air Base, Kyrgyzstan, and Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar. Before assuming her current position, she served as superintendent, 51st Mission Support Group, at Vance AFB, Oklahoma.



CMSgt Melvina Smith
509th BW Command Chief

Major Awards and decorations:

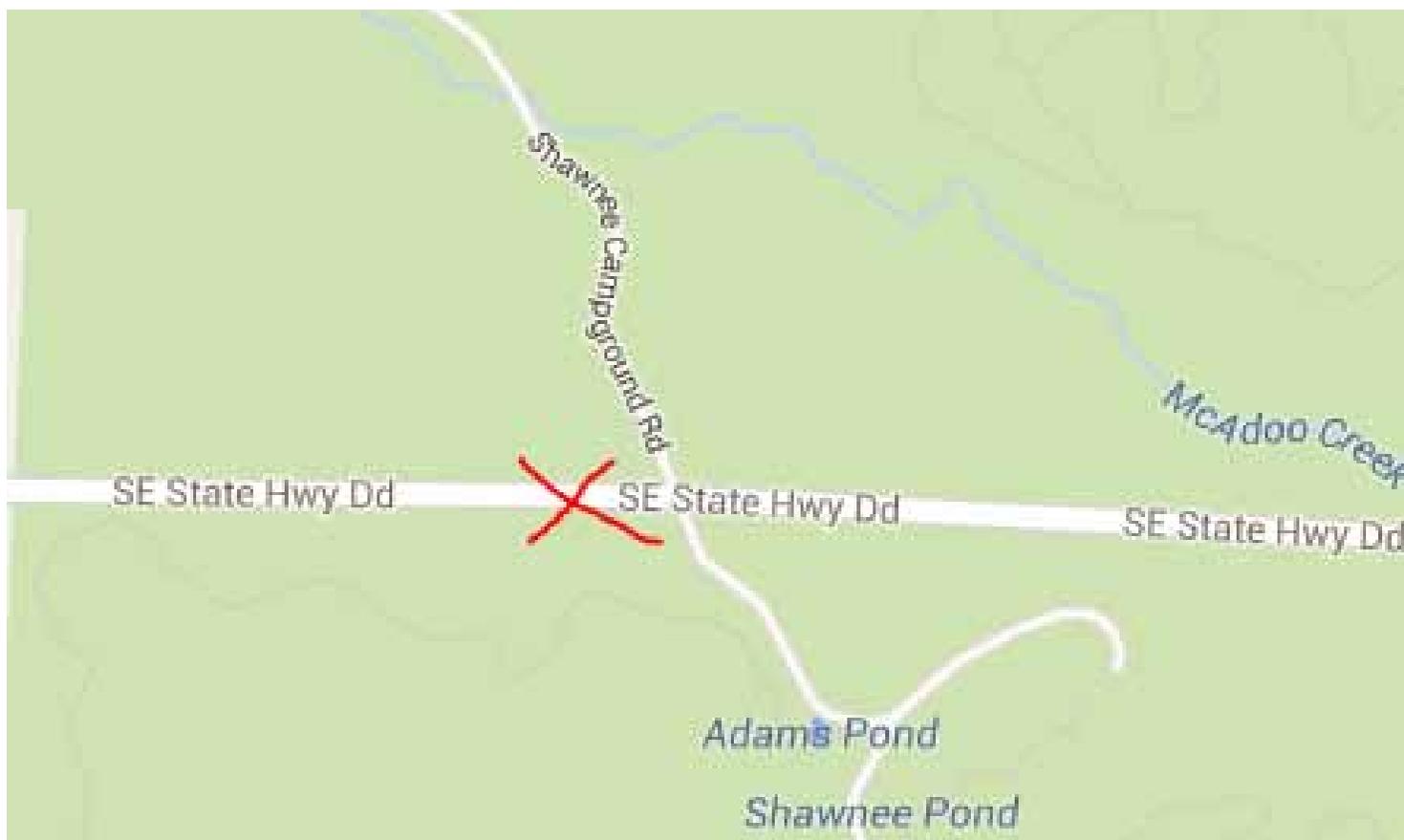
- Meritorious Service Medal with five oak leaf clusters
- AF Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters
- AF Achievement Medal with four oak leaf clusters
- Meritorious Unit Award
- AF Outstanding Unit Award with Valor Device with five oak leaf clusters
- AF Organizational Excellence Award
- Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal
- GWoT Expeditionary Medal
- Global War on Terrorism Service Medal
- Korean Defense Service Medal

509TH BOMB WING
WHITEMAN AIR FORCE BASE



U.S. AIR FORCE

Route DD closed beginning Monday, July 18th



Courtesy graphic

KNOB NOSTER, Mo. – Crews will close Route DD, just west of Shawnee Campground Road, outside Whiteman Air Force Base beginning Monday, July 18 to replace a culvert and expect to reopen the road early August. All work is weather dependent.

A signed state detour will be in place and will send traffic approximately 10 miles along Route 50, Route 13, and Route 23.

An estimated 5,000 motorists travel this route daily.

The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) urges all motorists to be alert and use caution when driving through work zones. Follow the posted speed limits and take turns merging every other car, like a zipper, where lanes are closed. Always wear safety belts and be alert for slowed traffic, narrowed lanes or a reduced number of lanes.

You booze, you cruise, you lose



U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Joel Pfiester

An Airman changes the number of days since the last DUI on the DUI condition level sign at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., July 13, 2016. In an attempt to further prevent Airmen from getting behind the wheel while intoxicated, the 509th Bomb Wing implemented a DUI Battle Plan. The plan serves as a tool for commanders and supervisors to ensure Airmen, and members of Team Whiteman, understand the risks of drunken driving and the importance of responsible decision making with regard to their safety and the safety of others on the road.

By Senior Airman Joel Pfiester
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

In an attempt to further combat Airmen from getting behind the wheel while intoxicated, the 509th Bomb Wing implemented a Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Battle Plan.

The DUI Battle Plan is operationally based and is a targeted response to the total number of DUIs occurred by Whiteman personnel. As the total number of DUIs increase, so do the prevention measures and consequences. The plan serves as a tool for commanders and supervisors to ensure Airmen and members of Team Whiteman understand the risks of drunken driving and the importance responsible decision making has on their safety and the safety of others on the road.

"The DUI Battle Plan builds upon and strengthens the installation's already robust DUI prevention program," said Master Sgt. Shane Sudman, the 509th Security Forces Squadron NCO in charge of operations. "With our new tracking system, we might see a minor upswing in DUI related incidents, the battle plan supports good order and discipline, while reinforcing the importance of taking care of our Airmen."

Whenever an Airman receives a DUI, the Airman and their unit are responsible for updating the DUI sign at the front gate every day. The sign keeps track of how many days it has been since a member of Team Whiteman received a DUI. The Airman is relieved from updating the

sign once the installation reaches 60 days without a DUI, or another DUI occurs. The goal of the plan is to see a 20 percent decrease in DUIs over a three-year period by regularly disseminating information regarding the DUIs that are occurring. The number of DUIs during calendar year 2016 currently sits at six.

There will be three different colored condition indicators known as DUI conditions. Green indicates there has been zero DUIs in the last 60 days, yellow indicates one to three and red indicates four or more. During condition levels yellow and red, the respective unit of the Airman with the DUI will have increased commander intervention actions which may include increased all-calls, and the utilization of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment (ADAPT) sponsored focus groups.

"Driving under the influence is never acceptable, and it will have severe consequences," said Brig. Gen. Paul W. Tibbets IV, the 509th Bomb Wing commander. "Every member of our team is a valuable member, and I hope this effort to increase the social pressures on our Airmen to do the right thing will see real change within our wing and become another way we keep our Airmen safe and mission ready. This truly must be a team effort, and I am confident we will succeed."

For additional information on alcohol abuse, contact the ADAPT office at 660-687-4341. If you have questions about this policy, please contact your supervisor.

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SATURDAY, JULY 16 • 7 p.m.

Me Before You (PG-13)

Adults - \$6.25, children - \$4.00

SUNDAY, JULY 17 • 3 p.m.

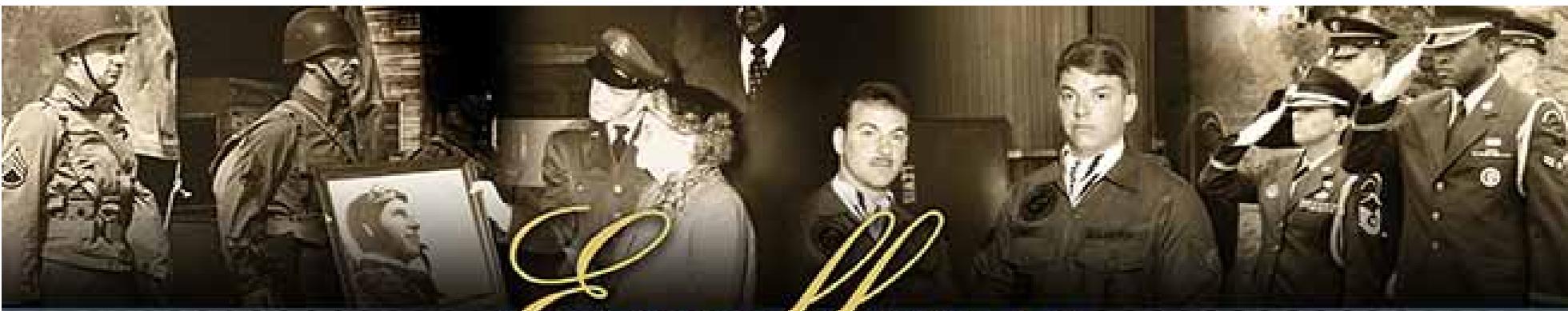
Popstar (R)

Adults - \$6.25

WEDNESDAY, JULY 20 • 2 p.m.

The Angry Birds Movie (PG)

Adults - \$6.25, children - \$4.00



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*Save the date: Saturday, September 17th
at Hangar 52*

2016 Air Force Ball



Diamond Sharp Award



U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Danielle Quilla

U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Robert Palmer, a force support readiness technician with the 509th Force Support Squadron, receives the Diamond Sharp Award at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., July 7, 2016. Palmer was recognized for leading two suicide prevention sessions and four talks on mental health during CAF Day, and earning second place in the Striker Life Half Marathon in addition to volunteering weekly.

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Balfour Beatty Communities Foundation awards academic scholarships to Whiteman Family Homes residents

Balfour Beatty Communities recently recognized Whiteman Family Homes residents Teralyn King, Julia Cheney and Tiffany Wooten, on their Balfour Beatty Communities Foundation (BBCF) academic scholarship awards for the 2016/2017 school year. Balfour Beatty Communities provides residential property management and development services for more than 55 military installations across the United States, including Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo. King will be studying marriage and family counseling at Liberty University, Cheney will be studying psychology at American Military University, and Wooten will be studying elementary education at the University of Central Missouri.

“On behalf of the foundation, I would like to congratulate this year’s hardworking and dedicated scholarship winners,” said Chris Williams, president of the Balfour Beatty Communities Foundation. “The academic and community-driven integrity of our resident applicants is consistently impressive, and we are proud to help support their academic journey and future aspirations.”

The BBCF has awarded 50 academic scholarships for the upcoming 2016/2017 year to residents of properties owned and managed by Balfour Beatty Communities. As part of the foundation’s goal to promote the pursuit of education and a commitment to community leadership, BBCF awards academic scholarships to high school seniors, undergraduate and graduate students attending accredited educational or technical institutions. Scholarship recipients were selected on the basis of demonstrated leadership qualities and a drive toward bettering their community.

The BBCF is a non-profit organization which principally focuses on the post-secondary educational goals of residents who live in communities owned and managed by Balfour Beatty Communities, LLC. Since the scholarship program’s inception in 2009, BBCF has awarded more than 250 academic scholarships. The Foundation is also committed to honoring military personnel – active, wounded and fallen – by supporting organizations that assist military service members and their families. For more information, visit bbcommunitiesfoundation.org.



Courtesy photo
Candi Wagler, Whiteman Family Homes, presents Teralyn King with a scholarship award certificate.



Courtesy photo
Candi Wagler, Whiteman Family Homes, presents Tiffany Wooten with a scholarship award certificate.



Courtesy photo
Candi Wagler, Whiteman Family Homes, presents Julia Cheney with a scholarship award certificate.

Upholding the Legacy of Excellence -- your legacy!

Public Affairs is offering the opportunity for you, members of Team Whiteman (to include active duty, Guard, Reserve, civilian and retired military), to submit commentaries about your personal experiences with or reflections on the 509th Bomb Wing's Legacy of Excellence and what it means to you.

Submissions must be 250-1200 words in length and will be reviewed for content, grammar and style before publication by the Public Affairs staff. Once approved, one commentary will be posted in the Whiteman Warrior base newspaper weekly.



To make a submission, please email the 509th Bomb Wing PA office at 509.bw.pa@us.af.mil. Please include "UTL Commentary" as the subject line. Lastly, please ensure that you include information about yourself, such as your name and rank, job title, and any information that could help tie you to the Legacy.

Photos are accepted! Please ensure that they are either official military photos or scans/digital copies of personal photos.

We look forward to publishing your story!

Load crew member's career comes full circle

By Senior Airman Danielle Quilla
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

Many times Senior NCO's do not have the chance to go back and get their hands dirty, but one master sergeant had the opportunity to see his career come full circle.

"I started my career off loading and I wanted to end my career loading," said Master Sgt. Allen Anderson, an aircraft armament systems mechanic assigned to the 131st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

From June 10 to 30, 2016, Anderson attended the initial certification training to become a "four man," which is the bomber load crew member position responsible for operating the bomb lift truck to transport the munitions to and from an aircraft.

Normally the training is for first term Airmen, but an opening in the course gave the 58-year-old an opportunity to again do what he loves before retiring in 2018.

Anderson began his loading career when he joined the Air National Guard on July 24, 1977.

"Fresh out of high school I decided I wanted to do something with my life," Anderson said.

After taking the Armed Service Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), Anderson learned he was qualified for the job and the guardsmen at Otis Air National Guard Base, Massachusetts, showed him what he would be doing on the flightline.

One month later on Aug. 24, 1977, Anderson left for Basic Military Training and attended technical school at Lowry Air Force Base, Colorado.

Upon completing his training, he returned to Otis to work with a three-member fighter load crew on Aim-4 Falcon missiles. Eventually, he worked his way up from a "two man" to a Load Standardization Crew (LSC) "one man," the leader of the load crew.

In 1990, his civilian position transferred him to St. Louis, Missouri, where he spent 17 years loading until his entire unit was moved to Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, on Oct. 15, 2007, as part of the total force integration, where they worked on the B-2 Spirit.

Once the unit was established in 2008, Anderson was assigned to the back shop where he worked on equipment, 24-month inspections and facilitated moving equipment.

It had been eight years since he had the chance to load so Anderson jumped at the opportunity to attend the initial certification training to become a "four man."

"During his certification, Master Sgt. Anderson worked harder and showed more dedication to learn than most of his counterparts that are a third of his age," said Master Sgt. Andrew Chocha, LSC team chief assigned to the 509th Maintenance Group.

With retirement two years away, Anderson said he was grateful for the opportunity to have his career come full circle.

"I have been in the back shop for a while, so this is a breath of fresh air for me to finish out my career loading," Anderson said. "The Airmen are awesome to load with, and it brings back great memories of my first load crew."



LEFT: U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Allen Anderson, center, poses for a photo with his load crew members at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, January 1998. Anderson was a "one man" for the three member fighter load crew. They loaded Aim-9 Sidewinder and Aim-120 Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missiles onto a McDonnell Douglas F-15A Eagle.



RIGHT: U.S. Air Force Airman Basic Allen Anderson poses for his official Basic Military Training photo at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, Oct. 4, 1977. Anderson has served 39 years and will retire in 2018.



U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Allen Anderson, an aircraft armament systems mechanic assigned to the 131st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, stands beside the rest of his load crew prior to certification training at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., June 28, 2016. Airmen must be certified on each training munition before being allowed to load it onto aircraft.

Courtesy photo



U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Allen Anderson, an aircraft armament systems mechanic assigned to the 131st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, smiles after successfully completing steps for his certification training at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., June 28, 2016. Anderson is certified to load various munitions and now holds the 4-man role on his load crew.



U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Allen Anderson, an aircraft armament systems mechanic assigned to the 131st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, loads a GBU-31 version 1 trainer munition during certification training at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., June 28, 2016. Anderson holds the 4-man role on his load crew team, which gives him control of the jammer during munition loads.



U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Allen Anderson, an aircraft armament systems mechanic assigned to the 131st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, operates an MHU-83 D/E "jammer" during certification training at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., June 28, 2016. Anderson, after serving more than 20 years in the Air Force, decided to end his career how it began, as a weapons loader.

U.S. Air Force photos/Senior Airman Jovan Banks

New Missouri military income tax law

By Capt. Michael Haffner
13th Bomb Squadron

Missouri Senate Bill 814, which provides an exemption from state income taxes for pay earned by active duty service members who are residents of Missouri, was recently signed into law by Gov. Jay Nixon. This change officially takes effect on Aug. 28, 2016 but retroactively applies to wages earned since Jan. 1, 2016.

Those immediately impacted are Missouri residents serving in the active duty component and stationed and/or living inside the state. Missouri residents stationed and serving outside of Missouri were already exempt from paying Missouri state income tax.

Affected personnel are encouraged to visit their local finance office to complete a Form MO W-4 if they want their monthly state income tax withholding to cease. State income tax paid since Jan. 1, 2016 will be refunded to the service member in 2017 when individuals file their 2016 Missouri income tax returns. Residents of other states who serve in the active duty component while living in Missouri, who also have the intent of making Missouri their permanent home and abandoning their old state of legal residence, are also impacted by the new bill.

Prior to visiting the finance office to complete a DD Form 2058 "State of Legal Residence Certificate," members are encouraged to perform an internet search for the document and consider all

of its stipulations. Other recommended actions include, but are not limited to:

- * Visit or call a Missouri county assessor to determine the potential cost of recurring annual Missouri vehicle personal property taxes (e.g., trailers, mobile homes, watercraft, boat motors, aircraft, livestock, farm machinery) may have additional tax implications - (see <http://www.jacksongov.org/Faq.aspx?QID=134>);

- * Learn more about how Missouri taxes military retired pay versus other states (see <http://dor.mo.gov/personal/whatsnew/>);

- * Determine if your spouse will need to change his or her residence due to differences in state taxation and the legal complexities of spouses being residents of different states;

- * Find out if there are differences in estate planning and probate laws; you may need to update your will and/or trust;

- * Examine differences in state-specific college benefits, tuition rates, and/or educational savings funds, both for you and your dependents; and

- * Decide which state you want to vote in for state and local issues.

Whiteman's Legal Office welcomes appointments to help identify and discuss factors affecting personal situations. The office is located in the 509th Bomb Wing Headquarters Building, Suite 203. It can be reached at 660-687-6809, with walk-in hours between 0800-1000 on Tuesdays and 1300-1500 on Thursdays.

Air Force Medical Service embraces patient centeredness



By Air Force Surgeon General
Public Affairs

FALLS CHURCH, Va. -- The Air Force Medical Service (AFMS) is working to increase patient and family-centered care throughout all operations. Patient centeredness is critical to AFMS' delivery of safe, effective, high quality care. But what is patient centeredness?

"Patient centeredness is respecting our patients' preferences, needs, and values, and making sure patients' values are guiding all clinical decisions," said Col. (Dr.) John Oh, chief, Preventive Medicine, Air Force Medical Support Agency.

The colonel was quick to add, "Supporting patient centeredness is like saying you like puppies. Who is going to say, 'I don't support patient-and family-centered care?'" Yet too often the needs of the health care system drive the delivery of care. Col. Oh cited one extreme example of when he tried to schedule an appointment with a civilian provider years ago. "I was told the provider scheduled patients in sequence so that there would be no gaps. So the first caller would be given an appointment at 1300, the second would get 1315, etc. This was not a system designed around needs of patients!"

While that may be an extreme example, there remain many ways to improve patient centeredness today. Removing limits on family visiting hours is an example of a patient and

family-centered best practice, according to Lt. Col. William Fecke, chief, Medical Support Programs Division, Air Force Medical Support Agency. Allowing families to visit their hospitalized loved ones 24/7 is recommended by the Institute for Patient and Family-Centered Care and the National Patient Safety Foundation. "Patients and families are our partners in making sure health care is safe and effective, and we should welcome their active engagement," he said.

Improving patient activation and engagement, as part of patient centeredness, also leads to better outcomes and safer care. "Activated patients are less likely to be readmitted, experience a medical error, suffer poor care coordination and lose confidence in the health care system," said Col. Timothy Stevens, patient centeredness project officer at Air Force Medical Support Agency.

Col. Oh said patients have access to an increasing amount of health information on the internet, that when obtained from reputable and quality sources, can be a force multiplier. "Providers sometimes joke about patients coming in with a list of 20 things they read about on the internet, but in general we should welcome and encourage patients to get more involved in their care and partner with us. We can provide safe, effective care if patients are comfortable speaking up, asking questions, voicing concerns and expressing their preferences."

509TH BOMB WING 2015-2016

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TECH. SGT. KIRKLAND WALKER
509th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

Senior Enlisted Nominee

SENIOR MASTER SGT. DAVID HALL
509th Security Forces Squadron

Junior Officer Nominee

1ST LT. GRANT HATFIELD
509th Civil Engineer Squadron

Senior Officer Nominee

LT. COL. CHRISTOPHER JOYCE
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Beat the Boss

The Beat the Boss program is a monthly PT test competition among 509th Bomb Wing units that will recognize outstanding teamwork and devotion to fitness at the Squadron level. Active duty 509th Airmen who score the same or higher than the commander's score of 95.4% will earn a one-day pass, and those who score a 100% win a one-day pass and one of the commander's coins.

Here are the latest Beat the Boss results:



1st Lt. Emily Keyes, 20th ATKS • 100%

Capt. Phillip Demeter, 393d BS • 98.6%

Lt. Col. Todd Riddle, 303d FS • 98.3%

Senior Airman Omar Fonseca, 509th SFS • 97.6%

Staff Sgt. Donovan Garrett, 509th SFS • 97.3%

1st Lt. Justine Erickson, 20th ATKS • 97.2%

Airman Alexander Wolston, 509th SFS • 96.8%

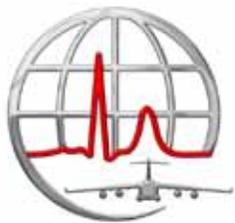
Airman 1st Class Jose Rangel, 509th FSS • 96.4%

Airman 1st Class Joseph Dobra, 509th SFS • 95.7%

Senior Airman Matthew Eason, 509th CS • 95.7%

Staff Sgt. Logan Frazier, 509th SFS • 95.7%





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Belardo assumes command of 131st AMXS



U.S. Air National Guard photo/Airman 1st Class Halley Burgess
Lt. Col. Michael Belardo receives the 131st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron guidon from Col. Kimbra Sterr, 131st Maintenance Group commander, during a change of command ceremony at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, July 10, 2016.

By Senior Airman Nathan Dampf
131st Bomb Wing Public Affairs

Lt. Col. Michael Belardo assumed command of the 131st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron during the Missouri Air National Guard's 131st Bomb Wing (BW) July drill weekend.

Belardo, previously the director of operations for the 509th Operations Support Squadron, is replacing outgoing squadron commander Lt. Col. Matthew Calhoun, who will serve as the new 131st BW vice commander.

"I am honored and excited to serve and lead the men and women of the squadron," Belardo said. "They have continually demonstrated their ability to make the B-2 ready for war and they are the professional knowledge bedrock of Whiteman and the B-2."

In his previous role, Belardo was responsible for the combat readiness of more than 200 Citizen-Airmen. He earned his commission through the United States Air Force Academy in May 2000. He was competitively selected to fly the B-2 in the 13th Bomb Squadron in 2005. He joined the Missouri Air National Guard as the assistant director of operations for the 393rd Bomb Squadron and became the first Missouri Air

Guard nuclear command and control procedures instructor.

"Having the opportunity to command a squadron, especially one like the 131st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron that has a long history from Charles Lindbergh to today, is a once-in-a-lifetime chance," he said. "I am humbled and honored."

Col. Kimbra Sterr, 131st Maintenance Group commander, was the presiding officer for the ceremony. She described Belardo as an officer who improved every mission and person he ever worked with.

Calhoun also commended Belardo and informed the squadron they are in good hands.

"I could not be more thrilled to turn over command to Lt. Col. Belardo," Calhoun said. "He is a family man, and I can think of no one better to lead this squadron that has accomplished so much – another Fairchild Trophy and participation of our drill-status Guardsmen in the latest nuclear inspection."

Belardo was joined by his wife, children and parents at the ceremony. He thanked them for their support.

"My wife is my foundation," he told all in attendance. "We have four sons and she is a truly unselfish person that has, at every step, put our family first."

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