

WARRIOR

MILITARY MUSCLE

131ST AIRMAN FIRST IN FITNESS PG.8



WHITEMAN AFB

PG.5

THE ELDEST SON

DEFENSOR VINDEXTM

Chief Settle moves up to Command Chief role

By Senior Airman Nathan Dampf
131st Bomb Wing Public Affairs

Chief Master Sgt. Jessica Settle took the reins as the top enlisted professional of the Missouri Air National Guard's 131st Bomb Wing (BW) during August drill.

Settle started her career in 1996 as an active duty aerospace medical service specialist and transitioned to the Missouri Air National Guard in 2008 as a drill-status guardsman, while also working as a civilian with Missouri's Department of Health and State Emergency Management Agency in Jefferson City, Missouri.

"Chief Settle will bring a new perspective to our wing's enlisted force," said Col. Ken Eaves, commander of the 131 BW. "Having worked as the 131st Medical Group (MDG) superintendent, as human resources advisor for the wing and with SEMA, I have no doubt that she is ready to help mentor our Airmen to complete our state and federal missions."

Settle credits her success to her willingness to try new things. In addition to working in operations, she served in a variety of medical positions; as an emergency management exercise NCO in charge with the 509th Bomb Wing; as human resources advisor and most recently as the 131st MDG superintendent.

"Throughout my career, I've had the opportunity to challenge myself with multiple job roles," said Settle. "Now, I look forward to visiting with our Citizen-Airmen, hearing more about their roles and successes and encouraging them to take advantage of everything the Guard has to offer."

Settle says her first focus will be ensuring the 131st continues to excel in performing the nuclear mission, while staying ready to help our state neighbors when needed by the Missouri governor.

"I also want to build trust with our people," Settle said. "We'll be launching our new NCO Orientation in October, and then Airmen and Senior NCO Orientation will follow in the near future. All of these courses will help build leader-Airmen who can hopefully see the benefit in growth and stepping out of their comfort zones to have the same opportunities I had in my enlisted career."



Chief Master Sgt. Jessica Settle

Faces of the 131st Bomb Wing

Name: Brittney Fisher

Rank: airman first class

Hometown: Troy, Missouri

What is your military specialty?

3S0X1, Personnel Specialist.

What is your civilian occupation?

I am the commander's support staff for the 131st Bomb Wing Mission Support Group commander, Col. Michael Jurries[TP1].

Why did you join the Air National Guard?

I joined the Air National Guard (ANG) because I was at a point at my life where I didn't know what I wanted to do. I had always wanted to join the military but just had never done it, so I saw this as my opportunity to join. At first I was mostly in it for the schooling benefits, but now that has changed. The ANG has been one of the best decisions I have ever made. I was lucky enough to get a full-time job right out of technical training. The ANG has opened up so many more opportunities for me and I wouldn't change a thing.

What do you like best about your job?

I love the fact that I get to meet so many new people. I also enjoy building relationships with my peers and learning new things all the time.

What do you enjoy most about being in the military?

I enjoy meeting new people, being a part of something bigger than myself and serving my country.

What are your favorite ways to spend your free time?

I love to do anything outdoors: fishing, mountain biking, riding dirt bikes, kayaking, hunting, boating, softball, etc. Spending



Airman 1st Class Brittney Fisher

time with my fiancé, friends and family is also important to me.

Where do you hope to see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?

In five years I hope to see myself graduated from Airman Leadership School and being promoted to staff sergeant. I also hope to be graduating from college with my bachelor's degree, then working towards my master's. I would like to do something in the medical field. I also see myself starting a family.

What is something that is on your bucket list?

I would like to go to Alaska and do some hunting and visit Colorado to go skiing.

Do you have any interesting skills?

I am very organized. I am also quite the fisherwoman (I always out-fish my fiancé). I am into fitness and living a healthy lifestyle and I am a karaoke queen.

Tell us about your favorite military memory.

One of my favorite military memories was when I went to Camp Clark this past year and did State Emergency Duty training. While at Camp Clark, I got to do things I've never done before. I enjoyed doing the HMMV rollover and driving the HMMV's. Getting to shoot the M-16 and qualifying as Marksman was pretty exciting for me. Meeting new faces and connecting with people in our unit that I hadn't met before was awesome.

THE WARRIOR Editorial Staff

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

Capt. Karl Wiest
Chief, Public Affairs

2nd Lt. Matthew Van Wagenen
Public Affairs Officer

Airman 1st Class Michaela Slanchik
Editor

Senior Airman Danielle Quilla
Senior Airman Joel Pfister
Senior Airman Jovan Banks
Airman 1st Class Jazmin Smith
Photojournalists

The Sedalia Democrat
Layout and Design

Published by the **Sedalia Democrat**, a private firm in no way connected with the U.S. Air Force, under exclusive written contract with Whiteman Air Force Base.

This civilian enterprise Air Force newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military services. Contents of **The Warrior** are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Air Force.

The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts or supplements, does not constitute endorsement of the products or services advertised by the Department of Defense, the Department of the Air Force or the **Sedalia Democrat**.

Everything advertised in this publication shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other non-merit factor of the purchaser, user or patron. Editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the Public Affairs office of 509th Bomb Wing, Whiteman Air Force Base. All photographs are Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated.

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.

To advertise in *The Warrior*, call the *Sedalia Democrat* at 1-800-892-7856.

On the cover

U.S. Air Force photo/
Airman 1st Class Michaela R. Slanchik
U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Ricardo Zuniga, a 131st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron weapons load team chief, poses with a weighted plate at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., Sept. 7, 2016. Zuniga recently placed first in a bodybuilding competition and he also helps his clients reach their fitness goals.

NEWS BRIEFS



U.S. AIR FORCE
EagleEyes
WATCH.REPORT.PROTECT.

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.

Found property

Keys, wallets, bicycles, jewelry and other items have been turned in as found property to Security Forces Investigation Section. To inquire about lost property, go to building 711, room 305, or call Detective Steven Scott at 660-687-5342.

WEATHER

| Today | Saturday |
|---------------|----------------|
| Storms Likely | Becoming Sunny |
| Hi 85 | Hi 75 |
| Lo 71 | Lo 61 |
| Sunday | Monday |
| Sunny | Sunny |
| Hi 76 | Hi 82 |
| Lo 53 | Lo 60 |

Whiteman Airman receives 2016 JINSA Grateful Nation Award



U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Danielle Quilla
U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Michael Becker, the explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) flight chief assigned to the 509th Civil Engineer Squadron, poses next to a F6A robot at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., Aug. 22, 2016. Becker is the Air Force recipient of the 2016 Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs Grateful Nation Award for his superior conduct in the war on terrorism and designing new state-of-the-art robotic systems to keep airmen safe inside assault vehicles during missions.

By Senior Airman Danielle Quilla
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

Every year since 2003, the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA) Grateful Nation Award is presented to six members, one from each branch of the U.S. Armed Forces and the U.S. Special Operations Command, who are recognized for having distinguished themselves through superior conduct in the War on Terrorism.

The Air Force recipient for the 2016 Grateful Nation (JINSA) Award is Senior Master Sgt. Michael Becker, the explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) flight chief assigned to the 509th Civil Engineer Squadron at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri.

"This outstanding senior non-commissioned officer sets the standard which all Airmen should emulate," stated Maj. Gen. Richard M. Clark, the Eighth Air Force commander. "His outstanding service in defense of our nation since the terror attacks on 9/11 is an inspiration to all and worthy of recognition with this prestigious award."

In his four combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan within a five-year time span since 2005, Becker saved numerous lives by accomplishing more than 700 combat missions.

On September 27, 2007, Becker and his team were awarded

the Army Commendation Medal and the Air Force Combat Medal for saving two soldiers struck by a roadside bomb. The incident occurred in 2005 just outside of Forward Operating Base (FOB) Summerall, Iraq.

"A suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated on the Army truck immediately behind our EOD vehicle, destroying it and setting it on fire," said Becker. "Myself and two other Air Force EOD technicians exited our vehicle and ran to the struck Army truck. We rendered immediate first aid to stabilize the soldiers and cross loaded them into our vehicle for rapid transport back to the FOB for higher level medical treatment."

Their quick actions led to one of the soldiers eventually returning to combat.

In addition to this event, Becker executed Air Force EOD's first amphibious Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (armored vehicle) assault to recover and repatriate soldier's remains, and devoted himself to modernizing the force. He was part of designing new state-of-the-art robotics systems, such as a remote robot retrieval system, which kept Airmen safe inside assault vehicles.

On November 29, 2016, Becker and his family will travel to the District of Columbia to be presented the 2016 Grateful Nation Award at the JINSA's 34th Annual Awards Dinner.

Reel Time Theaters

We're saving a seat for you.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 9 • 7 p.m.

Suicide Squad (PG-13)

Adults - \$6.25, children - \$4.00

SATURDAY, SEPT. 10 • 7 p.m.

Advanced Free Screening (PG)

Adults - \$6.25, children - \$4.00

SUNDAY, SEPT. 11 • 3 p.m.

Sausage Party (R)

Adults - \$6.25

AF WRITING COACH

2016 Writing and Professional Development Seminars

Presented by Chuck Diven, Lt Col, USAF (ret.)

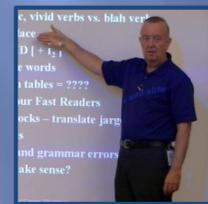


• Seven Skills for Air Force Performance Reporting and Beyond
- Learn user-friendly, step-by-step bullet-building methods for your EPR/OPR and for your career beyond the military

• Grab Your PRF by the Horns!
- Be ready for that one piece of paper on which your promotion and career depend



• Proactive Transition: Four Circles for a Successful Job Hunt
- Find the sweet spot of your job hunt and make your resume stand out from the crowd



• Write to Win: Quarterly Awards (Almost) Without Pain
- Plan ahead and produce award-winning packages without last-minute panic

• Riding Out the Storm, or How to be 10% Happier (Tornado Optional)
- Practical techniques from a tornado survivor to help weather life's storms and be happier in the process

For more information: coachchuck@afwritingcoach.com; 405-308-5277

"Really excellent and relevant!" – Capt, Elmendorf AFB

"Love the examples, your humor, and techniques" – MSgt, Tinker AFB

"Great. I highly recommend it." – Col, McConnell AFB

"Very straight-forward and interesting" – SRA, Whiteman AFB

"Outstanding seminar!" – SSgt, Eglin AFB

"Teach this class to everyone!" – Capt, Creech AFB

ITINERARY:

Sept. 13: Unit focus: 20th ATKS/509th MSG

9:30 - 11:00 a.m. - OPR/PRF Session

12:30-2:00 p.m. - EPR (All Ranks)

2:00-3:00 p.m. - 1206 Session (All Ranks)

4:15-5:15 p.m. - Riding Out the Storm, or How to be 10% Happier (Tornado Optional)

Sept. 14: Unit focus: 509th MDG/OG/131st BW

12:30 -2:00 p.m. - OPR/PRF Session

2:00 - 3:30 p.m. - EPR (All Ranks)

3:30 -4:00 p.m. - 1206 Session (All Ranks)

4:00 -5:00 p.m. - Riding Out the Storm, or How to be 10% Happier (Tornado Optional)

Sept. 15: 509th MXG/OPEN BASE (PDC)

9:30 - 11:00 a.m. - OPR/PRF Session

12:30 - 2:00 p.m. - EPR (All Ranks)

2:00 - 3:00 p.m. - 1206 Session (All Ranks)

4:15 - 5:15 p.m. - Riding Out the Storm, or How to be 10% Happier (Tornado Optional)

Force Protection is everyone's business

By the Antiterrorism office
509th Security Forces Squadron

The further we get from the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the more complacent people seem to become about the threat from global terrorism. Without security and law enforcement personnel at every turn, it takes a total team effort to protect the Whiteman AFB community. Each person, regardless of their military affiliation, plays a vital role in the protection of the base.

"Preserving the mission and protecting the families here at Whiteman AFB is a job we all share. As world tensions rise, we must all remain vigilant." Said Lt. Col. Justin Secrest, 509th Security Forces Squadron (SFS) commander and Wing Antiterrorism officer. Remember to be aware of your surroundings at all times and report anything suspicious through the Eagle Eyes program or to the Police Services Desk."

Unfortunately, terrorism has become a grim reality and the number of attempted attacks has increased over the past years, according to Mr. Robert Striegel, Chief, Antiterrorism/Investigations 509th SFS.

"Our intelligence and law enforcement communities are doing a tremendous job thwarting many potential terrorist plots; however, as terrorists change their tactics, techniques and procedures, we too must change our methods of protecting the community," Striegel said. "We may not always agree with some security precautions put in place but they are there to ensure the safety and security of you and your family."

In today's environment, members must not allow

themselves to become complacent. By being alert and notifying law enforcement professionals of any suspicious activities on or near the base, members can help prevent incidents from happening. "The U.S. Air Force has a program called the "Eagle Eyes" program, which encourages all personnel to be aware and report suspicious behavior to the proper authorities.

Signs to look for and report:

Surveillance -- Someone recording or monitoring base activities.

Elicitation -- Any person or organization attempting to gain information about military operations or people. This includes through the use of social media networks.

Suspicious Persons Out of Place -- People who do not seem to belong in the workplace, neighborhood or anywhere else.

Suspicious Mail -- Be alert for suspicious letters or packages that arrive at your office or home. Consider mail suspect if it has no return address; markings are poorly typed or written; it has excessive postage or tape; an unknown powder or substance is present on it; the package is rigid, bulky, lopsided or uneven; it is addressed to title only, instead of an individual; if there are any protruding wires; or if there are oily stains, discoloration or odors present.

If you receive a suspicious package, do not handle it. Isolate it, and do not open, smell or taste it. Acti-

vate your unit's emergency plan, notify your supervisor and contact OSI and SFS immediately.

Test of Security -- Any attempts to measure reaction times to security breaches or to penetrate physical security barriers or procedures.

Acquiring Supplies -- Purchasing or stealing explosives, weapons, ammunition, uniforms, badges or any other controlled items.

Dry Runs -- Putting people into position and moving them about without actually committing a terrorist act.

Deploying Assets -- People and supplies getting into position to commit the act.

And finally, always remember to practice good operational security. This applies to military members and their families. Posting sensitive information on social media sites may seem harmless however, complaining about work schedules or disrupting weekend plans on social media sites such as Facebook could paint an operational picture for our enemy. This could put people at risk if put in the wrong hands.

Nobody wakes up thinking they will be a victim of a terrorist attack. Through continual awareness by the Whiteman community we can ensure the safety and security of our families.

To report suspicious or criminal activity, call Eagle Eyes at 660-687-3700.

The Eldest Son

A reminder that we were first

By Ms. Morgan Hildebrand
509th Bomb Wing Historian

When I left for basic training in 2006 my father handed me a small card that read "Stay Focused, Pay Attention, Everyone Has Done It Before, They Keep Score To See Who Wins, Proud Of Ya." Today I keep that card framed on my desk, and when I have a bad day (they happen) I remember to Stay Focused, because there are no dead ends. When I am taking on a new challenge I am reminded to Pay Attention, because this is an opportunity to learn as well as to grow. And when I want to give up, I remember to look at the score board and keep pressing forward, because someone is counting on me, and I will not lose. It is when I see the Eldest Son symbol that this idea that Everyone Has Done It Before takes on new meaning.

Made official in 1952, the 509th Bomb Wing emblem displays two wings, open and turned outward as a sign that we come in peace, with the atomic cloud burst between them as a reference to our atomic past and our use of atomic power for deterrence today. On a scroll across the bottom, the motto of the 509th reads "Defensor Vindex" which translates to Defender Avenger. In other words, we have and will. Below the wings and cloud burst, just above the bold motto sits a small red tripod, this is the symbol of the eldest son.

For the 509th Bomb Wing that red tripod

is our way of saying to the world that we were first. In 1945 our founders were asked to change the world, to establish peace through ultimate force. These men understood the risks, but they didn't quit or run away. They had a mission to complete, and regardless of how hard it was going to be – mentally and physically – they were going to serve proudly at the call of their nation. Today, we all have the luxury of knowing someone else carried the burden of taking the first step. Making the world a safer place is not a very glamorous job, but we know that if and when we are ever called upon, we can and will be the ones that get the job done – because it is us that have Done It Before.

Marks of cadency are the easily recognizable symbols we use to adorn our heraldic devices. Worn as patches, embroidered on flags, engraved into wood and steel, painted on buildings and aircraft, and depicted on coins, these symbols represent not just those that came before us, but that the journey continues through us. I do not believe that any one working with or serving in the military is unaware of our collective legacy. How well versed one may or may not be with the details of our past is not an indication of how deeply they care about our organization, or a measurement of how successful they will be in their career. Rather it is how each of us exemplifies the meaning behind these symbols that will strengthen our character and the future of our legacy.

"Stay Focused, Pay Attention, Everyone Has Done It Before, They Keep Score To See Who Wins, Proud Of Ya."





With the fiscal year coming to an end October 1, 2016 Airmen with excess leave, leave counting over 60 days, are at risk of losing them. Congress recognizes that military requirements may prevent members from using their planned leave. Thus, the law permits members to accrue a maximum of 60 days (the maximum that may be carried over into the next fiscal year [FY]). The expression "use or lose" means that leave in excess of 60 days is lost if not used by the end of the FY (30 September).

END OF YEAR CLOSEOUT MESSAGE FY2016 (DEGRADED OPERATION)

In preparation for the end-of-year close out for fiscal year (FY) 2016, Enterprise Solution-System (ES-S) and Integrated Maintenance Data System (IMDS) will be down on Sept. 29, 2016, at the normally scheduled time for End of Day processing. Please be reminded that only priority 02/03 requests will be accepted during this time. Normal processing should resume Oct. 3, 2016.

For Flight Line Support, please contact Aircraft Part Store at 687-7137

For all other requirements, please contact 687-1165 or the 509th LRS.custsvc@us.af.mil

If you have any further questions, please contact the following:

**Master Sgt. Maydanell Lim at 687-4074/
maydanell.lim@us.af.mil**

or

Master Sgt. Ted Pyle at 687-1009/ted.pyle@us.af.mil

**Tech. Sgt. Stephen Cook at 687-4066/
stephen.cook.10@us.af.mil**

**Tech. Sgt Vincent Baugh at 687-7137/
vincent.baugh@us.af.mil**

**Tech. Sgt Jason Wynn at 687-2681/
jason.wynn.1@us.af.mil**

Every Airman plays a role in suicide prevention

By J.D. Levite

Air Force Surgeon General Public Affairs

FALLS CHURCH, Va. -- The Air Force is determined to prevent suicide, but you don't need to be a specialist or doctor to do that. Sometimes all it takes is starting a conversation. Everyone has a role to play. That's a key part of the Department of Defense's #BeThere Campaign, which encourages making a difference through every day connections.

"We're sending the message that it's ok to have problems and it's ok to talk about them. Having problems and talking about them with people you work with openly is a sign of strength, not weakness," said Maj. Joel Foster, Chief of Air Force Deployment Health who supports the Suicide Prevention Program with annual training. "The fact that everyone can intervene is part of the messaging we're trying to promote. Every Airman is a censor."

He said Airmen should look out for certain red flags, like changes in mood or behavior, substance abuse, indications of problems at home or domestic violence. Problems like these can lead to thoughts of suicide, but you're only going to notice if you're paying attention. For this reason, supervisors, commanders, first sergeants, and peers need to get to know their Airmen more personally because they're the ones Airmen with problems should feel comfortable turning to for help.

"Supervisors and commanders really need to get involved with their Airmen and get to know them personally so they can identify when things are not going well," Foster said. "They can see subtle changes in their behavior and in their personality and in their work productivity so they can intervene early and help that Airman get the tools and the right resources that they need."

Commanders have a huge role to play in preventing suicides because they have such a large amount of influence, said Foster.

"They have the influence to create an environment that is conducive to help-seeking behavior, to promoting a healthy lifestyle and encouraging a sense of balance in life," he said. "If we have all of those factors operating, then Airmen will feel a sense of connectedness. They'll



U.S. Air Force graphic

September is Suicide Prevention Month. You don't need to be a specialist or doctor to help prevent suicide. Sometimes all it takes is starting a conversation. Be there for your Wingman.

have a strong support system to buffer against the stressors of life."

There are already a number of resources for Airmen in need, such as Wingman Online or Military One Source, and the Air Force is introducing new initiatives all the time. For example, Airmen always have access to mental health clinics on base when they need help. Plus, they can always find Military and Family Life Consultants at Airman and Family Readiness Centers.

Something new the Air Force is doing is embedding Military and Family Life Consultants directly into the squadrons. MFLCs don't replace mental health or medical services, but they do provide access to a short-term counselling service. Airmen with embedded MFLCs will have increased access to this service at the point where they need it.

"We're decreasing the barriers, decreasing the stigma, increasing availability and increasing the use of services," Foster said. "They know the culture of the squadron they're a part of and that makes it easier for Airmen to trust them and feel like they can go to them."

He said ideally by catching things early or referring Airmen to the appropriate care at the right time, MFLCs could help Airmen in all four areas of Air Force resiliency by keeping them physically, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually fit.

"The bottom line here is if you have your life well-ordered, and you are en-

gaged in all four domains of Airmen fitness, suicide is not something you would resort to."

The Air Force is also collaborating with chaplains, who have 100% confidentiality when Airmen need someone to talk to about the troubles they're facing. Foster said they're working with the Chief of Chaplains to give chaplains the tools to enhance their ability to assess suicidal risk.

He said, "We're hoping to give them the tools to be more effective in evaluating the level of risk of Airmen. Then they can use that information to inform Airmen about the next steps to take and what they need to do to get the right services."

Foster said recent studies have shown when one person commits suicide it can impact up to 100 other people that they knew and worked with, and eventually those numbers can impact productivity and readiness. If one suicide can impact that many people, then it's important for an organization like the Air Force that values its people to develop concrete ways to prevent it.

"Every Airman matters and every single Airman has a role to play and makes a difference," Foster said.

Airmen should think about all the different ways they can #BeThere for friends, family, fellow service members, and veterans. Other resources you can use for yourself or someone you know are the Wingman Toolkit and the National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273-8255.



131st Airman first in fitness despite having to relearn to walk

By Senior Airman Nathan Dampf
131st Bomb Wing

"If you don't start taking care of yourself, you may never walk again."

Doctors said this to Tech. Sgt. Ricardo Zuniga in 2006 after a head-on motorcycle accident nearly took his life.

"I broke four ribs, three vertebrae and my sternum," said Zuniga, a weapons load team chief with the 131st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. "When the doctors looked at the x-rays, they found that my spinal cord was pinched. They had to do an emergency surgery to remove the weight off of it."

On July 2 of that year, Zuniga, on active duty at the time, was riding his motorcycle through the mountains near Aviano Air Base, Italy. A van rounded a curved road, veered into the Airman's lane and hit him head on. Zuniga flew off his motorcycle and through the van's windshield.

After a one-hour life-flight helicopter ride to the hospital, the 25-year-old Airman had to undergo multiple surgeries, and was bedridden for weeks.

"I couldn't walk," said Zuniga. "I had to be bathed in bed and fed by someone else. It was very difficult."

His battle to recover was a tough one. He spent 25 days in the hospital, and did physical therapy two or three hours daily for three months.

His doctors said his current weight put too much pressure on his spine. His weight was affecting his recovery.

"I ate and drank what I wanted," said Zuniga. "The doctors instructed me not to get out

of shape, or it would have been very painful. That's when they said it may even prevent me from walking again."

Zuniga accepted the challenge to lose weight. For three months he used a walker to relearn how to walk. Despite the pain he still experienced, he wanted to extend his Air Force career.

"I was almost medically boarded," Zuniga said. "To not be, I was told I needed to pass a PT (Air Force physical fitness test) test with no waiver. So, I quit drinking and started working out and eating right. I lost 30 pounds and scored an 85 on the PT test."

In the years since, he's consistently scored Excellent on each annual PT test.

Today, he chooses to devote his time to train for - and win - body building competitions. He competed in two competitions at the Whiteman Classic held in November at the Missouri State Fairgrounds in Sedalia. Nearly 200 people and 20 competitors took part in the first-of-its-kind event held in the area.

"I placed first in body building and second in physique," Zuniga said.

Zuniga also took second place in two separate categories during June's Muscle Mayhem event in Kansas City, Missouri. After turning his own physical fitness habits around, other Airmen now seek his advice on how to reach such an impressive physical condition.

"It's exciting because I can show the people I'm working with that I'm doing the same thing I'm talking about with them. I have to walk the walk."

Zuniga says he enjoys helping others and showing what that type of motivation can do.

"I've helped over 100 people online and about 20 face-to-face," he said. "I help them train for PT tests."

Because he's gone from one extreme to another, he says he's better able to motivate those who ask for help. He shows them pictures of his motorcycle accident and his scarred back from the surgeries.

"I don't like excuses," he said. "I ask them to come up with reasons why they are going to get the job done instead of excuses for not doing it. We all have 24 hours in a day and we have the choice how to utilize them."

Zuniga's physical fitness success is nothing but outstanding, and his performance in the 131st Bomb Wing has been recognized as well, his leadership said.

"His drive is not limited to his work capacity, but his personal life as well," said Chief Master Sgt. John Flaughter, the 131st wing weapons manager. "It is felt through our shop. He wants to be the best and strives to help others be their best. Others look to him as a leader and are always asking him questions that may be work related or personal.

"Tech. Sgt. Zuniga is a straightforward, hardworking Airman," continued Flaughter. "He is diligent in his job and has a strong attention to detail. He's always encouraging others and ready to help."

Zuniga has been working on the B-2 Spirit aircraft for 10 years and helped the wing pass the Nuclear Surety Inspection in August 2013. His continuity with the aircraft ensures that the Missouri Air National Guard continues to provide trained and ready forces to Whiteman's total-force team for all of its strategic deterrence and assurance missions.

Although his life path changed on a mountainside road a decade ago, Zuniga said he hopes that others see how physical fitness can help them conquer other life challenges and excel in all aspects of life.

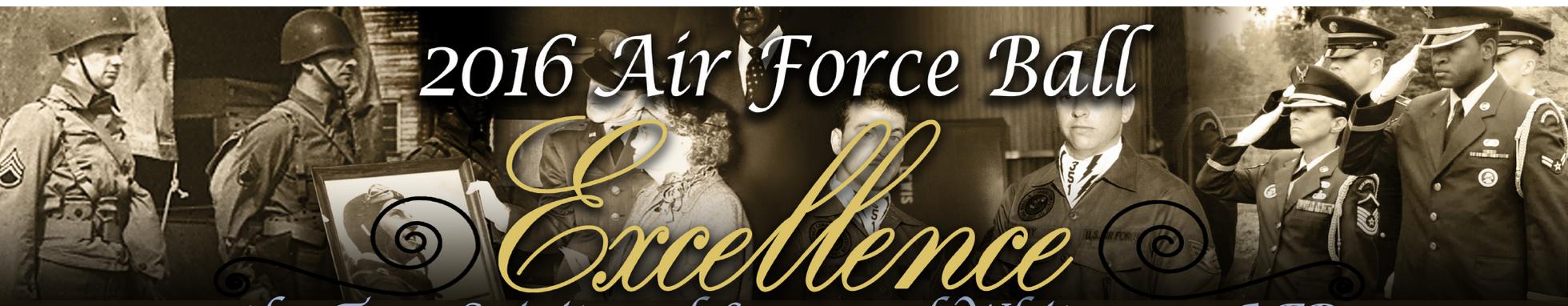
"Ultimately, we all have one life. It's up to us to choose to live it."



Above: Tech. Sgt. Ricardo Zuniga, 131st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron weapons load team chief, inspects a V3 Joint Direct Attack Munition before a practice load on the weapons load trainer at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri. Zuniga, who had to relearn to walk after a motorcycle accident in 2006, has worked on the B-2 Spirit since his recovery after the accident and was part of the 131st Bomb Wing's Nuclear Surety Inspection in August 2013.

Left: Tech. Sgt. Ricardo Zuniga and Staff Sgt. Jake Smith, both weapons loaders in the 131st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, workout during a break at the fitness center on Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri. Zuniga, who battled through a life-threatening motorcycle accident by using bodybuilding, now uses his talents to promote healthy lifestyles with other Airmen he works with.

U.S. Air Force photos/Senior Airman Nathan Dampf



2016 Air Force Ball

Excellence

the True Spirit and Legacy of Whiteman AFB

Saturday, September 17th at Hangar 52

social begins at 5:30 p.m. ceremony starts at 7 p.m.

Dress for the event

Military: Mess Dress or Semi-formal

Civilian: Formal attire

contact your unit POC to purchase tickets



**SERVANT LEADERSHIP
LECTURE SERIES –
THE IKE SKELTON
LECTURE**

**A story of persistence and
overcoming adversity,
inspiring others to
keep an open mind
and push through life's
obstacles.**



CEDRIC KING

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 21

9 a.m. & 2 p.m.

UCM Hendricks Hall

A free ticket is required for admission.

Tickets available at the Central Tickets Box Office weekdays,
9 a.m.-noon, beginning Wednesday, Sept. 14 through Tuesday,
Sept. 20 and 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 21.
The Box Office is located in the University of Central Missouri
Administration Building, 100B.

Please call 660-543-8888, or visit ucmo.edu/series,
for parking and additional information.



Chief's Choice Award winner recognized



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

Senior Airman Jennifer Dehn, a bioenvironmental engineering journeyman from the 509th Medical Operations Squadron, receives a Chief's Choice Award at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., Aug. 31, 2016. Dehn is responsible for Whiteman's Hazard Communication (HAZCOM) program, where she met with 29 shop supervisors to identify discrepancies and assist them in developing HAZCOM plans for their shops. Despite a 23 percent manning loss, she led an 11-day noise dosimetry test and certified 12 hearing protection devices thus protecting 196 personnel from excessive noise. Dehn also participated in an Airman's Council initiative by collecting toys and blankets for a local domestic violence shelter.

Commissary open Mondays!
Starting **Sept. 12, 2016** through the duration of the DFAC closure.



FULFILLING OUR NATION'S PROMISE

POW/MIA 24 Hr Run

15-16 September 2016 at Ike Skelton Park
Hosted by: Whiteman AFB Tier II

Opening Ceremony
from 1100-1130 on 15 September 2016

24 Hour Run

Closing Ceremony
from 1100-1130 on 16 September 2016

POCs Information:

SSgt Shiantee Rivers
687-5736

SSgt Tashonna Brown
687-1397



www.dpaa.mil



NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY
SEPTEMBER 16, 2016