

WARRIOR



REMEMBERED

GONE BUT ALWAYS

TEAM WHITEMAN HONORS FALLEN AIRMEN

► PG.8

MY FIRST FATHER'S DAY

AIRMAN REFLECTS DURING FIRST FATHER'S DAY

PG.2

FLYING HIGH

WHITEMAN AIRMAN OF THE YEAR AWARDED INCENTIVE FLIGHT

PG.4



My first Father's Day

By Staff Sgt. Joel Pfiester

509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

It was exactly this time last year when I found out news that would change my life forever. Now, I am celebrating my first Father's Day as a dad.

It's crazy to think about how much has happened between then and now—it still feels like I just received the news.

My girlfriend, Casey, and I had been in a long distance relationship for a little more than a year. Having known each other since the third grade, we were each other's first crush and had reconnected after all these years. I traveled from Missouri to my home state, Florida, to spend time with Casey, which eventually blossomed into me taking leave to see her, or her taking time off to visit me here each month.

It was on June 12, 2017 when I received a message from her. I was leaving work for the day and she sent me a photo of two positive pregnancy tests. As soon as Casey got off work, she called me. I'm not sure I'd ever been more excited to hear anything in my life. We were both at a loss for words with an overwhelming sense of excitement and happiness. But the feelings were also accompanied by a sense of panic.

You see, I was slated to deploy at the end of the following month, which meant I would miss nearly all of the pregnancy, and potentially the birth of my first child. On top of that, there were many other factors causing me stress over the situation. We were still in a long distance relationship; Casey has a very good job that she enjoys; and she owns a home in Florida.

Meanwhile, as my deployment loomed, the topic of marriage came up between Casey and I. We realized having a baby is not cheap, and the benefits of being a military spouse and the access to healthcare are hard to beat. Plus, if anything were to happen to me while I was deployed, I wouldn't want them to be left with nothing.

After getting her family's permission and discussing it at length, I asked Casey to marry me. My officer-in-charge held a low-key but lovely ceremony at his home and we were married on July 5, 2017. We spent the rest of that month enjoying being newlyweds and parents-to-be before I left for the desert.

Although I wasn't able to be there in person for the duration of her pregnancy, we were able remain in close contact almost daily. We even found out the baby's gender together while on FaceTime. Casey's mother asked a local bakery to bake a cupcake filled with colored icing on the inside. She cut into it, revealing baby blue filling. We were thrilled to be having a little boy.

Having been a die-hard Philadelphia Eagles fan my whole life, I immediately started to order baby swag for my son. I couldn't wait to have him grow up watching games with his old man. Things were going really well. I was learning a lot during my first deployment while being able to keep in touch with my wife and know how things were progressing. My scheduled return to the United States was about two weeks before my wife's due date, but our son had other plans.

Our little man decided he was ready to come into this world three weeks early and my wife's water broke on January 20. Thankfully, my deployed leadership gave me time off to FaceTime with her during his birth. On January 21, after nearly 26 hours of labor, Julian Paul Pfiester was born, sharing the same birthday as his mother. Although things didn't pan out how I had initially hoped and I wasn't able to be there in person, I'm extremely grateful that I still witnessed Julian's first breath.

I returned back to the states shortly after and was able to hold him for the first time. I took some leave on top of my paternity days and got to spend quality time with my little new family. We even watched the Eagles win their first-ever Super Bowl, which was an incredible experience.

I've since returned to Whiteman and am back at



work while Julian and Casey are down in Florida. We figured that in the meantime it's best for them to stay put until I get orders to a new duty station, instead of having them move to Whiteman just to move again. We will continue to make monthly trips until we can all be under the same roof.

I'm very grateful for the leadership I had both deployed and at my home station who helped me through the process, from the day we found out we were going to be parents, to the birth and now. My Air Force family has taken care of me and my little family and I look forward to seeing where the rest of our journey takes us.

This Father's Day, I'll be in Florida with my family making up for lost time, while looking back on how wild this new experience of being a father has been. Being a father in the military has given me a greater sense of appreciation for my family. While you're working long hours, frequently going on TDYs or being deployed downrange, you notice how much your spouse does in your absence, which in turn drives you to carry your weight when it comes to parental duties. Being in the profession of arms, I've learned to cherish the time we spend together because you never know when your duties may pull you away. Julian and Casey are the most amazing things I've ever laid eyes on. I'm so proud to call him my son, and her my wife.

THE WARRIOR

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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 do not guarantee publication.

For more information, call the Warrior office at 660-687-5727, email 509.bw.pa@us.af.mil, fax 660-687-7948, or write to us at Whiteman Warrior, 509th Bomb Wing, 509th Spirit Blvd. Suite 116, Whiteman AFB, Mo., 65305.

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On the cover

U.S. Air Force photo by
Senior Airman Jovan Banks

After the crash in rural Missouri in 1982, Whiteman dedicated a replica of the Bell UH-1F Iroquois at its historical Oscar-1 launch facility. A memorial wreath was laid to honor the fallen Airmen of the Charlie Fire Team at Whiteman Air Force Base Missouri, June 10, 2018.

Courtesy photos

NEWS BRIEFS



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WEATHER

Friday	Saturday
Sunny	Sunny
Hi 91	Hi 94
Lo 74	Lo 73

Sunday	Monday
Sunny	Sunny
Hi 91	Hi 91
Lo 74	Lo 74

Whiteman Family Homes residents awarded academic scholarships

Two Whiteman Family Homes young adult residents, Jordan Liebold and Chelsea Slemmer, received academic scholarships for the 2018 - 2019 school year through the Balfour Beatty Communities Foundation.

Jordan will be pursuing a degree in civil engineering and Chelsea is working toward a nursing degree.

The BBC Foundation scholarship program awards academic scholarships to residents living in a BBC-owned community who are attending or will attend an accredited higher education or technical institution. Scholarship recipients are selected on the basis of academic achievement, demonstrated leadership qualities and a commitment to community involvement.

This year, the Balfour Beatty Communities Foundation has awarded more than 65 academic scholarships for the upcoming academic year.

"This group of scholarship recipients left us in awe with their passion and dedication to their communities," said Chris Williams, president of the BBC Foundation. "The Foundation is honored to be able to assist students in their educational aspirations and looks forward to their future accomplishments. Congratulations to all of this year's scholarship winners."

In addition to Whiteman Family Homes, BBC provides residential property management and development services to 55 military housing communities throughout the country.

The BBC Foundation is a nonprofit organization that principally focuses on supporting the post-secondary education goals of residents who live in communities owned and managed by BBC. Since the scholarship program's inception in 2009, the BBC Foundation has awarded more than 300 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 bbccommunitiesfoundation.org.



Courtesy photos

509th SFS wins championship



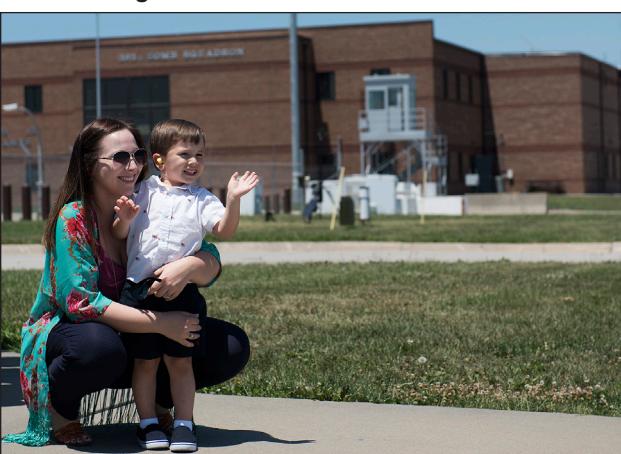
U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Danielle Quilla

For the second year in a row, the Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, intramural soccer championship came down to the 509th Security Forces Squadron versus the 509th Force Support Squadron, June 12, 2018. This year though, SFS claimed the title, scoring a 2-1 victory over FSS. To see more photos from the game on the Whiteman Air Force Base app, scan the QR code.

Whiteman's 2017 NCO of the Year earns incentive ride



U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Michael Vallejo, left, an explosive ordnance disposal team leader assigned to the 509th Civil Engineer Squadron, puts a pilot helmet on his son, Brayden Vallejo, after his incentive flight at Whiteman Air Force Base Missouri, June 5, 2018. With the support from his family, Vallejo was named Whiteman's 2017 NCO of the Year and received a B-2 Spirit incentive flight for his achievement.



ABOVE: U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. John Nichols, left, the 509th Bomb Wing commander, shakes hands with U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Michael Vallejo, right, an explosive ordnance disposal team leader assigned to the 509th Civil Engineer Squadron, after his incentive flight at Whiteman Air Force Base Missouri, June 5, 2018. Vallejo received a B-2 Spirit incentive flight for being named Whiteman's 2017 NCO of the Year. Nichols, other base leadership and Laura and Brayden Vallejo, Michael's wife and son, center, met Michael after the flight to congratulate him.

LEFT: Laura Vallejo and Brayden Vallejo, U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Michael Vallejo's wife and son, watch as Michael, an explosive ordnance disposal team leader assigned to the 509th Civil Engineer Squadron, arrives at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, after a flight in a B-2 Spirit on June 5, 2018. Michael's family along with his coworkers and base leadership congratulated him after his incentive flight.



U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Michael Vallejo, an explosive ordnance disposal team leader assigned to the 509th Civil Engineer Squadron, stands in front of a B-2 Spirit after his incentive flight at Whiteman Air Force Base Missouri, June 5, 2018. Vallejo received the flight for being named Whiteman's 2017 NCO of the Year and flew with U.S. Air Force Maj. Joshua Dorr, a pilot assigned to the 393d Bomb Squadron.

U.S. Air Force photos by Airman 1st Class Taylor Phifer

Related story on page 5

Whiteman NCO of the Year flies in B-2

Incentive flight awarded to Airmen, officials on rare occasions

By Brye Steeves

509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs Specialist

As the Spirit of Indiana touched down on the runway at Whiteman Air Force Base on May 5, 2018, 3-year-old Brayden Vallejo clapped excitedly, exclaiming, "That's my dad! My daddy's in there!"

Wearing a shirt with little American flags and yellow earplugs, Brayden, along with his mom Laura Vallejo and more than a dozen Airmen, waited on the flightline while the B-2 taxied to a stop in front of them.

Tech. Sgt. Michael Vallejo could see the entourage from the inside the two-person cockpit. As he descended from the airplane, the group applauded and cheered. Brig. Gen. John Nichols, 509th Bomb Wing commander, and Chief Master Sgt. James Lyda, 509th Bomb Wing command chief, shook Vallejo's hand and offered their congratulations. Vallejo's family gave him celebratory hugs.

Vallejo had just completed an incentive flight in the stealth bomber. He is one of 12 enlisted Airmen to have done so and the only one ever from a mission support squadron.

"It was such an honor," Vallejo said. "And something I'll never forget."

Vallejo is a 509th Civil Engineer Squadron explosive ordnance disposal team leader at Whiteman. He was recently named the base's 2017 Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year. In recognition of his outstanding performance here and while deployed to Southwest Asia, Nichols and Lyda presented Vallejo with a personalized flight suit and a flight in the B-2.

"A B-2 incentive flight is a unique opportunity that is earned through hard work and superior performance, which Tech. Sgt. Vallejo exemplifies," Nichols said. "He's an outstanding Airmen and certainly deserves this recognition to fly in the world's most lethal combat aircraft."

Fewer than 700 people have flown in the B-2 in its 29-year history, said Col. Brian

Gallo, commander of the 509th Operations Group. Most have been the B-2 pilots themselves, but in certain rare circumstances, Air Force regulations allow other Airmen or officials to receive an incentive flight. This includes rewarding military personnel for outstanding service and to motivate other service members to high performance levels. Additionally, certain distinguished visitors, such as Air Force and government officials, may receive flights to further their understanding of the B-2 mission.

"Tech. Sgt. Vallejo is now part of a small group of non B-2 pilots to fly in the airplane," Gallo said. "He also joins some of our country's top officials, including one Secretary of Defense, four Secretaries of the Air Force, two Chiefs of Staff of the Air Force and three congressional members."

Each person to fly in the B-2 receives a Spirit Number to signify his or her succession in the aircraft. Vallejo is Spirit No. 683. He flew with B-2 pilot Maj. Joshua Dorr, Spirit No. 499, who is assigned to Whiteman's 393d Bomb Squadron.

The two flew over the local area in what Dorr described as the best flying conditions seen in months. Their two-hour sortie reached an altitude of 29,000 feet and included air refueling. Dorr said Vallejo appeared comfortable in the cockpit and even took command of the aircraft for a few minutes.

Prior to his flight, Vallejo was cleared medically and trained in case of an in-flight emergency. He also participated in a flight simulator and attended a mission brief.

"It was important for Tech. Sgt. Vallejo to be involved in the preflight process as well as be familiar with the airplane before takeoff," Dorr said. "During the actual flight, he seemed comfortable and didn't appear nervous at all. I think he really enjoyed the experience."

Vallejo's post-flight assessment: "I felt like I was strapped to a rocket. It was awesome."

To read a profile of Whiteman's 2017 NCO of the Year U.S. Tech. Sgt. Michael Vallejo, please visit <http://www.whiteman.af.mil/News/Article/1466161/eod-airman-earns-nco-of-the-year/>

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THINK SAFETY

Charlie Fire Team: Honoring the past with the future



By Master Sgt. Matthew Wilson
509th Security Forces Squadron

On June 11, members of the 509th Security Forces Squadron and former 352nd Missile Security Squadron at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, honored six fallen Airmen on the 36th anniversary of the UH-1 Iroquois crash in rural Missouri.

The group, affectionately remembered as Charlie Fire Team, included Staff Sgt. Richard Bohling, Sgt. Thomas "Tiny" Meredith, Senior Airman David Jones and Senior Airman Marion Pace. On that day 36 years ago, they prepared for a routine missile escort, or what they called a "business trip," just like any other. Their job was to link up with Capt. Richard Conrady and 2nd Lt. James Hebert, two pilots from Detachment 9 of the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squad-

ron, and provide aerial over-watch aboard one of four UH-1 Iroquois Helicopters, from Whiteman AFB.

They were responsible for communicating potential threats to ground forces in order to defend the weapon system against possible attacks. According to an Air Force report, while on a mission from Whiteman to a launch facility near Passaic, Missouri, the helicopter's main rotor blade dipped out of position and struck the tail of the aircraft, causing the aircraft to break apart. All six Airmen died.

Nearly four decades later, their memories are still honored through annual wreath laying ceremonies. At this year's event, family, friends and fellow Airmen shared heartfelt stories, including how Sgt. "Tiny" Meredith was able to fit his 6-foot-8-inch frame into the confines of the Peace Keeper vehicles and helicopters in which he spent the majority of his time. Pictures and photo albums from the more than 40 family members and friends in attendance were also on display.

Today, Charlie Fire Team's legacy lives on within Air Force Global Strike Command, the wing and the unit. Because Charlie Fire Team represented the best of the best, it was a tradition for the most tactically proficient security forces teams to have their picture taken in front of the UH-1 Iroquois at Peace Memorial Park, the same one currently on display at the Oscar One facility. Those pictures are displayed around the security forces building. Furthermore, thanks to the efforts of retired security forces Col. Lynden Skinner, the top security forces team at the annual Global Strike Challenge is awarded the Charlie Fire Team Trophy. Recently, Lt. Col. Justin Secrest, the 509th Security Forces Squadron Commander, placed a memorial plaque in the squadron so all members would know of the giants whose shoulders they stand upon.

Additionally, each member who has served within the unit receives a squadron lithograph which outlines the history of the wing and unit's mission. It specifically honors Charlie Fire Team with the illustration of four security forces shields surrounding a UH-1 Iroquois helicopter flying before the U.S. flag and the Minuteman-II missiles.

Members of Fire Team Charlie who perished in a crash on June 11, 1982:

Capt. Richard Conrady
Detachment 9, 37th Air Rescue and Recovery Squadron

2nd Lt. James Hebert
Detachment 9, 37th Air Rescue and Recovery Squadron

Staff Sgt. Richard Bohling
352nd Missile Security Squadron

Sgt. Thomas "Tiny" Meredith
352nd Missile Security Squadron

Senior Airman David Jones
352nd Missile Security Squadron

Senior Airman Marion Pace
352nd Missile Security Squadron



Air Force implements new parental leave policy, secondary caregivers given 21 days

Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- In accordance with the Department of Defense Military Parental Leave Program, the Air Force announced an expansion to its parental leave policy on non-chargeable leave entitlements following the birth or adoption of a child.

Previously, Air Force policy authorized 12 consecutive weeks of maternity convalescent leave to female Airmen who gave birth. Additionally, 10 days of non-chargeable leave were given to an Airman whose spouse gave birth.

Effective immediately, the new policy applies to Total Force Airmen who are birth mothers and fathers, same-sex couples, as well as adoptive and surrogate parents. Reserve Component Airmen should refer to Air Force Instruction 36-3003 for specific eligibility requirements.

Under the new policy, AFI 36-3003, Military Leave Program, outlines three forms of non-chargeable leave following a qualifying birth event or adoption: maternity convalescent leave, primary caregiver leave and secondary caregiver leave.

Now maternity convalescent leave is six weeks (42 days), primary caregiver leave is six weeks, and secondary caregiver leave is three weeks (21 days). Every birth mother will have convalescent leave. Caregiver leave is given in addition to the convalescent leave.

Covered service members having a child by birth, adoption or surrogacy will determine which parent is the primary and secondary caregiver. Designations for

caregiver status should be made as early as possible and follow Department of Defense guidance. Each parent can only hold one caregiver status per birth event or adoption; for example, a secondary cannot transfer his or her leave to the primary caregiver.

Airmen should submit their caregiver leave as determined by their local unit commanders. Until LeaveWeb is altered to allow for a caregiver leave category, members will request the non-chargeable caregiver leave by selecting (T) Permissive on the type dropdown menu, and then choosing rule 18 for primary and rule 19 for secondary. Until the AF Form 988 is altered, Airmen who cannot use LeaveWeb, should check "Other" in block 8 and specify primary or secondary in the remarks.

For all three types of parental leave, the allotted time off must be taken all at once and cannot be split up. Primary and secondary caregiver leave can be taken any time within the first year after a child's birth or adoption.

The Air Force policy, authorized by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, is effective immediately and retroactive to December 23, 2016.

The Air Force Personnel Center will send out guidance via MyPers on the process for requesting restoration of qualifying non-chargeable leave.

Frequently Asked Questions can be found here. For additional information regarding the Military Leave Program, please visit AFI 36-3003 or contact Air Force Total Force Service Center at 1-800-565-0102.



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