



T'birds leave community ...

SOARING

PAGES 12-13



It's all about how you respond to failure

“There are no secrets to success,” said retired U.S. Army Gen. Colin Powell. “It is the result of preparation, hard work and learning from failure.”

None of us can go through life without failing at something at some point. Whether it's at work, at home or anywhere else, you simply aren't going to succeed at everything you do, every time. Some failures can obviously be far more painful to deal with than others, but regardless of the type



Commentary by Lt. Col. Nathan R. Hier
660TH AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE SQUADRON COMMANDER

of failure, the most important thing is how you respond. Essentially, you can either pick yourself up and get back on the horse or you can walk away and never ride again. The choice you make is what defines you as a person.

Between Christmas 2017 and St. Patrick's Day 2018, our squadron had three folks get arrested for DUIs. Needless to say, it was a very rough couple of months. We had all the same briefings as you'd expect before, during

Commander's Commentary

and after – have a plan, call me, call the shirt, call the chief, call production, call Airmen Against Drunk Driving, etc. We all know there are a thousand ways to get home safely and really only one way to do it wrong. Still, as a family, we'd done it wrong – three times in short order. Fast forward to today, and the squadron has now gone more than a full year without a single DUI. What changed is the folks that failed had the courage to own it and the passion to make sure

no one else in the squadron had to learn the hard lessons they were now learning.

The guys involved in the incidents set up briefings in small groups and shared intimate details of everything they'd each been through since getting their respective DUIs. They talked about the extreme financial impact, the loss of rank, the embarrassment they felt, etc. They did it with the utmost sincerity and sent a message home to the squadron that the shirt, chief and I could have talked ourselves blue in the face and never have gotten through. In short, they took their failure and turned it into

a success story for the squadron because they had enough character to do so. I couldn't be any more thankful for their efforts or any more proud of how they demonstrated the very best way to respond to a bad situation.

Everyone looks great while succeeding. Success is easy. You don't find out what somebody's truly made out of until they get tested by failure. It takes far more strength of character to accept that you failed, dust yourself off and get back on that horse until you get it right. You simply can't do that any better than these guys did.

Lead by giving people freedom to do their jobs



Commentary by Chief Master Sgt. Jeffrey Clark
660TH AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE SQUADRON

Recently, while deployed, I came in one morning and saw things were more hectic than usual. The two master sergeants on shift gave me the morning update and the day wasn't starting off well. Planes were broken, the flying schedule was a mess and my people were running around with their hair on fire. My instinct to fix things kicked in.

“I got this,” I told the master sergeants. “Let's go.”

I hopped in the truck with them and we went to the flight line. I took over and told them to do this, do that, put this over there, send those people there. I enjoyed myself, having

Chief's Commentary

flashbacks to my younger days on the flight line. After a few hours, things started to calm down. The work pace got back to normal and we started to look good. Crisis averted. I left the two master sergeants to their jobs and I went back to my day.

That night while sitting in my room, I reflected back on the day like I normally do. When I thought about the morning, it occurred to me while I was in the truck barking directions, the two master sergeants were very quiet. Through all the chaos of the moment, I hadn't realized it, but

the more I thought about it, I thought they were upset. It was then I realized I had messed up. The next morning, I talked to the two master sergeants about the day prior. One of them told me, “Chief, you said you got it, but we already had it.”

I took a bite of humble pie that day. The day prior was an opportunity for those two master sergeants to grow professionally and gain experience in a deployed location. Instead of overseeing them and making sure they were doing what they were supposed to be doing to fix the situation, I took that opportunity from them. It was a lesson learned for me.

This lesson applies to all of us,

from the first-line supervisors to chiefs. I see it happen all of the time. When things aren't going right, a lot of us have a tendency to jump in and fix it ourselves instead of using the situation to grow and develop our Airmen. Some situations require us to jump in, but most can be resolved by our people, if we let them.

The next time you're in a situation like that, ask yourself, “Do I need to take this over or can I oversee the situation and let my people resolve this?” Our Airmen can accomplish great things if we give them the opportunity.

Remember, let your people do their jobs.



U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Jonathon Carnell
Master Sgt. Richard Williams, 548th Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance Group Public Affairs superintendent, operates a virtual reality set March 27 at Travis Air Force Base, Calif. Travis hosted an innovation expo which brought 15 technology companies to educate more than 100 Airmen on mission-centric assets.

Innovation expo highlights technology

Airman 1st Class Jonathon Carnell

60TH AIR MOBILITY WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

“Pew pew pew” is the sound buzzing by your ears while sprinting, carrying a 60 pound bag, an M4 and dog tags through hostile land. An Airman made a huge mistake, but there's no turning around.

Thankfully, though, it only took place in virtual reality, where Airmen can learn from mistakes before encountering a similar situation in a real war zone.

Approximately 100 Airmen saw this firsthand March 27 at an innovation expo at Travis Air Force Base, where different technology companies offered insight and background information on 3-D printing, cybersecurity and augmented virtual reality headsets.

“This was the first time the Phoenix Spark Hub has had an innovation expo and, with the great turnout we had, I can definitely see us doing an annual program,” said Capt. Jacob Payton, Phoenix Spark Hub chief.

The Phoenix Spark Hub's mission is to bring tomorrow's tools to the war fighter today.

The virtual reality equipment we brought will put Airmen in real-time environments, said Bryan Luhn, Myriad Global Media representative.

“They will actually be emerged in real-life surroundings,” he added. “If they have to train on a plane or in the cockpit or even in the medical field, this technology can put them in any realistic situation which may arise.”

Airmen had the opportunity

to try virtual headsets and get hands-on experience with the technology.

“I could operate every button and control all of the functions,” said Master Sgt. Richard Williams, 548th Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance Group Public Affairs superintendent. “The controls were sensitive and I feel if I practiced more I could get a better hold on being a pilot.”

Events like this give squadrons knowledge about the tools and resources that can be

available to them.

“It was really amazing to see the innovation expo and see some of the products which could allow our unit to be more mission ready,” said Master Sgt. Aaron Scott, 821st Contingency Response Squadron.

This event is one way the Phoenix Spark Hub generates discussion on innovation, Scott said

“As the Air Force continues to grow, we will continue to find better and more efficient ways

See EXPO Page 18

Tailwind

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Air Force

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60th Air Mobility Wing commander

2nd Lt. Mike Longoria
Officer in charge of command information

Tech. Sgt. Traci Keller
NCO in charge of command information

Tech. Sgt. James Hodgman
Command information staff writer

Airman 1st Class Jonathon D. A. Carnell
Command information staff writer

Daily Republic

Nick DeCicco
Tailwind editor

Todd R. Hansen
Copy editor

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On the cover

The USAF Thunderbirds demonstration team performs March 31 during the “Thunder Over the Bay” air show at Travis Air Force Base, Calif.

U.S. Air Force photo/Louis Briscose

Airman sees spike in pursuit of athletic goals

Lan Kim

60TH AIR MOBILITY WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

As No. 10 on a Californian Division II volleyball team, Senior Airman Jade Cairns, 60th Diagnostics and Therapeutics Squadron medical laboratory technician, identified herself as a student-athlete.

Although she graduated high school with a scholarship, her athletic and academic abilities weren't enough to keep her "buckled down," as Cairns said, and she decided in the winter of 2013 that college wasn't for her.

Bewildered by her short-lived college experience and what she thought could have been a promising college volleyball career, Cairns lost a sense of direction and purpose for her life.

"I had to figure out, 'Who am I?' What I wanted to do? What is this without the sport?" Cairns said. "I just felt like I was going in the same spiral of not buckling down, not taking things seriously, not having structure."

Those questions led her to join her grandparents on a monthlong road trip around the country before eventually moving in with them. It was there she felt the most peace in her life. She had accepted her decision to leave college as well as the absence of competitive collegiate volleyball, and was ready to start anew.

"In 2014, I moved to Tennessee to really move away from the distractions I had in California," she said. "I felt like this is where I needed to be, completely away from everything and just refocus my life."

The two years in Tennessee with her grandparents were transformative for Cairns. She got her driver's license at 20, got her first job and she was, by all accounts, "adulting."

With her newfound perspective on life and increased maturity, she gave



U.S. Air Force photo/Lan Kim

Senior Airman Jade Cairns, 60th Diagnostics and Therapeutics Squadron medical laboratory technician, poses Feb. 15 at Travis Air Force Base, Calif. Cairns was accepted to play on the 2019 Air Force Women's Volleyball Team.

joining the military serious thought for the first time in 2016. It helped that her grandparents were retired enlisted Airmen and gave her positive encouragement to join the Air Force.

"I was maturing," Cairns said. "I wanted to provide for myself. I wanted to feel like I could take care of myself."

Her desire for independence and personal growth ultimately led her to where she is now as a medical laboratory technician in the 60th MDTs at David Grant USAF Medical Center.

By the time she completed basic

training in the Air Force and had undergone the necessary schooling to be certified as an MLT, Cairns shed her former athlete identity.

But it wasn't long after she got stationed at Travis Air Force Base in March of 2017 that she decided to rekindle her love for volleyball.

"The first time I picked up a volleyball (again) was intramurals," Cairns said. "And I was like, 'Oh man, it's been a long time.'"

"I've always just been a fan of the game," she said. "Even though I haven't played in a long time, I knew

how things should be working, but my body was like, 'No, you haven't done this in a while.'"

The pursuit of athletic acumen didn't come easy at first, but it made Cairns happy.

With a busy academic workload at community college and an even busier work schedule on the night shift, Cairns managed to find time to fit the sport in her regimen of enriching activities.

The constant presence of volleyball in Cairns' life crept into her social

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AFGSC orders B-1B stand-down due to safety

Air Force Global Strike Command Public Affairs

BARKSDALE AIR FORCE BASE, La. — The commander of Air Force Global Strike Command ordered a safety

stand-down of the B-1B Lancer fleet March 28.

During a routine inspection of the B-1B drogue chute system, potentially fleet-wide issues were identified with the rigging of the drogue chute. It appears

to be a procedural issue and is unrelated to the previous problem with egress system components. As a precautionary measure, the commander directed a holistic inspection of the entire egress system.

The safety stand-down will afford maintenance and Aircrew Flight Equipment technicians the necessary time to thoroughly inspect each aircraft. As these inspections are completed and any issues are

resolved, aircraft will return to flight.

The safety of Airmen is the command's top priority and this precautionary step will enable the command to correct any potential issues.



U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Miranda Simpson

Airman Emma Booth, 126th Aerospace Medicine Squadron public health technician, high-fives her sister, Staff Sgt. Katryn Ellis, 375th AMDS NCO in charge of occupational health, after putting UV lotion on her hands Jan. 31 at Scott Air Force Base, Ill.

Sisters serve at Scott together

Airman 1st Class Miranda Simpson

375TH AIR MOBILITY WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, Ill. — Two sisters who are five years apart are serving their country at the same time, at the same base, and in the same career field; working together every day.

They come from a military background, but Staff Sgt. Katryn Ellis, 375th AMDS NCO in charge of occupational health, was the first in her family to join the Air Force. Her younger sister, 19-year-old Airman Emma Booth, 126th Aerospace Medicine Squadron public health technician, would soon follow in her footsteps.

"I wanted to go in to the Air Force ever since she joined in 2013," said Booth. "I was just starting eighth grade, and I knew that's what I wanted to do."

Although Booth was inspired by her sister's actions, she still had dreams of her own.

"I wanted to go guard. That way, I could get school out of the way because I want to commission later on in life."

In order to bring Booth's goals to fruition, Ellis suggested

Booth stay with her. Their parents travel often, and Booth would need a steady place to live to be able to join the Air National Guard. As a bonus, Booth could help watch her two-year-old niece when her brother-in-law, also an active duty military member, travels for work.

The plan was set into place, so Ellis helped her sister take the next big step.

"I walked down the hall and into the guard unit," said Ellis. "I asked if they had anything available for medical. They gave me three jobs, and one of them happened to be public health, which isn't initially what she wanted. But as fate went, she ended up getting public health."

Since Booth's guard unit is located here, she was sent to the active duty section for seasoning and upgrade training where she studied under Ellis and grew to love public health.

They mimic their grandfathers, who were sent to the same location at the same time during the Vietnam War.

"We wouldn't be here if it wasn't for Vietnam," said Booth, explaining how their paternal grandfather, "Pawpaw,"

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Coming home

Candid homecoming of a service member captured March 28 at Travis Air Force Base, Calif. Travis is also known as the "Gateway to the Pacific" and receives a large number of deployed service members returning home.

U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Amy Younger



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Wilson, Goldfein outline Air Force progress

**Secretary of the Air Force
Public Affairs**

WASHINGTON — Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein told lawmakers on two House committees Tuesday that the Air Force must get bigger and funding

must be predictable to meet – and defeat – security threats at home, globally and in space in an era of great power competition.

“In fiscal year 2020, we will continue to build a more lethal and ready Air Force, while fielding tomorrow’s Air Force faster and smarter,” Wilson and

Goldfein said in a joint statement highlighting the themes presented first to the House Armed Services Committee and later that day to the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee.

In both appearances, they cited findings from the independent and bipartisan National Defense Strategy Commission to explain the stakes.

“Regardless of where the next conflict occurs or which adversary it features, the Air Force will be at the forefront,” the Commission said.

Increasing the number of operational squadrons to 386 from the current 312 is required, they said, to meet requirements in the National Defense Strategy and to “prevail over our highest priority competitors.” The analysis from which 386 was derived included thousands of simulations and war games “produced an unmistakable conclusion: the Air Force is too small for what our nation needs.”

“It’s no surprise that the Air Force we have is the smaller than the Air Force we need,” Wilson told the Appropriations Defense Subcommittee.

Wilson and Goldfein at both hearings also urged Congress to pass a supplemental spending



Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson testifies during a House Armed Services Committee hearing April 2 in Washington, D.C.

bill that would include funds to repair Tyndall Air Force Base that was heavily damaged by Hurricane Michael in October and Offutt Air Force Base that was submerged last month by 7 feet of water in some places when the Missouri River flooded.

Building a more lethal and ready force

While Wilson and Goldfein dealt with issues ranging from the impact of climate change on operations to the development

of hypersonic weapons, the use of artificial intelligence and the Air Force’s role in cyber warfare, among others, they highlighted a core set of issues.

Ensuring readiness was one, they said, the Air Force will increase by 4,400 Airmen and 5,143 civilians. That growth follows 2019 in which the Air Force increased pilot production by graduating 1,211 pilots with production expected to hit 1,480 in 2020.

New direction for female-specific flight equipment

**Airman 1st Class
Bailee A. Darbasie**

99TH AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE, Nev. — The Air Force is working to redesign the gear used by female pilots across the force after facing challenges with current flight equipment.

“We have women performing in every combat mission, and we owe it to them to have gear that fits, is suited for a woman’s frame and (a pilot) can be in for hours on end,” said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein at a Defense Writers Group breakfast, March 2018 in Washington, D.C.

The majority of the equipment worn by pilots was built off anthropometric data from the 1960s, a time when only men were in aviator roles.

The lack of variety and representation in the current designs have caused multiple issues for women, said Col. Samantha Weeks, the 14th Flying Training Wing commander, assigned to Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi.

Many of the uniform issues circulate around G-suits, flight suits, urinary devices and survival vests.

“The challenges other female aviators and I face are the fit and availability of our flight equipment,” said Capt. Lauren Ellis, 57th Adversary Tactics Group executive officer.

Limited sizes and accessibility often force aircrew to order the wrong size and have it extensively altered to fit properly, taking time and money away from the mission, Ellis said.

“All of the bladders on my G-suit need to be modified,” Ellis said. “It’s a lot of work for the Aircrew Flight Equipment, or AFE, Airmen. Even after they’re modified, the proportions don’t fit.”

G-suits are vital anti-gravity gear for aviators. The bladders in the suit fill with air and apply pressure to the pilot’s body to prevent a loss of consciousness during high levels of acceleration. Not having a properly fitted G-suit could lead to hypoxia followed by unconsciousness. Ellis said ill-fitting flight



Participants of the Female Flight Equipment Workshop demonstrate issues women face with the current survival vests Jan. 30 at AFWERX Vegas in Las Vegas. Female Airmen stationed across the globe traveled to attend the workshop to explore areas of opportunity and come up with solutions for their issues.

suits are a common problem for men and women. Aircrew who are significantly above or below average height have a hard time finding suits that fit their body type.

Even if a woman found a flight suit close to her size, the flight-suit zipper is designed for men – not women. Female

aircrew struggle with relieving themselves during flights because the flight-suit zipper isn’t designed low enough for them to properly use their urinary devices.

“There are flight suits that were designed with longer zippers for women, but they’re almost never available,” Ellis

said. “It’s common for females to have to wait months to receive the flight suit they’ve ordered which causes them to have to wear the male one.”

Along with the possibility of injury and discomfort associated with G-suits and flight suits, women struggle to get their life-saving gear to

fit accordingly. The process of ejecting is so powerful, even pilots with well-fitting gear are at a serious risk of injury. It’s important for aviators to be heard and the modernization of equipment for everyone continues, Ellis said.

“In certain situations, having ill-fitting gear, such as harnesses and survival vests, can result in a loss of life,” Ellis said. “If an aircrew member ejects from the aircraft with equipment that doesn’t fit, they can be severely injured or lose their life.”

The Air Force and Air Combat Command are working to find a feasible solution for aircrew members.

Part of the strategy to correct the uniform problem was to take part in several collaborative Female Flight Equipment Workshops at AFWERX Vegas. Female Airmen stationed across the globe traveled to the innovation hub and attended the workshops to explore areas of opportunity and come up with proposed solutions.

“The purpose of the workshops is to bring together female aviators, Aircrew Flight Equipment, Human Systems Program Office personnel and subject matter experts to

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 RON WHITE 9PM SAT. APR. 27	 ILIZA SCHLESINGER SAT. MAY. 10	 WHO'S BAD! MICHAEL JACKSON EXPERIENCE SAT. MAY. 11
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'Thunder Over the Bay' dazzles skies above Travis



1) The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds demonstration team practices its routine prior to the "Thunder Over the Bay" air show March 29 at Travis Air Force Base, Calif. The two-day event featured performances by the Thunderbirds, U.S. Army Golden Knights parachute team, flyovers and static displays. The event honored hometown heroes such as police officers, firefighters, nurses, teachers and ordinary citizens whose selfless work made their communities safer and enhanced the quality of life.

Thunderbirds, Patriot Jet Team, Golden Knights among performers

Tech. Sgt. James Hodgman
60TH AIR MOBILITY WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

High-speed jets performing a variety of aerial acrobatics, Soldiers parachuting to earth from 10,000 feet and 40 aircraft on display.

This was the scene March 30-31 at Travis Air Force Base during the "Thunder Over the Bay" air show. The two-day event featured 17 aerial performances, including the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds Aerial Demonstration Team, the F-22 Raptor Demonstration Team, the U.S. Army Golden Knights Parachute Team and numerous static displays.

The theme for the show was Honoring Hometown Heroes.

"We are thankful our country looks to the military as heroes of hope and security," said Col. Jeff Nelson, 60th Air Mobility Wing commander. "Yet, it's important for Team Travis not to overlook the heroes in our local community who, like us, work every day to keep us safe."

The commander said Team Travis would show appreciation for local heroes and the American public with a little bit of "air power."

"Last year, we saw several events transpire, like the fires in California, and we saw people step up in so many ways to serve something greater than themselves," said Maj. Imran Khan, 60th Air Mobility Wing air show director. "We wanted to do something to honor them because they are amazing."

"During the show, the Patriot Jet Team held a memorial for fallen police officers, we had a hometown hero booth where people could learn about the great things those heroes have done, and, on Friday night, we held an event where we gave out 14 American flags to nurses, doctors, teachers, police officers and firefighters," Khan said. "They don't always get the recognition



2) The Patriot Jet Team performs during the "Thunder Over the Bay" air show March 31 at Travis Air Force Base, Calif. 3) The U.S. Army Golden Knights parachute team perform during the "Thunder Over the Bay" air show March 30 at Travis Air Force Base, Calif.

they deserve for the amazing work they do and we want them to know we appreciate them."

The air show, which took about a year to plan, opened each day with a parachute jump by the Golden Knights, followed by a variety of performances including the Patriots Jet Team, Travis aircraft and the Smoke and Thunder Jet Truck. The Thunderbirds closed the show both days to loud cheers from an estimated audience of 100,000 people over the course of the two days.

The event also featured aircraft tours, opportunities to interact with service members, and for the youngest air show fans, a fun zone with bounce houses, inflatable slides and a rock climbing wall.

"We wanted everyone to have a fun time, but safety was our top priority," Khan said. "We developed a plan for traffic, as well as a plan for 100,000 people to be safe, fed and entertained. I'm proud we were able to keep everyone safe and entertained at the same time."

Khan also said more than 1,000 people volunteered in a variety of capacities to support the air show.

"We had tremendous support from our Airmen and the local community," he said. "I'm humbled to see how many people came together for this event. Everyone had an integral part in the air show and without their support we would not have been able to have such a successful show."

Diego Reed of Vacaville, California, traveled the world with his father, a retired Air Force chief master sergeant, and attended numerous air shows as a result. He said he and his family attend every air show they can, but this year's air show at Travis was a little extra special.

"We are here to support our daughter's boyfriend," he said. "He's a C-17 Globemaster III pilot in the 21st Airlift Squadron."

"We had to come out and show our support," Reed said. "Plus, we just love it. It's in our blood."

Reed's wife of 31 years, Cathy, echoed that sentiment.

"Being here and seeing the precision flying, it's so impressive and it's so important that we show appreciation for the military," she said.

Srilatha Vissa of San Jose, California, also attended the air show, her first, along with nearly a dozen of her family members.

"The military is not a daily part of our lives so it's nice to come here, see the planes and make it more a part of our lives," she said. "We also really enjoyed seeing all the performances and touring the displays."

Many people took to social media to share their thoughts on the show posting pictures and videos.

"We had a great time, thank you to all the ladies and gentlemen who put this together," commented Facebook user Matthew Mopar Noel, on the Travis Air Show Facebook page. "God bless our military, officers and first responders."

"It was the best experience of my life," commented Facebook user Jay Jetter.

Sisters

From Page 5

saved their maternal grandfather, "Pop," after he was critically wounded. "Pawpaw went and took Pop and put him on the chopper. He put his hand on his chest and said his good-byes, thinking that he was going to die. Turns out, Pop was sent to the nearest hospital, and he survived."

Booth then explained how their father met their mother after meeting Pop in New York City at a reunion held for the Vietnam veterans. Their father was on his way to Germany when his flight got delayed where Pop lived.

Pop jokingly said, "Just come stay with me. Maybe I'll try to get you married to one of my daughters."

After their father came back from Germany, he really did marry Pop's daughter, and they had four children altogether.

"I was always like mother hen growing up because there were three of them and I was the oldest," said Ellis. "I think that kind of stayed with me. Being an older sister made me a better supervisor because a lot of the Airmen I have are the age difference between her and I, so I kind of get the things they say. I also don't let her get away with anything, and that's how I am for all of them."

Equipment

From Page 9

understand the current products, the acquisition process and the actual needs from the field," Weeks said.

Throughout the workshops, aviators participated in briefings, as well as discussions and exercises with the agencies involved in the design and distribution of their gear.

"The Human Systems Program Office acquires and sustains all equipment for male and female Airmen," said Lt. Col. Elaine Bryant Human Systems Program Office deputy chief, assigned to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. "We are committed to hearing our consumers' voices, and we will make the changes necessary to our current process to meet their needs."



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Expo

From Page 3

of doing operations," Scott said.

"It's programs like the Innovation expo that could create new sparks in our young Airmen."

With day-to-day operations in full function, many Airmen

spend their time after hours in the Phoenix Spark Hub, creating a more lethal Air Force.

"The Phoenix Spark program has Airmen working

many volunteer hours and I think this event will amp up the excitement and maybe get some new faces in the lab," Payton said.

The warfighter down range can benefit from some of these great technologies.

"Events like this can help

spark thought processes to our Airmen and their leadership," Payton said.

Phoenix Spark meets at noon every Friday in Bldg. 181.

For more information, contact the Phoenix Spark Hub at 60amw.ps.phoenixspark@us.af.mil or 707-424-8920.




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Spike

From Page 4

media feed as well. It was at that time the idea of being able to play officially for the Air Force volleyball team occurred to her.

Cairns didn't know the Air Force had a professional volleyball team until she saw a posted photo of a friend on the team. Surprised, Cairns inquired further and got details on the

application process.

Cairns applied to the Air Force volleyball trials in December 2018 and was accepted to attend the training camp at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas.

"I used to think I was a failure from my failed college experience fresh out of high school," Cairns said. "I didn't think I was ever going to play again when I joined the military. I just felt grateful because I never thought I'd be in this

situation to play again."

A week into trial camp, Cairns found out she made the team and would go on to compete in the Armed Forces Championships at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, March 6-10.

"The moment I found out, I was super excited," she said. "I like to look for that affirmation in life. I feel like that was just a sign I was supposed to be playing. My volleyball experience has come full circle in a strange way."

Cairns was able to make a high-caliber team with only weeks of proper training.

The majority of the starters besides her had played at the U.S. Air Force Academy for four years prior to the camp, according to Cairns. To her, that spoke volumes to her abilities and made her feel like volleyball was the sport she was supposed to be playing and motivated her to work hard.

What volleyball experience Cairns did have, she used to

excel the Air Force through the championship tournament. The Air Force Women's Volleyball Team won the 2019 Armed Forces Championships for the third consecutive time.

As amazing the victory was for Cairns, it was more special that she celebrated it wearing her same college number - No. 10.

For more information on how to apply to a U.S. Armed Forces Team, visit www.armedforces.sports.defense.gov.

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1) An E-3 Sentry from Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., positions itself to be refueled March 28 by a KC-10 Extender assigned to Travis Air Force Base, Calif., over Northern California. The KC-10 also refueled two A-10 Thunderbolt IIs, offloading more than 19,000 pounds of fuel. 2) Senior Airman Kayleen Fringle, 60th Aerial Port Squadron passenger services agent, prepares to place a block at one of the back tires of a staircase truck to prevent it from moving once it's parked outside a KC-10 March 28 at Travis. 3) Senior Master Sgt. Matt Fisher, 70th Air Refueling Squadron boom operator, refuels an E-3 Sentry assigned to Tinker from the back of a KC-10 March 28 during a refueling mission over Northern California.

REFUELING

KC-10 supplies A-10 Thunderbolt II, E-3 Sentry

U.S. Air Force photos by Tech. Sgt. James Hodgman





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