



Wildfires propel ash and ... SMOKE

PAGES 10-11



Ask for help when needed, general says

I'm here to talk to you about a national public health concern: Suicide.

Suicide impacts all of us and has become the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. To help prevent suicide among America's armed forces, we're working relentlessly to better connect, connecting with family, friends, community and resources such as Military One Source, is critical to our well-being and our preventing suicide.

To do this, we need to start with our chain of command. I sought help when I needed it. When I was a commander of U.S. Strategic Command, I felt like I needed to get some



Commentary by Gen. John Hyten
VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

help. I felt like I needed to talk to somebody, so I got an appointment with a psychiatrist.

I was kindly offered an anonymous, back-door entry and I rejected it. If I'd had the flu, I'd walk through the front door to see the doctor. This was no different. Our mental and physical health are equally important and the same thing. I got the help I needed and I'm stronger for it, so

don't hesitate to get professional help.

There are no negative consequences to your career and only positive results for you, personally, for your family and your friends. It's important that the U.S. military brings

Commander's Commentary

light to this complex issue of suicide because regardless of which uniform you wear, we're not immune from life's challenges, including thoughts of suicide.

Ending suicide in our ranks is a top priority, not just during Suicide Prevention Month in September, but throughout the year.

So I ask you to do your part. Connect to protect. Leaders, reach out to your people. Check in on them. Follow up with your buddy. Set aside time to listen, provide support, watch their "six," on and off base.

If you or someone you know is in a crisis, know that you're



U.S. Air Force graphic

not alone in this. Reach out. Contact the Military and Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, text 838255 or chat online with the veteranscrisisline.net. It's free,

confidential and available 24/7. Caring and trained responders, many of them veterans, can help you.

If you need help, please reach out.



Commentary by Tech. Sgt. Frances Rodgers
436TH AIRLIFT WING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY MANAGER

Big picture: EO resolves complicated issues

DOVER AIR FORCE BASE, Del. — When you see me, you will see a 6-foot individual with an extremely focused demeanor.

My pride in serving this great nation is exemplified in the caliber of my work on behalf of the Equal Opportunity office. But what is it that I do for Dover Air Force Base, Delaware?

The EO mission is a unique mission, and my teammates fight an unseen fight – an intolerable fight.

Enlisted Commentary

The EO purview is clear: It is against Air Force policy for any Airman, military or civilian, to unlawfully discriminate against, harass, intimidate or threaten another Airman on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, reprisal or genetic information. As such, the essence of EO operations is addressing allegations that our values and policy are not

being upheld.

As the daughter of two amazing, retired law enforcement parents, my upbringing was regimented yet loving. My father was an Army officer before his transition into the civilian sector. To those who did not know my daddy, he appeared to have a serious, no-nonsense bearing – and also stood at an imposing 6-foot-5. My daddy was very matter-of-fact, not the type that required a drawn-out dissertation in regards to a matter, just your

point. To his children, he was the man that had unlimited time for all three of us. I share this because I have adopted a lot of his characteristics, naturally.

While serving in the Air Force, I've been told that I appear unapproachable, that I need to smile more and have been accused of being angry on the basis of my looks. Nonetheless, those that know me, Frances, know that am I nothing

See RODGERS Page 18

Weather specialists forecast mission success

Tech. Sgt. Luther Mitchell Jr.
621ST CONTINGENCY RESPONSE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, N.J. — When a weather warning pops up on your computer or phone, it's probably time to take it seriously and prepare for what lies ahead. You may go outside and roll up your car windows or bring the dog inside.

In the 621st Contingency Response Wing, weather specialists play a critical role in executing the mission, safeguarding personnel and property, and updating squadron and contingency response element leaders to affect plans.

"We may be the first weather personnel deployed to a location, so the information we collect is vital in developing climatological trends and studies for an area," said Master Sgt. James Gragg, 321st Contingency Response Squadron weather specialist at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey.

Unlike other weather squadrons, CRW weather specialists are not equipped for sustained airbase support. They issue weather watches, warnings and advisories for threats like lightning and high winds while deployed, and coordinate with other operational weather squadrons for support.

Their primary job is weather data collection, analysis and dissemination. This includes taking routine and special weather observations using automated and manual techniques, as well as recording this data and submitting it to the 14th Weather Squadron, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska, for their archives.

The 14th Weather Squadron is the Air Force's only climate operations unit that collects, protects and exploits authoritative climate data. They provide



U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Luther Mitchell Jr.

U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. James Gragg, 321st Contingency Response Squadron weather technician, sets up a tactical meteorological observation system during Exercise Swamp Devil July 26 at Lake Charles, Louisiana. The TMQ-53 is used to observe weather elements and relay information to pilots in real time.

Devil Raiders with specialized products for planning and execution purposes.

"They have a wealth of data that they can tailor to specific requests, which makes them a valuable asset in our line of work," Gragg said.

Weather observers can continue

observing and reporting weather conditions even if equipment breaks or communications fail by using a manual observation kit. A MOSKIT includes handheld lightning detectors, portable rain gauges, laser range finders, and devices for measuring winds, temperature, and atmospheric pressure. This

skill is especially helpful when CRW personnel deploy to more remote locations.

Weather specialists assist in the planning phase of operations, providing seasonal weather assessments for areas

See WEATHER Page 18

Tailwind

Travis AFB, Calif. | 60th Air Mobility Wing

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- Capt. Erica Feehan
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Daily Republic

- Nick DeCicco
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- Todd R. Hansen
Copy editor

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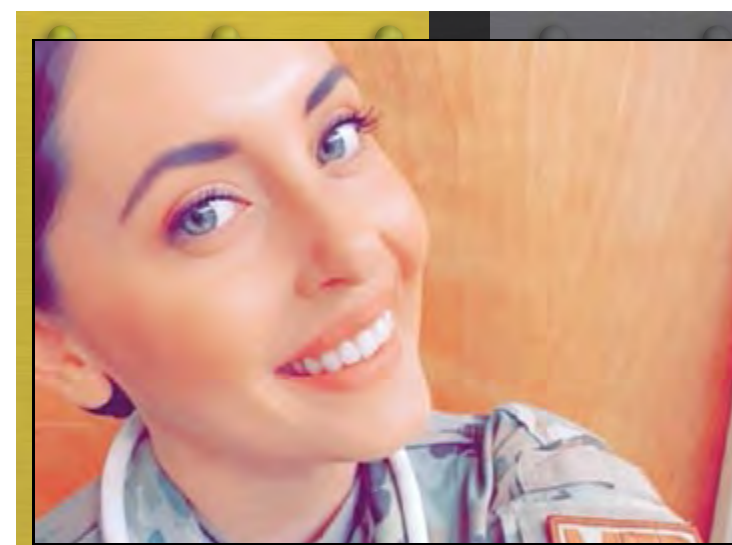
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On the cover

A C-5M Super Galaxy flies above a C-17 Globemaster III fleet Sept. 9 at Travis Air Force Base, California.

U.S. Air Force photo/Christine Minoda



Courtesy photo

WARRIOR OF THE WEEK

- Name:** Airman 1st Class Drea Baylon.
- Unit:** 60th Inpatient Squadron.
- Duty title:** Aerospace medical technician.
- Hometown:** Fresno, California.
- Time in service:** One year.
- Family:** Dad, Arthur; mom, Lucy; two brothers, Arthur and Angel, and one sister, Abriana.
- What are your hobbies?** Hiking and cooking.
- What are your greatest achievements?** Joining the military and being a role model for my siblings.
- What are your goals?** To become a nurse and work in

Valley Children's Hospital in Madera, California.

CHPS program to boost activity

Civilian Health Promotion Services

Civilian Health Promotion Services is offering the CHPS Minute to Win It 2.0 virtual activity challenge to promote physical fitness for the Air Force Materiel Command and Air Mobility Command workforce.

Participation is free and easy. The goal of the challenge is to log at least 500 minutes of physical activity on USAFwellness.com. Logging activity on the website is now easier than ever with the new IOS app and the ability to link wearable fitness devices.

Use this challenge as motivation to stay active whether working in person or teleworking.

Participants that are able to log at least 500 minutes of physical activity will be eligible for a completion award. Also, stay tuned for more information on CHPS first ever Exercise and Nutrition Virtual Class Series via CVR MS Teams.

Register online at USAFwellness.com or contact CHPS at CHPSsupport@us.af.mil through Sept. 30. The challenge takes place from Oct. 1 to Nov. 15.

For more information, contact Elisa Meggs, Travis CHPS coordinator, by phone at 707-424-2477, by email at elisa.k.meggs.ctr@mail.mil or by mail at 818 Topaz Circle.

TRAVIS FITNESS CENTER is open 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Visit <http://travisfc.technicate.com/> to schedule a time.

Airmen fighting virus out-process from DGMC



U.S. Army photo/Maj. Doug Halleaux

U.S. Air Force medical providers, nurses, technicians and supporters complete their equipment turn-in during out-processing Sept. 12 at Travis Air Force Base, California. U.S. Northern Command, through U.S. Army North, remains committed to providing flexible Department of Defense support to the Federal Emergency Management Agency in support of the whole-of-America COVID-19 response.

Retiree Council discusses ID cards

Tammy Cournoyer
AIR FORCE RETIREE SERVICES

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, Texas — Technology allowed the annual Air Force Retiree Council to continue its 48-year history of meeting despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

The council gathered together virtually Aug. 27-28 to address the latest Department of the Air Force retiree interest items and concerns.

This year's concerns focused on the availability

of appointments at military treatment facilities; indefinite ID cards for spouses and widows; and the ability to communicate with local retiree communities.

"The council meetings are key because that is where we get the issues and feedback needed to bring the CSAF and Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force up to speed on all the factors affecting their retiree populations," said Hoog. "Airman for Life begins at the highest levels within our Air Force — it is the council's job to

help make that connection." The Air Force currently has about 685,000 military retirees and more than 200,000 surviving spouses.

"Given the ever-declining numbers of those that serve in our military, the power of this population and the connection they have with our Department of the Air Force and the community will be foundational to our success in maintaining and gaining the support of the American people and our allies around the world," said former Chief Master Sgt.

of the Air Force James Cody, Air Force Retiree Council co-chair.

"Literally thousands of retired Airmen and their families continue to support those that serve today, and they tell the Air Force story across the globe," said Cody. "The strength and the power these patriots bring to the current force and civilian population is priceless and essential to the future of our Air Force."

The Department of the Air Force has 96 RAOs worldwide

See COUNCIL Page 15

Trump, IRS deliver tax deferral guidance

349th Air Mobility Wing
Public Affairs

In order to provide relief during the COVID-19 pandemic, a presidential memorandum was issued Aug. 8 and guidance followed Aug. 28 by Internal Revenue Service to temporarily defer Social Security Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance tax withholdings through the end of the 2020 calendar year.

For military members, it is effective the September mid-month pay, Defense Finance Accounting Service will temporarily defer the withholding of 6.2 percent of Social Security tax for basic pay less than \$8,666.66.

Military members can use their August or prior leave and earnings statement as a good reference for their typical Social Security tax amount. The Social Security tax is labeled as "FICA-SOC SECURITY" on the statement and is calculated as 6.2% of basic pay.

For civilian employees, the change will be effective pay period ending Sept. 12, DFAS will temporarily defer your 6.2

percent Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance tax withholding if wages, subject to OASDI, are \$4,000 or less in any given pay period.

Employees can use the "Taxable Wages" on the leave and earnings statement as a good reference for whether they will have OASDI tax deferred.

The OASDI deduction is found on the leave and earnings statement under the deductions tab/section.

Military members are not eligible to opt-out of the deferral if their Social Security wages fall within the stated limits. The deferral will happen automatically.

Civilian employees are not eligible to opt-out of the deferral if their Social Security wages fall within the stated limits. The deferral will happen automatically.

Per IRS guidance, collection of the deferred taxes will be taken from wages between Jan. 1 and April 30, 2021, for military members and civilian employees. Additional information on the collection process will

See DEFERRAL Page 12

Dover Airmen reroute cargo, save \$5 million

Airman 1st Class Faith Schaefer
436TH AIRLIFT WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

DOVER AIR FORCE BASE, Del. — The 436th Aerial Port Squadron saved approximately \$5 million through collaborative efforts with the 618th Air Operations Center to reroute and re-source cargo missions through the installation.

Dover AFB is home of the Department of Defense's largest aerial port, which is a hub for many strategic airlift missions. However, COVID-19 has complicated many of those missions.

"In some instances, (before COVID) an aircraft used to come in and spend 24-48 hours (on

the flight line) before they take off to go back home," said Bradley Schmidt, 436th APS cargo scheduler. "They're now spending two or three hours here: just enough time for us to get cargo off, (new) cargo on, and then they go to their next location."

The combination of COVID-19 procedures and limited time for ground operations required the APS to collaborate and devise a new and more efficient way to plan and execute mobility missions on a combination of both military and commercial aircraft.

That innovation happened

See REROUTE Page 12

Travis Credit Union earns recognition



U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Cameron Otte

Len Augustine, left, Travis Credit Union board director and former Vacaville, California, mayor, gives a speech as Sandy Person, center, Air Force-level civic leader, and Col. Zachery Jiron, 60th Air Mobility Wing vice commander, look on during the 2019 Air Force Distinguished Credit Union Award presentation Sept. 9 at Travis Air Force Base, California. The Travis Credit Union earned the Air Force Distinguished Credit Union Award in recognition of the achievements they made over the course of a year.

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ID card deadline extended to 2021

349th Air Mobility Wing
Public Affairs

Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System policy has granted a Department of Defense-wide extension to honor all expired retired or dependent ID cards that expire from Jan. 1 through June 30, 2021.

Cards that expired prior to Jan 1 must be processed new.

New dependent or retiree ID cards will only be scheduled under these circumstances:

- Dependents: When the sponsor's status has changed, such as changing from active duty to Guard or Reservem retirement, commissioning and more.

- Full-time college students age 21 or 23 need to schedule a DEERS update with information from the college of their

full-time enrollment. Only a DEERS update is required. The card can be expired. DO generate first time cards. Finally, those members age 23 applying for Tricare Young Adult coverage must be paid for prior to generating an ID card.

- Retirees: Sponsors and their dependents turning age 65 who may need Medicare updated if the feed from SSA fails. When Medicare information is updated in DEERS, Tricare will accept the claims regardless of the expiration date on the card. Tricare coverage will remain intact as it is not associated with ID card expiration dates. There should be no lapse in coverage or benefits.

For all CAC and USID related questions, please visit www.cac.mil and click on the red COVID-19 banner.

Leaders double down on Double Deuce



U.S. Air Force photo/Chustine Minoda

Airmen from the 22nd Airlift Squadron welcome Col. Zachery Jiron, second from right, 60th Air Mobility Wing vice commander, during a Leadership Rounds visit Sept. 11 at Travis Air Force Base, California. The Leadership Rounds program provides 60th AMW leadership with an opportunity to interact with Airmen and to get a detailed view of each mission performed at Travis AFB.

Fitness testing pushed back

Secretary of the
Air Force Public Affairs

ARLINGTON, Va. — Official physical fitness assessments across the Department of the Air Force will resume Jan. 1, 2021, officials announced Sept. 16.

To continue minimizing close contact among personnel during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and ensure units and personnel are fully ready to resume, testing has been delayed from October to January, and testing in January will move forward without obtaining waist, height and weight measurements.

“We know people are staying fit regardless, but we want to give our Airmen enough time to prepare,” said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Charles Q. Brown, Jr.

Beginning Jan. 1, uniformed members are expected to test on the 1.5 mile run, 1 minute of push-ups and 1 minute of sit-ups. The body composition

component (abdominal circumference), height and weight measurements are postponed until further notice. All members, including those with abdominal circumference exemptions, will receive maximum points for the AC component as part of their official score.

“This is an unprecedented situation and we’ve put a lot of work into assessing how and when we could safely resume fitness testing across the force,” said Lt. Gen. Brian Kelly, deputy chief of staff for manpower, personnel and services. “People have been juggling work, childcare issues, homeschooling, family separations, isolation, etc., and we know it’s been more challenging to maintain fitness. This delay gives our folks extra time to prepare for January, while also ensuring units have more time to implement additional COVID precautions.”

“We’re also aware our resumption occurs right after the

annual holiday season that can be challenging for people’s fitness,” Kelly said. “Hopefully this change removes some of the stress caused by the waist measurement, and gives us all a chance to start our New Year’s readiness and fitness resolutions on the right foot.”

Fitness assessment due dates in 2021 will primarily depend on the date and score of the last official test. Airmen and Space Professionals may determine their next fitness assessment due date by visiting the Official Physical Assessment Due Date Matrix on myPers.

“This transition requires a careful and systematic approach,” Kelly said. “Our goal is to begin testing where it makes sense, but also give commanders the needed tools and flexibility to make decisions that make sense for their locations and their people.”

Fitness assessment cells, See **FITNESS TEST** Page 12

Air Force Research Laboratory tracks Sporadic E

Joanne Perkins

377TH AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

KIRTLAND AIR FORCE BASE, N.M. — Researchers at Air Force Research Laboratory have discovered a new way to track and characterize a phenomenon called “Sporadic E” naturally occurring in the upper atmosphere, where large structures of dense plasma form.

These plasma structures, which occur at mid latitude locations around the world, disrupt radio frequency (RF), electromagnetic waves (or simply “radio waves”) and impact both the Department of Defense and civilian radio systems in positive and negative ways, depending on the application.

“Previous methods to observe these structures were insufficient for identifying and tracking these structures over large regions,” said Ken Obenberger, AFRL research physicist. “It would be advantageous to actively identify where these structures are, where they are going, and how dense they are, and we thought we could find a better way.”

The new method developed by Obenberger and collaborators at AFRL and the University of New Mexico, leverages the unintentional RF emissions from power lines, and using broadband radio noise, they can map and track dense Sporadic E structures.

“Since power lines are widespread we can observe Sporadic E over a very large region surrounding our observatory, the Long Wavelength Array, which is an asset of our collaborators at the University



Courtesy photo

Long Wavelength Array stations sit in the desert Sept. 8 near Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico. Researchers at the Air Force Research Laboratory at Kirtland AFB have discovered a new way to track and characterize a phenomenon called “Sporadic E” that naturally occurs in the upper atmosphere, where large structures of dense plasma form.

of New Mexico,” Obenberger said. “This technique could be used anywhere in the world where there is an electrical grid and an instrument similar to the LWA, and we are lucky because there are not many.”

This kind of technology could be very interesting to industries that work on or rely on high frequency and very high frequency communications like Marine radio, citizen band radio, FM radio, and digital TV.

Amateur HAM-radio operators have

long used Sporadic E for long-range communications in the VHF band, also known as the “2-meter” and “6-meter” bands by hams. Climatology of Sporadic E can provide a probability that it will occur, but the actual presence of sporadic E can only be determined through trial and error observations at the time.

“This is similar to how meteorologists can predict how likely thunderstorms will occur in the afternoons above New Mexico during monsoon season, but use Doppler

radar to identify and track specific thunderstorms as they occur,” notes Chris Fallén, one of Obenberger’s collaborators at AFRL. “Ken’s technique basically provides weather radar for sporadic E, only using radio noise from power lines as the radar transmitter.”

Having accurate now-casting of sporadic E can be critical during disaster situations where oftentimes HAM operators play a key role in communicating vital information.

In the devastating aftermath of the 2017 Hurricane Maria, Puerto Ricans were without power for many weeks, and 130 local, amateur radio operators immediately became the only method of emergency communication.

“Better understanding will lead to improved design and use of radio systems that mitigate the negative effects and take advantage of the good effects, thereby ensuring a stronger emergency communication network,” Obenberger said. “We are interested in Sporadic E and the effect it has on radio wave propagation, both good and bad.”

The effects are also relevant in U.S. military applications.

“In the case of the U.S. warfighter, reliable communication, position, navigation and timing, and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems, and understanding those effects, and understanding how Sporadic E develops and moves, can improve our ability to design and use those systems,” Obenberger said. “And everything we do at AFRL is to advance the technology for our military members.”

AFWERX announces event including space industry

AFWERX Public Affairs

LAS VEGAS — AFWERX, the U.S. Air Force’s innovation catalyst, announced Sept. 16 that registration is now live for EngageSpace virtual event.

Join AFWERX, the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Space Force and the Space Frontier Foundation for this two-day virtual event on Sept. 29-30.

With its highly interactive format and diverse participants, this event is designed to revolutionize how the space ecosystem works, dismantle the walls between sectors and

close the “believability gap” for what’s possible in space.

“EngageSpace is exactly the type of event that we need to help bridge knowledge gaps, explore funding for small companies, and align industry and government interests to ensure that America maintains its technological and innovative edge in the space domain,” said Maj. Ryan Pennington, Space and Missile Systems Center Space Ventures deputy.

AFWERX EngageSpace is a one-of-a-kind opportunity to connect with the best and brightest and see the future of

the new frontier. From the 800 companies that submitted their solutions to four space-focused AFWERX Challenges, 178 have been selected to showcase their solutions and connect with space experts, potential government buyers, and enthusiasts from around the world. Some of these companies will move on to funding opportunities for prototyping and development with the U.S. Air Force or Space Force.

The event will feature highly engaging opportunities to connect, educate and innovate

See **AFWERX** Page 12

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Courtesy graphic

An artist rendering of the KC-46A aircraft three-bay maintenance hangar for Travis Air Force Base, California.

AFCEC helps in switch to KC-46

Mila Cisneros
AIR FORCE INSTALLATION AND MISSION SUPPORT CENTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, Texas - The Air Force Civil Engineer Center is expanding global reach through a multi-phased construction effort to support the new KC-46A Pegasus refueling tanker.

The KC-46A, a next-generation aerial refueling aircraft, is designed to boost the air power and mobility operations of the Air Force. The high-capacity aircraft, which displaces the KC-10 and replaces the KC-135 Stratotanker, will aid global missions and improve the ability to respond rapidly to crisis and contingency operations around the globe.

AFCEC, responsible for providing full-spectrum installation engineering services across the enterprise, plays a key role in the beddown of missions and airframes.

"The Air Force relies on AFCEC to design and deliver resilient facilities, which will accommodate the needs of the KC-46A

fleet," said Col. David Norton, director of AFCEC's Facility Engineering Directorate.

Jointly with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Naval Facilities Engineering Command, AFCEC's Facility Engineering Directorate is managing construction efforts Air Force-wide to deliver infrastructure for the new tanker.

"Infrastructure is critical to air power. We work closely with the bases to improve their facilities and ensure they are mission ready," Norton said.

AFCEC completed McConnell Air Force Base beddown in 2017 with 16 projects at \$230 million and is nearing completion of the Altus Air Force Base beddown with eight projects at \$66 million. Construction is ongoing at several other locations, to include Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, and Travis Air Force Base, California.

At Tinker, a designated maintenance hub for the new refueling platform, the massive \$500

See AFCEC Page 15



Courtesy photo

A New Hampshire Air National Guard KC-46A Pegasus refuels five Marine Corp's F/A-18D Hornets over the Pacific Ocean with the Marine All-Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 242, as the fighters returned home to Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona, from MCAS Iwakuni, Japan, on Sept. 10.

ANG flies first KC-46 coronets

Staff Sgt. Charles Johnston
157TH AIR REFUELING WING

PEASE AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, N.H. — Pease Air National Guard Base, New Hampshire, achieved another historic first in military aerial refueling.

A year after the 157th Air Refueling Wing became the first Air National Guard unit in the country to field the KC-46A Pegasus, New Hampshire Airmen helped plan and execute the new tanker's first ever coronet, a tactical air movement that typically involves multiple fighter aircraft.

"A fighter has such a small gas tank, it can't get to point A to point B without landing or refueling midair," said NHANG Capt. Josh Stewart, a planner assigned to the Northeast Tanker Task Force, the command responsible for the Aug. 21 coronet.

Five Navy F/A-18E Super

Hornets were "dragged" or escorted and refueled by a KC-46A from Volk Field, Wisconsin to Naval Air Station Lemoore, California, Stewart said.

Stewart is helping the Air Force develop standard operating procedures on how to best implement the next-generation tanker. "We are a perfect entity to be planning these coronets," Stewart said. "We have three KC-46 qualified pilots and two qualified boom operators. It was important for us to volunteer and take these missions."

Not to be outdone, fellow NHANG Capt. Christopher Schimmel, the task force director, helped orchestrate the first KC-46A transoceanic coronet Sept. 9. The milestone comprised an all-Pease aircrew and two tankers, which completed 16 refuelings for five F/A-18s.

"(Pease is), no kidding, writing the book on how to operate this new jet and knocking it

out of the park," said Maj. Alex Nutting, coronet branch chief for the 618th Air Operations Center.

The goal is to keep improving the coronet process, Stewart said. Building on lessons learned from the first two coronets, the task force is planning a third, even more complex multi-leg mission for later this month.

"Very seldom do coronets go as planned, so coming up with a solid starting product gives us a baseline to deviate from, and our planners are some of the best on-the-spot thinkers out there," said NHANG Maj. Wiley Semrau, task force lead planner.

Schimmel credited a total-team effort for the task force's early success.

"It's due to the perseverance of our aircrew and our maintainers during multiple challenges," Schimmel said. "It's absolutely amazing."

Puzzles

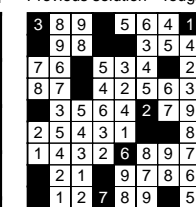
STR8TS

No. 508 Medium



You can find more help, tips and hints at www.str8ts.com

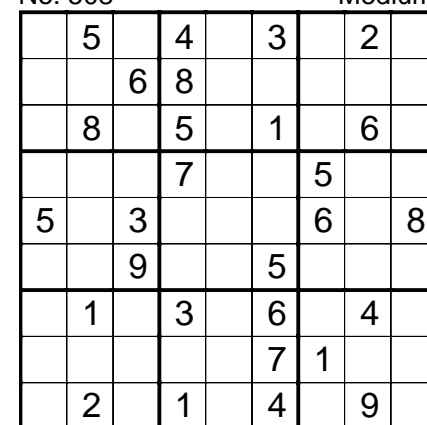
Previous solution - Tough



How to beat Str8ts - Like Sudoku, no single number can repeat in any row or column. But... rows and columns are divided by black squares into compartments. These need to be filled in with numbers that complete a 'straight'. A straight is a set of numbers with no gaps but can be in any order, eg [4,2,3,5]. Clues in black cells remove that number as an option in that row and column, and are not part of any straight. Glance at the solution to see how 'straights' are formed.

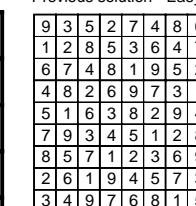
SUDOKU

No. 508 Medium



The solutions will be published here in the next issue.

Previous solution - Easy



To complete Sudoku, fill the board by entering numbers 1 to 9 such that each row, column and 3x3 box contains every number uniquely.

For many strategies, hints and tips, visit www.sudokuwiki.org

If you like Str8ts, Sudoku and other puzzles, check out our books, iPhone/iPad Apps and much more on our store at www.str8ts.com

Voluntary Leave Transfer Program

The following Travis employees are approved as leave recipients through the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program: Rebecca Austria, 60th Maintenance Group; John Butler, Special Tactics Training Squadron; Jaquelyn Cabanlit, Travis AFB Commissary; Neftaly Clark, 1st Special Operations Force Support Squadron; David Duncan, 319th Reconnaissance Wing, Grand Forks AFB; Rabiye Hamilton, Travis AFB Commissary; Patrick Hodge, United States Transportation Command, Scott AFB; Mark Holmes, 10th Contracting Squadron; Dina Patterson-Steward,

60th Aerial Port Squadron; Jason Perkins, Grand Forks AFB; Gina Silva, Air Force Academy headquarters; Jean Sommer, Travis AFB Commissary; Maria Thammassen, 60th Force Support Squadron; and Dennis Weaver, Air Force Manpower Agency.

The VLTP allows an employee who has a medical emergency or is affected by a medical emergency of a family member and is without availability of paid leave to receive transferred annual leave directly from other employees. For more information, call 707-424-1720.

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Wildfires across West Coast propel ash and smoke over Travis



U.S. Air Force photo/Nicholas Pilch



U.S. Air Force photo/Chustine Minoda



U.S. Air Force photo/Heide Couch



U.S. Air Force photo/Heide Couch



U.S. Air Force photo/Heide Couch



U.S. Air Force photo/Chustine Minoda

1) U.S. Airmen assigned to the 860th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron conduct routine maintenance to the wing of a C-17 Globemaster III Sept. 9 at Travis Air Force Base, California. Wildfires across California and the West Coast propelled ash and smoke into the troposphere, the lowest region of the atmosphere, impacting the air quality and sky color. 2) U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Ivan Rodriguez, 60th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron aerospace hydraulics journeyman, left, and Senior Airman Victoria Lovell, 60th AMXS aerospace propulsion journeyman, inspect a C-5M Super Galaxy's tail Sept. 9 at Travis. 3) Ground crews finish up working on a C-17 Sept. 9 at Travis. 4) A C-5M prepares to land on the runway Sept. 9 at Travis. 5) Airman 1st Class Jasper Walker, 860th AMXS integrated flight system control journeyman, looks over paperwork Sept. 9 while inside a C-17 at Travis. 6) U.S. Airmen assigned to the 860th AMXS repair a C-17 wing Sept. 9 at Travis.

Reroute

From Page 5

through the capability forecasters. They are tasked with maximizing aircraft utilization and ensuring that logistics run smoothly. They work closely with the 618th Air Operations Center's Channel Requirement Branch, the command and control center for mobility air assets, to coordinate conflict-free cargo missions.

"I am so proud of the collaborative efforts between our folks here at the 618th Air Operations Center and our fellow Airmen at Dover's 436th Aerial Port Squadron," said Brigadier General Daniel DeVoe, 618th Air Operations Center commander. "It started with an innovative idea by a Dover Airman, then through our strategic partnership and recent transformation, we were able to apply innovative solutions, deliver cargo faster and save the taxpayer nearly \$5 million. Together, we continue to provide global support for air mobility operations and demonstrate our ability to deliver anywhere in the world, whenever we choose."



U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Christopher Quail

436th Aerial Port Squadron Airmen load cargo being delivered to Ukraine onto a contracted aircraft June 16 at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware. Contracted aircraft stopped at Dover AFB to pick up cargo as part of a foreign military sales project.

Destiny Donigan, 436th APS cargo scheduling supervisor and capability forecaster, was able to recognize that there were many C-5M Super Galaxies and C-17 Globemaster IIIs leaving towards cargo destinations empty.

"We have to look at what the other entities within the aerial port have to do to make this mission happen and have it happen successfully," said Donigan.

Through coordination with the 618th AOC's Channel

Requirement Branch, Donigan and her team managed to have missions rerouted via Dover. This permitted cargo to be moved on Dover military aircraft rather than using commercial flights that cost a significant amount of money. The cargo was then allowed to enter the local port and permitted shared space utilization on scheduled airlifts. This rerouting gets the cargo to the destinations on time, if not ahead of schedule.

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AFWERX courtesy graphic

AFWERX, the U.S. Air Force's innovation catalyst, announced Sept. 16 that registration is now live for EngageSpace virtual event.

AFWERX

From Page 7

with other like-minded attendees, industry leaders, individual innovators, academia, investors, as well as military and government leaders. The entire event is designed to transform and accelerate the industry, and enable government buyers to pursue the most promising innovative solutions to the most pressing and threatening space scenarios.

"The Space Frontier Foundation is thrilled to be

supporting this collaborative event that will help align the major players who are actively creating the next-generation space economy," said Meagan Crawford, Space Frontier Foundation chair of the Board of Directors and SpaceFund managing partner. "EngageSpace is creating value for startup companies, established industry, and the U.S. government and ensuring that America continues to lead humanity out into the solar system."

Register for the EngageSpace event by visiting <https://engage.space/>.

Fitness test

From Page 6

fitness center staff, physical training leaders and members performing fitness assessments will adhere to physical distancing protocols and other local precautions as determined by installation commanders. Commanders may delay official

fitness assessments beyond Jan. 1, 2021, based on the recommendation of local public health officials, the continuation of closed fitness centers and extended state-wide restriction of movement and gatherings.

For more information, Airmen and Space Professionals should contact their fitness assessment cells and visit the COVID-19 Fitness Guidance page on myPers.

Deferral

From Page 5

be provided in the future.

If a military member or civilian employee separates or retires in 2020 before the Social Security tax can be collected in 2021, they are still responsible for the Social Security tax repayment. Additional information on the collection process will be provided in the future.

For questions on the temporary deferral of the 6.2 percent OASDI withholding,

visit the IRS page at <https://bit.ly/3khAxQ6>.

For more information on financial readiness, visit www.finred.usalearning.gov. Additional information can be found at the Travis Airman and Family Readiness Center by speaking with a personal financial manager or counselor, or visiting Military OneSource at <https://www.militaryonesource.mil>.

Information for this story was compiled from: <https://www.dfas.mil/taxes/Social-Security-Deferral/>.

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AFCEC

From Page 8

million effort began in 2016.

"The groundbreaking for the new facilities was in July 2016, with the first project completed in October 2019. The work included expansion of the taxiway, ramps and other infrastructure on the campus," said Rafael Gonzalez, AFCEC project manager.

AFCEC also finished a depot maintenance dock and system integration laboratory designed for equipment calibration in 2019.

"These developments were the first portion of a large construction effort expected to run through 2029," Gonzalez said.

AFCEC is managing the design and construction of a 14-dock maintenance campus, with the primary function to provide depot maintenance work in support of the KC-46.

Nearing completion is a \$110 million two-bay maintenance hangar – a first of its kind – combining different types of maintenance capabilities. It's expected to be ready next month in time for the arrival of

the KC-46A.

"With additional infrastructure being built, the 156-acre maintenance campus will improve the operations and assure continuity of Tinker's mission in support of the KC-46 air refueling operations worldwide," Gonzalez said.

On the East Coast, at JB-MDL, AFCEC is engaged in projects totaling \$105 million. The base is an existing tanker base but needed upgrades to enable the full operations of the new air frame when it arrives in August 2022.

"Our delivery plan includes construction of 10 projects to support this extremely capable aircraft," said Mai Stevens, AFCEC project manager.

"Since the ground breaking in December 2018, the base received a new maintenance hangar and servicing facility, along with ground equipment storage and a training facility," Stevens added.

"We also completed alterations to the parking apron and fuel system."

Stevens said activities for other facilities are ongoing with an expected completion by the end of 2021. They include a two-bay hangar, a new fuselage trainer and a boom operator trainer.

Council

From Page 4

and area representatives on the council who oversee offices in their region. RAOs, staffed by volunteers from the retiree community that include surviving spouses and sister service members, serve as information and referral centers to assist retirees and survivors with myriad actions.

"Normally, we cite volunteer hours and examples of all the other great work our retirees bring to any installation, but in truth they help tell the Air Force story and keep alive the traditions of service, integrity and excellence in everything they touch," added Hoog.

"A passion for our Air Force and its people – both active and retired – is needed for our service and great nation."

The Retiree Council serves both Air Force and Space Force personnel and their families. Additional adjustments will be made as we continue to stand-up and source the Space Force.

Since its inception in 1972, the council, which serves as a

link between the Department of the Air Force retiree community and the chief of staff of the Air Force, normally meets at the Air Force's Personnel Center in May. This year, because of the pandemic, the council and briefers met virtually using web-based conferencing to discuss issues affecting retirees, family members and surviving spouses worldwide.

"As always, meeting in person provides some face-to-face interactions that can't be replaced," said Lt. Gen. Stephen Hoog, Air Force Retiree Council co-chair. "With Zoom we were able to bring in a wider audience; this opened our eyes to the possibility of more frequent interaction as a team throughout the year. Overall, a big success for the entire team and a tool we'll add to our overall program."

The council is comprised of two co-chairmen currently appointed by the CSAF and 15 geographical area representatives. There are also four members-at-large who bring special knowledge regarding medical, legislation and spouse matters.

This year, Retiree

Activities Office staff members worldwide were also able to attend the meeting because it was web-based and no travel and lodging were required.

Representatives from the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, Air Force Surgeon General, Army and Air Force Exchange Service, Defense Commissary Agency, Military Officers Association of America, Air Force Association, Air Force Sergeants Association, Air Force Sergeants Association, and Department of the Air Force DEERS office briefed the council. Representatives from the secretary of the Navy's retiree council also attended.

Each year, RAO volunteers submit issues to the council based on common trends that arise when assisting customers and offer recommendations on how to help the retiree community overall.

For more information on the council, which is administratively supported by the AFPC Airman and Family Sustainment Branch, and RAOs, visit <https://www.retirees.af.mil/Library/Council/> and <https://www.retirees.af.mil/Library/RAOs/>, respectively.

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Weather

From Page 3

of interest and update leadership teams on any looming weather, such as hurricanes and sandstorms.

About a year ago, during a short-notice deployment for the reopening of Prince Sultan Air Base, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, weather played an important role in supporting airbase operations and ensuring en-route personnel and equipment weren't affected.

"We had several days where wind conditions led to extremely reduced visibility," said Master Sgt. Don Killian, 621st Contingency Response Squadron weather specialist. "I would brief the weather to our leadership to mitigate downtime for our operations."

There are four active weather specialists in the CRW: two in each contingency response group between Travis Air Force Base, California, and Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey.

Weather specialists attend training for up to eight months at Keesler AFB, Mississippi, for initial skill training. While there, they learn how to record weather observations using manual methods or meteorological equipment and analyze real-time weather conditions.

"There are many more tasks Air Force weather personnel get trained on, but these are the skillsets we utilize the most within the CR," Gragg said.

In-garrison, a weather specialist's primary job is to stay current on readiness training and maintain tactical weather

equipment for deployment.

"We periodically go out to set up our tactical weather sensors to perform operations checks and make sure they are ready to deploy with us," Gragg said. "We also work with the 305th Operations Support Squadron weather team to get our annual re-certifications for observing and forecasting core tasks."

Tracking the weather may not be a glamorous job to some. Still, each day is different, and one weather forecast can be the difference between mission success and failure.

"The variety of weather we can experience around the world has always impressed me the most," Gragg said. "Maintaining a grasp of the fundamentals is important, but it doesn't keep you from constantly seeing and learning new things."

Rodgers

From Page 2

of the kind. I enjoy taking time out of my day to speak with anyone.

Now, why did I share that?

My mom has a saying: "Do not allow things to roll down the highway of ignorance." Oftentimes, we view others from our level of understanding. Since many of our backgrounds and experiences differ, our viewpoints vary as well. That person that seems unapproachable or different may be the same person to give you a shoulder when life happens.

EO incidents happen for a reason and they create opportunities - opportunities for people to learn from one another. The driving force behind many of the complaints that I have had the unfortunate pleasure to process is lack of communication.

Communication will allow you to resolve concerns at the lowest level. Effective communication can resolve workplace disputes, personality conflicts and perceptions. The person that seems problematic may

need a new challenge that provides them with fresh determination. Effective communication will open the door to life-changing dialogue.

EO mission success hinges on going to the people and our objective is to inform the organizations we visit. As EO professionals, we need to see you, and you need to see us, your team. EO professionals listen to more than what's being said. We are also listening for what's not being said.

During our routine visits to your organization, share your views, thoughts and concerns. Opposing views and experiences will not be met with contemptuous disregard but welcomed as teachable moments. The old adage that "communication is key" certainly holds true.

The EO office is more than a complaint office. We are a resolution team. Please know, if help is needed to guide a conversation, we are here. If there is a topic that you want to learn about or would like our team to offer, reach out. Anytime you see me out and about, feel free to talk with me. We are here for you.

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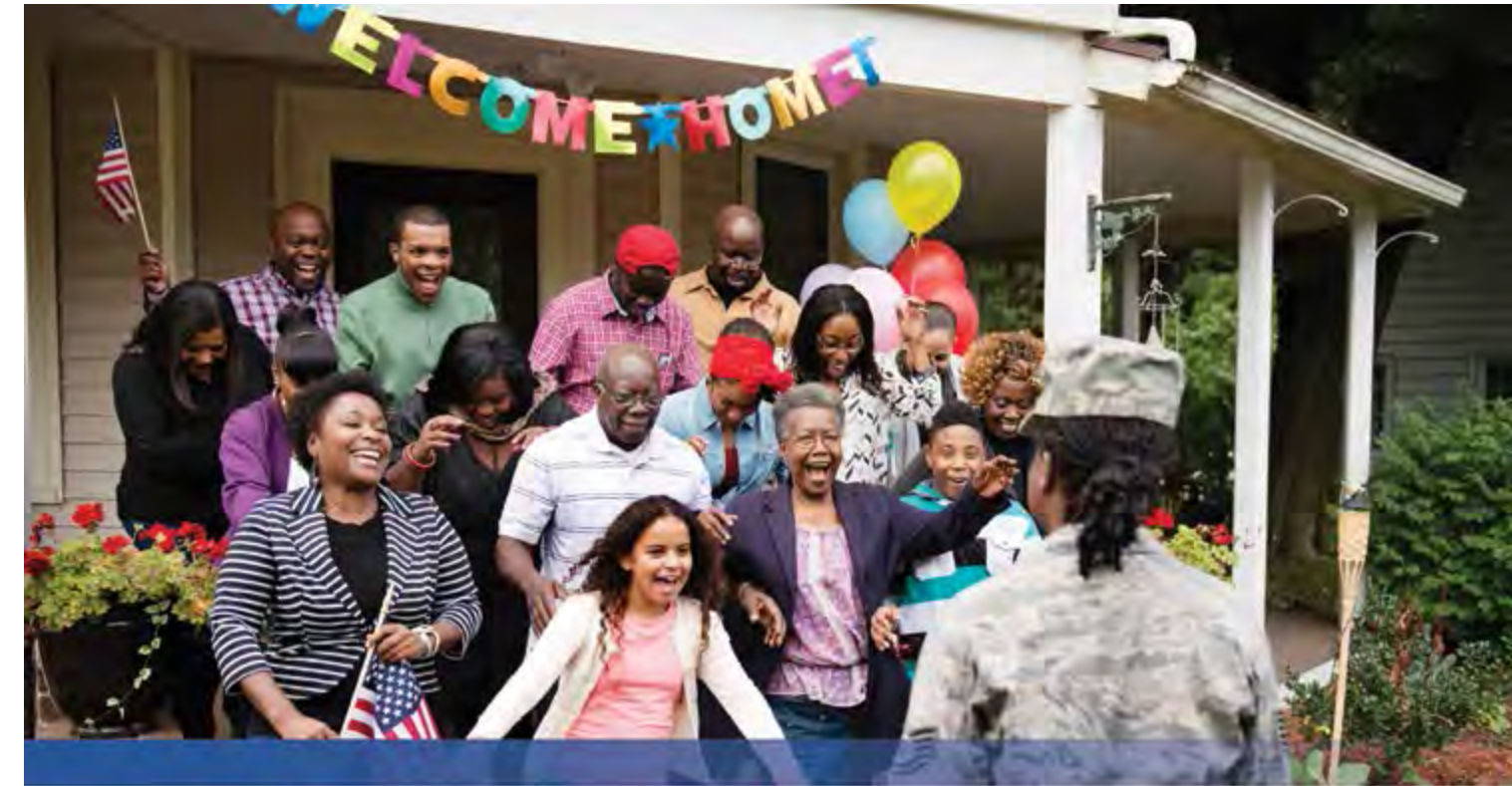
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1) U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Corey Burgan, Priority Material Office Detachment logistics specialist/submarines, stands in front of the U.S. flag at the 60th Aerial Port Squadron warehouse Sept. 11 at Travis Air Force Base, California. Burgan works in a one-person shop at the Aerial Port and is responsible for tracking and shipping high-priority components to vessels across the Pacific that need repair. He was a finalist for the Navy's Sailor of the Year. 2) Burgan works at his desk with his Sailor of the Year finalist award on display at the 60th APS Aug. 18 at Travis. 3) Burgan sorts various packages at the 60th APS Aug. 18 at Travis.

Sailor at Travis ships parts to the...
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U.S. Air Force photos by Nicholas Pilch



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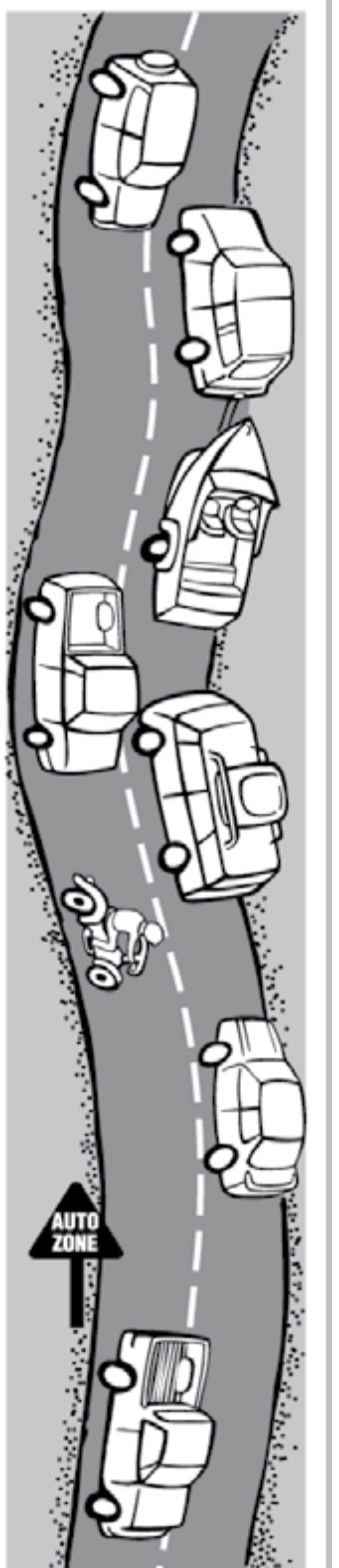
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