

Buckeye Flyer



Volume 45, No. 3

Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio

March 2006

Bradley endorses new hearing protection for Reservists

By John Schutte
Air Force Research Laboratory
Human Effectiveness Directorate

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, OHIO — Technology developed at the Air Force Research Laboratory here to prevent noise-induced hearing loss will become the preferred solution for Air Force Reserve Command aviators.

Lieutenant General John A. Bradley, Commander of Air Force Reserve Command and Chief of Air Force Reserve, recommended the Attenuating Custom Communications Earpiece System, or ACCES, and outlined funding methods at a Dec. 7 meeting of the AFRC Requirements Review Board at the Pentagon.

General Bradley, a command pilot with more than 6,900 flying hours including 337 combat missions, flew four F-16 sorties wearing the ACCES system in early December.

He liked what he heard—and did not hear—during those flights, and was immediately sold on the technology that reduces noise by 40 decibels (dB) and provides clearer radio communications in the cockpit.

“These things are phenomenal,” General Bradley said during a December 14 interview at his Pentagon office. “I want to buy this for every Reserve I have who wears a helmet. And that’s my fighter guys, that’s my bomber guys, and my training guys.” Additionally, mobility aircrew wear helmets during night vision goggle operations and in combat, and

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Tech. Sgt. Terry L. Lewis from the 445th CES Pavements and Heavy Equipment shop soaks the ground with water for the roller to compact. (Courtesy photo)

Engineers head south to the Caribbean for their annual tour

by Maj. Ted Theopolos
445th Public Affairs

The 445th Civil Engineer Squadron in conjunction with the 433rd Civil Engineer Squadron from Lackland AFB, Texas deployed eight members each to start construction of a 5,300 square foot building for the Marine Police Barracks and Operations Center on Saint Lucia Island at Vieux Fort. This building is a Southern Command project in support of anti-drug operations connected with the local Coast Guard there.

The Saint Lucia Island is located among the Lesser Antilles islands. The island sits between the Caribbean Sea on its west coast and the North Atlantic Ocean on its east coast. The island size is roughly 3.5 times that of Washington D.C. Vieux Fort is located on the southern most tip of the island.

The first of 12 rotations of reservists left in late January and have started the project by transporting deployed equipment to the job site from the local airport. Then engineers removed several junk cars from the property to another location out of the construction area and made sure there was no oil or gas in them which might harm the environment.

With near perfect weather, engineers leveled the ground surface for the new building which took a total of 1,475 yards of fill material to do so. Engineers have also started building forms for concrete, plumbers are roughing in the pad for toilets and showers while electricians provide temporary electrical power which included installation of a power pack.

The building is slated to be complete by August 6, after the last rotation of engineers perform the punch out list.

Bloom where you are planted

by Chaplain (Maj.) Bill Dickens
Wing Chaplain

I believe God places us at specific places, at specific times to accomplish His will. In the civilian world, I am completing my 5th year as the High School Principal at Calvary Christian School. Recently I was deployed to the AOR and received an email that a student, Sgt Dan Royce, U. S. Army, from my first graduating class (Class of 2002) was deployed to Kuwait, waiting for movement to Mosul, Iraq. I was able to connect with him, have lunch at the DFAC at Camp Buerhing, and pray with him before he headed north. It is a small world, but come on, the middle of the desert in Kuwait!!! I believe God orchestrated that meeting.

If you read the book of Acts in the New Testament, you see that God's hand guided the Apostle Paul to various cities to meet various people. Wherever he goes, cities, synagogues, houses or prisons, whoever he meets, philosophers, fellow Christians, or soldiers, Paul sees them as divine appointments, scheduled by God.

As I reflect on some of the recent retirements, Col Breed and Chief Waggy in particular, I am thankful for knowing them and serving with them. Once again, I believe God orchestrated those meetings.

I encourage you to examine your surroundings, get to know, really know the people around you, and become their Wingman. I believe you will be used to make a difference in someone's life.

Enjoy the beginning of Spring.

New Command Chief looks forward to serving you and serving with you

by Chief Master Sgt. Aaron Mouser
445th Command Chief

In June of 1976, I signed up for delayed enlistment in the United States Air Force. On December 1st of that year I showed up for basic training at Lackland AFB, Texas, with long hair and not a clue as to what really awaited me. For me, as for most of us, that next 6-8 weeks was a life changing event. Who could have known that 29 years later I would be selected to be the Command Chief of the 445th Airlift Wing?



I don't think it has sunk in yet, but I am excited about it and look forward to solidifying the processes Chief Waggy worked on for the last 4 years. To name a couple: The Enlisted Performance Reports, which are now critical in most applications for positions, promotions and Professional Military Education. We owe it to our members to provide them a valid report of their work as is applicable to their performance; Awards and Decorations are also a big topic and we should work to ensure our members are properly recognized for their efforts.

I am truly honored to have been selected for this position and will do my best to serve you. I pray that I serve you as well as Chief Waggy did during his time as Command Chief. That is a huge challenge, but I feel with the mentoring provided by Chief Waggy and the support of the Chiefs Group, the First Sergeants, as well as the rest of the members of the wing, we can

achieve most anything.

I have to admit I have had a set of the old style Chief's stripes for years that have moved around my home, office, and in and out of my car that always kept the goal of becoming a Chief Master Sergeant out in front of me. This is something I highly recommend for everyone—set a goal and then work towards it. When Chief Waggy was coming up on High Year Tenure I put up a picture of Command Chief Stripes as the specific goal and here we are today with the fulfillment of that goal. It is a tremendous honor to have achieved the goal with you all, and it is based in part on your support of our mission and programs within the wing. I truly have to say thank you to you for your support of me and the other first sergeants over the last several years.

With the change of the Air Force Reserves from a Strategic Reserve Force to an Operational Reserve Force, we all need to be the best we can be, and we need the best to serve with us. That is up to each one of us and we need to ensure we look around as we go through our daily work routines. If something needs to be done, we take care of it, or at least ensure it gets on our radar screen to take care of it.

With the conversion to the C-5 aircraft we all see numerous changes happening around us, to include a lot of new faces. Let's make sure we get the job done safely and accurately. A phrase that I stated in a previous article is "You can accomplish great things if you don't care who gets the credit." I think this is where we all are in support of our nation at this critical time in our history.

The members of the 445th Airlift Wing are the best I have had the honor to serve with. I thank you for your service and look forward to serving you and serving with you all.

Buckeye Flyer



Vol. 45 No. 2

445th Airlift Wing (U.S. Air Force Reserve Command)
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio

U.S. Government Printing Office 5-00001-445AW

This funded Air Force Reserve newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military services. Contents of the *Buckeye Flyer* are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by the U. S. Government, Department of the Air Force or Department of Defense. Editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the 445th Airlift Wing Office of Public Affairs. Photographs are U.S. Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated.

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Wing recognized African American History Month

Photo and story By Senior Airman Nicole Talbert
445th Public Affairs

Members of the 445th Airlift Wing gathered February 4 here during a luncheon to recall and celebrate the positive contributions to our nation made by people of African descent during African American History Month.

“We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools,” said Martin Luther King Jr. The briefing began by Wing Vice Commander Col. Brian Dominguez sharing this quote from Martin Luther King. The vice commander stressed the importance of who you have on your team.

Senior Airman Jermane Coleman of the 445th Maintenance Squadron gave a briefing about African American history and its impact on the nation’s history.

“African Americans have played a serious role throughout our history,” he said.

Senior Airman Coleman discussed road blocks African Americans faced in the military through talking about the lives of three soldiers, Staff Sgt. Rueben Rivers, 2nd Lt. Jackie Robinson, and Lt. Warren G. H. Crecy. These soldiers, attached to the 761st Tank Battalion, a United States Army segregated combat tank battalion during World War II, entered combat with Gen. George Patton November 7, 1944.

Staff Sgt. Rivers received the Medal of Honor in 1997 for unusual heroism. Despite a severely wounded leg, he took charge of another tanker, opened fired on enemy tanks and found a way to retreat and save thousands.

2nd Lt. Robinson was the most famous member of the 761st for taking a stand against bigotry. A white bus driver told Robinson to move to the back of the bus, but he refused. After leaving the army in 1944, he joined the Negro Baseball League. In 1947, he became the first African American to join a major league since the segregation of baseball in the 1900s. He symbolized a challenge to racial discrimination and segregation during that time. Jackie Robinson led the Brooklyn Dodgers to six World Series and one World Series Championship. He was named



Senior Airman Jermane Coleman from the 445th Maintenance Squadron gives a briefing on African American history during a luncheon honoring African American contributions to the U.S.

National League Rookie of the Year in 1947 and National League MVP in the 1949.

Lieutenant Warren G. H. Crecy, tank commander, was the “Baddest man in the 761st” for inflicting more casualties upon the enemy than any other tanker. Crecy was nominated for the Medal of Honor and received a battlefield commission.

Senior Airman Coleman completed his briefing by talking about the deactivation of the 761st in 1946 in Germany. The battalion was reactivated at Fort Knox, Kentucky, in November 1947, but deactivated for good in March 1955.

The luncheon concluded with closing remarks from Gen. Bruce E. Davis, 445th Airlift Wing Commander.

Col. Dominguez awarded Senior Airman Coleman with a 445th Wing coin after his presentation.



Deployed SFS member earns Airman of the Month

Senior Airman Jarrod Applegate from the 445th Security Forces Squadron earned Airman of the Month from his deployed location, Baghdad, Iraq with the 332d Air Expeditionary Wing. The airman, deployed last October, is now assigned to 732nd Air Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron -Det 3 in the Interantioanl Zone in Baghdad, Iraq. The airman was awarded the Airman of the Month certificate by Lt. Col. Philip Shott, commander of the 732d Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron. (Courtesy photo)



C-5 Galaxy aircraft sits on the west ramp with its nose pointing to the new C-5 hangar under construction. C-5s are being reengined, known as RERP. The aircraft will receive a more efficient engine made by General Electric, which will increase mission capability rate. (photo by Maj. Ted Theopolos)

C-5 Galaxy aircraft engine test successful

by Staff Sgt. C. Todd Lopez
Air Force Print News

The Air Force reached a milestone last month in the effort to modernize its C-5 Galaxy fleet.

A successful test of newly mounted C-5 engines occurred Jan. 21 at a Lockheed Martin facility in Marietta, Ga. The test was part of the C-5 Reliability Enhancement and Re-engining Program, or RERP, said Col. John Brunderman, Air Force mobility division chief for global reach programs.

“They were able to start the engines, show that the electronics worked, show the thrust reverses deployed, run it up to full power and control the engines,” Colonel Brunderman said. “That is a very significant milestone that demonstrates to us that the technical risk in C-5 RERP is pretty low. From this point on, it is some very minor adjustments and tweaks.”

The RERP is the second part of a two-phase C-5 modernization program helping the aircraft achieve a mission-capable rate of at least 75 percent during wartime. During the RERP, a C-5 is fitted with more efficient General Electric F138-GE-100 engines.

The aircraft also receives approximately 70 other modifications, which increases its reliability, the colonel said. Eventually, 112 C-5A, C-5B and C-5C model aircraft will go through the two-phase upgrade.

Before a C-5 goes through RERP, it must first go through the Avionics Modernization Program, also known as AMP. This program overhauls the C-5 flightdeck and prepares the aircraft to receive the more modern engines.

“AMP puts a digital backbone into the aircraft,” Colonel Brunderman said. “It replaces a lot of legacy analog dial systems that are no longer supportable and are getting unreliable and puts them into a digital format. AMP also allows the aircraft to interface with the digital controls on the new

engines that come in the RERP phase.”

The Air Force has 15 C-5s that have completed or are in the process of receiving AMP modifications. Three of these are currently being modified to the RERP configuration at Lockheed Martin’s plant in Marietta, Ga. The recent engine-run test was conducted on the first of these three aircraft.

After completing the entire modernization program, the C-5s will be renamed the C-5M Galaxy aircraft. The C-5M won’t be faster, but it will be more robust and powerful than the A and B models, Colonel Brunderman said.

“It will provide us with the ability to take off with heavier loads, on shorter runways, to climb to altitude faster, to save on fuel, to fly at higher altitudes, to make it into various air tracks to and from Europe and mix with all the international commercial traffic,” he said.

The modifications also make the aircraft less prone to maintenance failures, meaning the aircraft can spend less time being repaired and more time flying missions, he said.

Taking an aircraft that is invaluable to the Air Force and making it better means the Air Force will be better able to support the warfighter well into the future, Colonel Brunderman said.

“The C-5 Galaxy is an integral part of our overall mobility system which includes the C-17 Globemaster III aircraft as well as the C-130 Hercules aircraft,” Colonel Brunderman said. “A particular benefit of the C-5 is its outsize and oversize capability — we can move M1 ABRAMS tanks, helicopters and other things that will not fit on the C-130.

“The C-5 is the largest aircraft in the U.S. inventory and increasing its efficiency will benefit the entire military,” he said.

Colonel Brunderman said he expects all 112 C-5s in the Air Force will be fitted with new engines by 2020, and the efficiency realized by the modifications will pay for the program by 2029.



CES work on new Airman Leadership Building

Senior Airman Martin Moleski
445th Public Affairs

Airmen of the 445th Civil Engineer Squadron completed upgrades on the kitchen for the new Airman Leadership Building, which will be used as a regional classroom for active duty Air Force, Air Force Reservists, Air National Guardsmen, and recruiters.

The classroom, located in Area B, has seen many improvements over the last few months. Members of the 445th CES improved the main water lines and plumbing in the building, while also installing new countertops and cabinets.



Master Sgt. Dennis Jones from the 445th Civil Engineer Squadron helps put in a new sink in the Airman Leadership Building. (photo by SrA Martin Moleski)

Staff Sergeant Anthony Pence, of the 88th Air Base Wing and a flight instructor for the school said, "This is the smallest schoolhouse in AFMC, but we are trying to expand and add an auditorium on the

back."

Two teams consisting of carpenters and plumbers were sent in for the renovation, which gave junior enlisted airmen valuable on-the-job training.

New hearing protection

Continued from page 1

ground crew and maintainers wear helmets during takeoff and landing operations.

"I suspected... I would have the (radio) volume significantly



Air Force Reserve Command aviators will soon be wearing the Attenuating Custom Communications Earpiece System, or ACCES. The custom fit earpieces help to reduce noise by 40 decibels and provides clearer radio communication in the cockpit. The Air Force Research Laboratory at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, developed ACCES when Air Force maintenance crews reported problems communicating with each other and with pilots when jet engines were in high-power settings. (U.S. Air Force photo)

lower, and it's true," General Bradley continued. "I will tell you that it cuts out more noise and I can hear much better, and I mean it's unbelievable. I have the volume knobs turned way down... to the 25 percent range, versus 75 to 80 percent (without ACCES), so I hear much better."

General Bradley's plan would streamline procurement of the ACCES technology developed by AFRL's Human Effectiveness (HE) Directorate to improve health, safety and communications when flying or working around aircraft.

The review board collects, analyzes and validates the AFRC's requirements. General Bradley directed his staff to procure ACCES using either 2006 fallout funds (unused command program funds) or individual flying unit funds at the unit commander's discretion.

Air Combat Command issued a safe-to-fly memo in August authorizing ACCES for use in several fighter aircraft, and that memo applies to Reserve missions also, General Bradley said.

AFRL initiated the ACCES program upon learning that Air Force maintenance crews reported problems communicating with each other and with pilots when jet engines are in higher power settings.

The Veterans Administration has reported that treatment of hearing loss has cost taxpayers more than \$6.7 billion since 1977.

"We pay a lot of money to people in retirement for disabilities," General Bradley said. "We create that disability in some cases; people get disability payments for hearing loss because they've flown (or maintained) jet fighters or helicopters. And I thought, 'Gee, why don't we put some money into preventing the hearing loss up front instead of paying huge amounts, millions of dollars, or billions of dollars, in the end?'"



Wing People



Master Sergeant Lisa Rodriguez from the 445th Aerospace Medical Squadron receives Air Force Sergeant's Association's Reservist of the Year Award for 2005. The award was presented at the AFSA banquet. The master sergeant is shown with 88th ABW Vice Commander Col. Stephen Werner.



Senior Master Sgt. Joseph J. Smith earned the Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award for Wright-Patterson AFB. The Senior Master Sgt. was awarded at a base luncheon on Jan. 11 honoring the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He credited his mother for teaching him, "If each of us makes a little difference, we'll make a big difference together."

Think, act and practice safety

Your whole life can change in an instant

Master Sgt. Larry Stulz
445th Safety Office

Every now and then, we all see things that tend to make us stop and think about how precious life is and how our whole world can change in an instant. My wife and I own two English Cocker Spaniels that are registered therapy dogs. We visit local hospitals and nursing homes to help brighten the day of those who need all the love and attention they can get.

Last weekend was one visit that I'll remember for a long time. In the room normally filled with senior citizens, there was a 30-something man sitting at a table with a lady. The man stood out from all the others by wearing a muscle shirt which revealed tattoos on both arms from hands to shoulders. Mean tattoos.

The lady at the table waved for us to bring the dogs over. As I neared, I noticed the man had huge rings on his fingers. Mean rings which were emblazoned with skulls and crossbones, knives, and guns. Once at the table, the lady introduced us to Ron. She stated Ron was recovering from a brain injury from a motorcycle mishap five months ago.

Since I am the safety manager at work, I knew there was more to this story and thought quickly on how I could learn more about this mishap without seeming too forward. "Did the motorcycle helmet malfunction during the motorcycle mishap," I asked? "He wasn't wearing one," was her reply. Finally Ron said something while petting the dogs that I could not understand at first because his spoken words sounded like those from a person who was intoxicated from alcohol. "I had dogs once," were his words.

The lady at the table stated he was not expected to live at the time of the mishap but hopefully will be able to recover to the point he can take care of himself in the future.

We were then directed to a 30-

something lady with a shaved head who was rocking back and forth in her wheel chair but had a smile that would brighten anyone's day. Since her body was curled into a partial fetal position, I gently placed one of the dogs on her lap and her face lit up with excitement and she tried her best to laugh. I was concerned that the dogs may be too lively for her as I noticed a fresh surgical incision with staples that ran from one ear across her head to the other ear.

My wife, who is also a nurse, took over and made sure the dogs were not hurting her. I stepped back and talked to one of the nursing assistants and asked about the lady's condition. I learned the lady in the wheel chair was a typical soccer Mom several months ago. She was in a vehicle mishap while not wearing a seatbelt and suffered brain injury. She will likely not recover. I learned that her two young children and husband were in earlier that day to visit but she does not recognize her family members.

I had a hard time concentrating for the rest of the day as my thoughts often went back to those two people. I thought of the lifestyles they led and their families that are now suffering as much as they are and recovering as best they can. Thinking of their unfortunate examples, it is frightening to realize how fast one's whole world can change in an instant.

In our society, it seems that those who are injured or have long recovery periods tend to disappear from life's normal day to day activities. We may forget about those individuals or not learn from their experiences. I can't take photos of them and use those as examples of making a wrong choice. I am only left with the opportunity to tell the story of two people that I met whose worlds were changed in an instant, by not taking a second of time to make a choice that would have made a world of difference.

Newcomers

Welcome to the following reservists, recently assigned to the 445th AW:

- Capt Karen Keller, 445 ASTS
- TSgt Rebecca Ruchel-Nicoll, 445 AMDS
- SSgt Jess Pavlovicz, 445 AES
- SSgt Matthew Spuhler, 445 AMXS
- SrA Stuart Buchanan, 445 SVF
- SrA Aaron Hinton, 87 APS
- SrA Sara McKown, 445 ASTS
- A1C James Adkins, 445 AES
- A1C Johsua Dotson, 445 ASTS
- A1C John Stidham, 445 AMXS
- A1C Ryan Sutphin, 445 ASTS
- AB Alexander Hooper, 445 AMXS

Awards

Congratulations to the following 445th AW members who recently earned awards.

Meritorious Service Medal

- Col Kerry A. Breed, 45AMDS
- Col John A. Ellis, 445 AMDS
- Col Karen A. Nagafuchi, 445 ASTS
- Col Vincent L. Oba, 445 ASTS
- Lt Col Scott E. Sayre, 445 AMDS
- Maj Mark E. Durant, 356 AS
- Maj William J. Gorczynski, 356 AS
- Maj Kenneth M. Herstine, 445 AMXS
- Maj Leo R. Schellinger, 356 AS
- Maj Steven R. Shrader, 356 AS
- Maj Matthew G. Smith, 356 AS
- Maj Steven L. Temple, 356 AS
- CMSgt Ricky R. Waggy, 445 AW
- MSgt Margaret M. Brady, 445 LRS
- MSgt Mark E. Lankheit, 445 MOS
- MSgt Melissa A. Reich, 445 OSS
- TSgt Carlton L. Edwards, 87 APS
- TSgt John D. Evans, 445 LRS
- TSgt David G. Long, 445 CES
- TSgt Robert L. Mullins, 445 MXS
- TSgt Darryl E. Phillips, 87 APS
- TSgt Richard H. Radabaugh, 87 APS

Air Force Commendation Medal

- MSgt Jason R. Vance, 445 MPF
- TSgt Charles E. Everett, 445 AMXS
- SSgt Carie A. Brown, 445 AES

Air Force Achievement Medal

- MSgt James Foy, 445 ASTS
- SSgt Molly I. Blackburn, 445 ASTS
- SrA Ashley R. Clark, 356 AS

Promotions

Congratulations to the following personnel, recently promoted to the rank indicated.



Airman

- Robert Corn, 445 AES
- Brian Dible, 445 MXS
- Andrew Megimose, 89 AS
- Kevin Randall, 445 ASTS
- Thomas Wilson, 445 AMXS



Airman First Class

- Jeremy Conley, 445 AMXS
- Jason Garrett, 445 MXS
- Robert Hampton, 87 APS
- Jeffrey Stamper, 445 AES



Senior Airman

- Rachel Bruce, 445 ASTS
- Brayant Corde, 445 MXS
- Erin Hodge, 445 ASTS
- Danielle Keiser, 445 ASTS
- Matthew Krauss, 445 ALCF
- April Murdock, 89 APS
- Craig Ridener, 445 AMXS
- Ryan Sutphin, 445 ASTS
- John Walker, 445 AMXS



Technical Sergeant

- Mark O'Connell, 445 AMDS



Captain

- Patrick Shields, 445 CES

Wing Fitness Challenge

The first ever Wing Fitness Challenge will be conducted during the annual Wing picnic scheduled for 6 Aug 06. The challenge is open only to 445th Airlift Wing members who are currently participating in UTAs.

The Fitness Challenge is broken up into two separate categories; Male and Female and three distinct areas:

- 1.5 Mile Run and Strength Assessment (Pushups and Crunches)
- Best Improved Body Composition; Largest reduction
- Best Overall Physique; based on audience vote

All final Fitness Challenge Testing and/or Measurements will be conducted on Sunday, 6 August 2006. Testing will be conducted in accordance with the AFI 10-248 that is current as of the printing of this article and will be conducted by the Fitness Challenge Committee members consisting of certified Physical Training Leaders.

Wing members desiring to participate in the 1.5 Mile Run and Strength Assessment Challenge must complete Fitness Assessment Questionnaire prior to the start of the run.

Members desiring to participate in the Best Improved Body Composition Challenge require that you sign up and have measurements completed by a Fitness Challenge Committee member during your April 06 UTA. Members must have AFI 10-248, Attachment 7 requirements completed by the end of the Gray UTA, April 06.

Members desiring to participate in the Best Overall Physique Challenge require you to show up at the wing picnic dressed modestly for the competition.

Details can be obtained from your First Sergeant or if you have questions please contact CMSgt Aaron Mouser at (937) 257-7662 or MSgt Annette Jones @ (937) 904-2002 x4305.



Total Force Integration Logo

This logo replaces the "Future Total Force" logo and represents the Air Force Vision of Regular Air Force, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve moving together into the future ... quickly, to leverage the strengths inherent in each as we meet current and future threats.

News Briefs

Scholarship opportunity

The Dayton Area Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) will present a \$1,000 merit scholarship to a 2006 graduating high school senior in the Dayton chapter's area of membership. Eligibility for the scholarship includes the sons or daughters of military service members – officer and enlisted – who are serving on active duty with one of the seven uniformed military services or with one of their reserve components. It also includes the children of retired and former military service members and the survivors of military service members.

To request an Application package for the scholarship, graduating seniors should contact one of the following Dayton Area Chapter members:

Charlie Cooper:

charliecooper@woh.rr.com

Bob Massarini:

bob.massarini@acm.org

Dick Brubaker:

DickBrub@aol.com

When using e-mail to request an Application package, please put MOAA Scholarship Application Request on the SUBJECT line and include your correct address and telephone number in the message body.

Requests for scholarship Application packages must be received by 15 March 2006. The deadline for submission of completed scholarship applications is 31 March 2006.

C-141 Farewell Tribute

To register, go to www.starlifterfarewell.com and complete the registration form. For more information contact Maj. Steve Schnell at 257-6982.

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And then there was one . . .



A C-141 aircraft, known as the Hanoi Taxi, flies over the city of Dayton, Ohio. The aircraft will be the last C-141 in the Air Force inventory to retire. The aircraft will be placed in the National Museum of the United States Air Force on May 6, 2006. (photo by Maj. Ted Theopolos)

by Maj. Ted Theopolos
445th Public Affairs

After March 2006, there will be only one C-141 left from a fleet just over 280 and the last aircraft remaining is a special one. Known as the "Hanoi Taxi," it played a major role in Operation Homecoming during the repatriation of Americans held as prisoners of war in North Vietnam during the war.

On February 12, 1973, the world's attention was riveted on Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi, North Vietnam. The war was over and the long awaited start of "Operation Homecoming," was about to begin.

The first United States C-141 Starlifter aircraft, with tail number 660177, landed. At that time it was painted white with a Red Cross tail flash. The aircraft today has been repainted several times but for its last paint job before it retires, the aircraft was painted back to its original scheme, white over gray, except for the red cross.

The first 40 POWs waited patiently as the aircraft taxied toward them. The soon to be ex-POWs boarded the aircraft, took their seats, and prepared for takeoff. They sat

quietly, but as soon as the Starlifter's wheels left the Hanoi runway, a resounding cheer went up from all on board. Their first scheduled stop was at Clark Air Base in the Philippines, and then home to the United States. This is how the aircraft got its nickname "Hanoi Taxi".

Since that time the aircraft was at many different bases before finding its home here at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio with the 445th Airlift Wing. While here, the aircraft flew on many humanitarian missions including the recent aeromedical and supply missions for Hurricane Katrina and Rita. The aircraft was also flown in Operation Iraqi Freedom bringing wounded home from overseas.

Inside the aircraft are photos from the Vietnam War and photos from that historic day on Feb. 12, 1973, along with over 100 POW signatures that departed that day. This collection happened with the efforts of 445th Maintenance personnel. The aircraft is in high demand at air shows here and abroad.

The aircraft has had great impact on significant events of the past, and will be honored by going to the National Museum of the United States Air Force on May 6, 2006.

