

## SFS Airmen hone skills during winter challenge

By Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly  
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Cold, damp weather and a mud-riddled training ground spelled fun for the 445th Security Forces Squadron during their 2018 "Winter Challenge" March 3-4, 2018.

Reserve Citizen Airmen from the 445th Security Forces Squadron endured the elements while completing a one-for-all training session to keep their qualifications current.

"We had multiple trainings inside one training exercise," said Staff Sargent Nicholas Reynolds, 445 Security Forces Squadron security manager. Training courses in the reserve are often combined into groups of sessions due to time limitations.

According to Senior Airman Aaron Motley,

445th Security Forces Squadron patrolman, the unit incorporated all the training they completed in the past couple months into one scenario.

This year the winter challenge covered fire-team movements, hasty entry control point, setting up a constatine barrier for vehicular travel, vehicle searches, low crawling through mud, building clearing, weap on disassemble and reassemble, building a defensive fighting position with sandbags, shoot-move and communicate drills, and pushing a Humvee for 75 yards.

"We have a lot of job training skill sets to knock out, and the point of this training was to have a fun day while

————— See *WINTER CHALLENGE*, page 3



Photos by Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly

(left) Staff Sgts. Tyler Heath and Jonathan Prather prepare for the low crawl during the 445th Airlift Wing Security Forces Winter Challenge March 2, 2018. (right) Staff Sgt. Anthony Wilson prepares for the low crawl. The challenge is designed to provide the Citizen Airmen a mental and physical experience during inclement weather.

# Reserve Airmen, families attend Yellow Ribbon event

By Staff Sgt. Darrell Sydnor  
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service reports naturalizing more than 700,000 new citizens each year.

With the hope of making their life and the lives of their families better than what they were, many families travel a great distance, learn a new language, and try to assimilate into a new culture.

Emigrating from Mexico, that's exactly what little Cindy did decades ago when she was just 4 years old.

With English as her second language, now Tech. Sgt. Cindy Valenzuela, an intelligence specialist for the 445th Operations Support Squadron, is a Reserve Citizen Airman with a family of her own.

Married with two children, she works hard to provide for her family, just like her parents did for her.

"Some things have been a struggle, but I've always tried to excel at anything that's been presented to me. I've been knocked down a couple times, but hey I'm still plugging away and I'm still trying to better myself... I do it for our family."

The language barrier wasn't the only hurdle Sergeant Valenzuela had to overcome stepping out on her own. While grateful for the hard work her parents put into raising her, she went against family culture to become an American Airman. Not only was she the first to graduate from college, as she explains she holds a few more firsts in her family.

"I'm the first grandchild, only grandchild out of more than 20 who joined the military. Coming from a Hispanic family, 'You're crazy for doing that, [joining the military]' and now deploying, it's definitely first in our family."

Though a first for her family, she's very familiar with deployments. Her husband of almost 15 years, Master Sgt. Joseph Valenzuela, an aeromedical

evacuation specialist with the 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, has deployed three times already, not to mention the numerous temporary duty assignments and schools, well before there was a Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP).

Now at a Yellow Ribbon event with her husband and children in preparation for her deployment, Tech. Sgt. Valenzuela is grateful for the program.

"Reflecting back, this wasn't really around when he first deployed. I was a first time mom in an overseas location with no family support. I barely knew about any of these resources. I don't think the message really gets out unless you're in a certain situation like we are and you're deploying. Back then it wasn't available. This [Yellow Ribbon] is a good avenue to help get the message out."

The YRRP promotes the well-being of reservists and their loved ones by connecting them with resources before and after deployments.

It began in 2008 following a congressional mandate for the Department of Defense to assist reservists and National Guard members in maintaining resiliency as they transition between their military and civilian roles.

Each year, the Air Force Reserve program trains 7,000 reservists and those closest to them in education benefits, health care, retirement information and more.

Since the program events are hosted in places like Orlando, Florida, the Valenzuela family has been able to spend some quality time together as they prepare for the deployment.

Thirteen-year-old Natalye has already made plans to be pen pals with her mom and can't wait to ask her about her day using Skype. She's also ready to take on more responsibility at home.



Staff Sgt. Darrell Sydnor

**The Valenzuela family poses for a photo March 16, 2018 at an Air Force Reserve Command Yellow Ribbon event.**

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completing most of the requirements at the same time,” said Reynolds.

Initially everyone was not really looking forward to the challenge because of the cold weather and muddy course. But once they got out there away from the office and into the security forces main environment, everyone had a lot of fun, said Reynolds.

The course definitely had some challenging parts but once the

Airmen got through it as a team, everyone was pretty fired up and had a good time, he added.

Moving from one training station to the next, security forces members quickly maneuvered around a shelter to encounter the pop of a smoke grenade and simulated fire. Waiting for them was the low crawl station packed with mud and grass. The trainees hit the ground and began the low crawl

under wire while billowing green smoke fogged their field of view.

The Airmen work as a team to get to the end. The first one through turned to help the next one get back onto their feet and press forward.

“The training teaches us cohesiveness— to work together, communicate loudly and to not let your teammates down.” said, Motley. “I think it went really well. It was a lot of fun, and I learned a lot from it.”



Photos by Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly

Members of the 445th Security Forces Squadron participate in the unit's annual winter challenge March 2, 2018. The Reserve Citizen Airmen set up constatine barriers for vehicular travel, conducted vehicle searches, participated in low crawl training, building clearing, shoot-move and communicate drills, and other training during the event.



# SPOTLIGHT



2nd Lt. Rachel N. Ingram

**Rank/Name**  
Senior Airman  
Merissa Ayres  
**Unit**  
445th Security Forces  
Squadron

**Duty Title**  
Security Forces Patrol-  
man  
**Hometown**  
Hillsboro, Ohio

**Civilian Job**

Information technology technical support operator

**Education**

Associate of Science with a concentration in biology; Community College of the Air Force degree in criminal justice

**Hobbies**

Hike, bike, read (professional development/personal growth), playing the piano

**Career Goal**

**Military:** To continue to grow my career and get into the Raven program. I really like what I do and want to travel more. I think the Raven program would fit both.

**Civilian:** To continue my education and get into the medical field as a physician's assistant potentially specializing in endocrinology.

**What you like about working at the 445th?**

The people are truly amazing. Even when I

am feeling low energy or sick, I want to come into the unit to get motivated and feel good. The people are awesome. Everyone is really fun and passionate about what they do. There is such a wide variety of experience. I am always learning.

**Why did you join the Air Force?**

I originally started talking with an Army recruiter, but was not impressed. A friend had joined the 445th Maintenance Squadron and talked about the perks of the Air Force and the awesome people. After high school, I didn't really know what direction I wanted to take, but I wanted to do something before settling down and starting college. The military would allow me to travel while training me with skills I could apply to my future careers.

## Around the wing...



Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly



Capt. Wilson Wise

(left) Col. Adam Willis, 445th Airlift Wing commander, administers the Oath of Enlistment to Chief Master Sgt. Paul Stewart, 445 AW command chief, March 3, 2018. This event marks Chief Stewart's final enlistment. (right) Members of the 445th Force Support Squadron assemble a temporary lodging facility during the March 4, 2017 unit training assembly at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.



# 445th Education Office enhances academic opportunities

By Senior Airman Ethan Spickler  
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

The Air Force is committed to maintaining a culture of excellence in the air, on the ground and in the classroom. Throughout their careers, Airmen constantly improve upon the knowledge and skills demanded of them by their career fields with many continuing their education outside of the military.

Navigating constantly evolving academic environments can often be challenging, sometimes even frustrating, but 445th Airmen have access to information that can help them chart the right course.

The 445th Wing Education Office exists to facilitate the academic success of Reserve Citizen Airmen, not only on Wright Patterson Air Force Base but in the civilian world as well.

The office provides academic resources and benefits information alongside personalized guidance from experienced counselors. The education and training specialists have the ability to review education benefits options with members, import and export academic data and provide continuing support for military students.

They provide this support to 2,800 Airmen and thus far in FY18 alone, they have provided 157 members with \$271,000 in tuition assistance funds. They also provide Community College of the Air Force degree support, GI Bill support, financial aid resources, school information and College Level Examination Program/Defense Activity for Non Traditional Education Support test resources.

“The mission of the wing education office is to ensure that wing personnel are informed about how they can utilize the education benefits that are available to them,” said Master Sgt. Ashley B. Dahl, the 445th FSS unit training manager. “There are a lot of benefits that members don’t know about. We want anyone that comes into the office to know what they have available to accelerate their learning opportunities.”

The academic climate changes rapidly, with more and more schools focusing on online learning rather

than brick-and-mortar classroom instruction. The wing education office provides up-to-date resources for members interested in pursuing education both online and in-person, while at the same time, maximizing their financial utility. The Air Force values individual education, however many Airmen neglect to use the extensive support system provided for them to meet their educational goals and achieve academic success while simultaneously maintaining financial stability.



Senior Airman Ethan Spickler

**Tech. Sgt. Ashlee L. Janson, 445th Force Support Squadron education counselor and Staff Sgt. Michael Bailey, an HVAC technician with the 445th Civil Engineer Squadron, discuss education opportunities March 4, 2018.**

“My job is to provide wing training and education support and help get our members through school with as little debt as possible,” said Tech. Sgt. Ashlee L. Janson, the wing education counselor. “I put out resources for them and help them create an education strategy that offers the greatest chance of success. Every member has access to benefits, and it is always a good option to come to us for assistance. We will show you the steps you need to take to reach your goals, provide more insight into your options and help you decide which path offers the greatest long term utility.”

The wealth of knowledge provided by the wing education office’s specialists is invaluable to the personal and professional success of 445th Airmen.

If used properly, this resource can simplify the academic process and remunerate the education commitments members make. Life is an endless learning experience, and in the Air Force, that experience can offer exciting and rewarding challenges. The wing education office insists that 445th Airmen are able to excel and maintains a plethora of tools to aid them throughout their individual journeys. Airmen are highly encouraged to contact the education office in order to maximize the opportunities for growth that are currently available.

For more information call 937-257-5092 or email at 445MSS.DPMT@us.af.mil. The office is located in building 4014, room 162.



# Global space-A program available to reservists, families

By 2nd Lt Rachel Ingram  
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Worldwide, Air Mobility Command oversees hundreds of flights a day, transporting everything from ammunition and military working dogs to drones and uniformed service members. Some of these flights are fully loaded with mission-required cargo, but other flights may have more than 70 empty seats. The space-available program grants Reserve Citizen Airmen the opportunity to occupy surplus aircraft seats, barring negative mission impact.

As reservists, Citizen Airmen in the 445th are eligible to fly out of continental United States military passenger terminals at bases in Alaska, California, Florida, Hawaii, Virginia, Washington and more. The cost to fly depends on factors like the air terminal of departure and final destination, but the fee is nominal – typically less than \$20.

Passengers may bring two pieces of luggage, up to 70 pounds and 62 linear inches per piece, to check

at the terminal for free. Two small, hand-carried items are also permitted aboard the aircraft. Details about baggage restrictions are outlined in AMC Instruction 24-101, volume 14.

Space-A seats on Department of Defense aircraft are not determined until shortly before the plane's departure, and missions can change with no notice. Available seats are awarded first by priority level, then sign up time.

Of the six travel priority categories, Reserve Citizen Airmen fall into the sixth, along with retirees. Reserve retirees who are not yet eligible for pay (commonly referred to as "gray-area retirees") are eligible to travel space-A, but their spouse may not fly with them until they begin drawing benefits – typically at age 60.

Other travel priority categories include individuals on emergency leave (category one), Medal of Honor recipients (category three), and

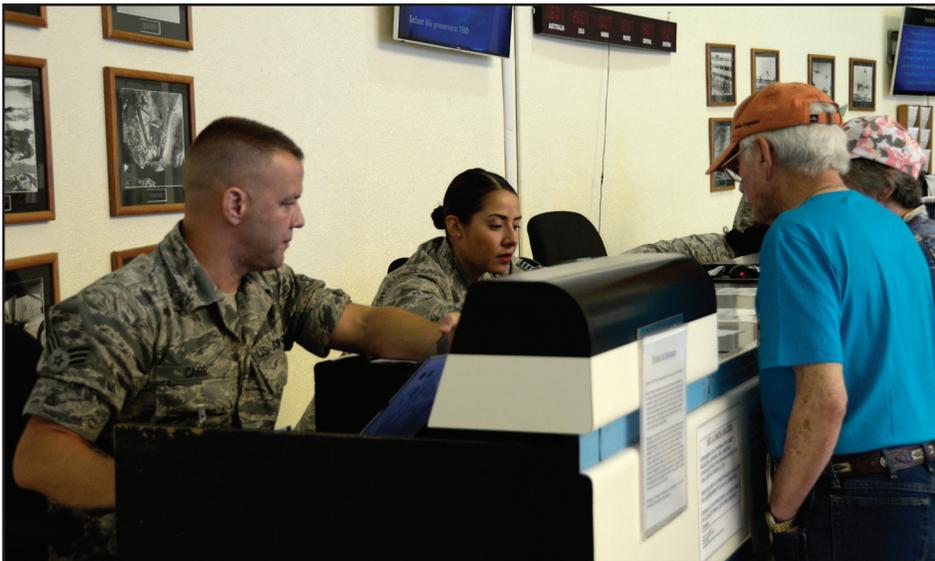
DoD dependent schools teachers (category four), to name a few. The full travel eligibility table can be found in DoD Instruction 4515.13.

To claim an available seat, reservists must be in good standing (promotion-eligible and participating in unit training assemblies), possess a common access card, and present a DD form 1853 signed by their commander to verify their reserve status, per the AMCI previously mentioned. Under standard conditions, spouses and dependents may not accompany reservists on space-A flights.

During a deployment, however, reservists' families (as identified in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System) gain temporary space-a privileges. The exception applies only to contingency, exercise or deployment orders of 30 days or more.

Unlike their reserve sponsors, dependents of deployed Citizen Airmen may fly within the United States, or opt to fly outside of the continental United States to destinations like England, Italy and Spain. Additionally, the travel priority for dependents of deployed members is four, rather than six. The baggage allowance and variable fees remain unchanged for all space-A passengers, regardless of priority level or circumstances.

Infants must be at least six weeks old to fly space-A, and DoD regulations require a passport for OCONUS travel or a DoD ID number for CONUS travel. Other dependents must present their valid dependent ID, plus a deployment verification letter stating the sponsor's name, social security number, start and end date of the deployment, dependents' names and social security numbers, their relationship to the sponsor, and the unit's contact information. The reservist's commander must sign the letter, and the traveler must carry a copy of the letter.



Staff Sgt. Joel McCullough

Senior Airman Christian Carr and Staff Sgt. Jennifer Lenz, 87th Aerial Port Squadron, help space-available travelers claim seats on flights at the Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii passenger terminal. Hickam is a popular location for space-A travelers.



# News Briefs

## Retirements

### April 2018

MSgt Eugenie Hinson, 445 AW  
MSgt Penny Wagner, 445 MXG  
SMSgt Carie Brown, 445 AES

## Promotions

### Airman

Joel Hale, 445 AMXS  
Anthony Miller, 445 MXS  
Dylan Postle, 445 MXS

### Senior Airman

Valor Burkhead 445 LRS

### Staff Sergeant

Nicholas Berardi, 445 AMXS  
Lorenzo Hines, 445 AMDS

Michael Kessinger, 445 AMXS  
Zachary Montgomery, 445 AMXS  
Charles Tryon, 445 MXS

### Technical Sergeant

Nathan Bowman, 445 FSS  
David Colon, 445 FSS  
David Smart, 445 AMXS  
Terra Stinnett, 445 FSS  
Zachary Thorsky, 445 AMXS  
Amanda Youngblood, 445 AMDS  
Xavier Lanier, 445 LRS

### Master Sergeant

Gerald Christy, 445 AMXS

### Senior Master Sergeant

Brian Williams, 445 FSS

## Awards

### Meritorious Service Medal

Lt Col Kimberlee Sandusky, AES  
Lt Col Kevin Todd, AMDS  
Lt Col Craig Wisler, AMDS  
MSgt Anthony Pinkovsky, AMXS

### Air Force Achievement Medal

TSgt Cory Smith, MXS  
SSgt Matthew Engel, ASTS  
SSgt Ariel Owens, MXS  
SSgt Matthew Sigler, MXS  
SrA Zachery Deatley, CES  
SrA Joshua Glass, MXS

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*YELLOW RIBBON, from page 2*

“Helping out my dad because we have a farm, and helping my brother and be like ‘did you do this’ so my dad doesn’t have to get stressed out.” Nine year old Jonathan also plans to help more around the house, with the essence of one statement at everything he does, “I love my mom very much.”

The Yellow Ribbon event provided a lot of resources and also brought out a lot of emotions. Master Sgt. Valenzuela teared up as he reflected at the event.

“One of the things I love about you the most, and it separates us from probably many couples, is every time I’m working on something, whether or not I need her help or ask for her help, she’s right there next to me helping me. Whether it’s reframing a lean-to to the barn, putting metal on the barn, cleaning horse poop, building, fencing, she’s always there. That’s one of the things I cherish about our relationship, I love that about her, she’s always out there with me, side by side, every project.”

The YRRP event allowed for many con-

nections during the breakout sessions. One facilitator Sergeant Valenzuela made a strong connection to is an emigrant from Guatemala; someone who shared the cultural struggles of assimilating to life in the United States and the military.

And after 30 years in the Air Force, Chief Master Sgt. Ericka Kelly, Command Chief for the Air Force Reserve Command, and Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief of the Air Force Reserve, has become a passionate supporter of what the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program can do.

“The Yellow Ribbon is that big body, big monster, that just grabs everyone, military member, family, children, friends, parents, and it connects all the dots. Because we all have a dot somewhere, we know something, and then when people come to the Yellow Ribbon those dots are connected, and then when people leave they get their ‘aha’ moment,” said Chief Kelly.

*This article is part 2 of a 3-part series.*





Photos by Staff Sgt. Darrell Sydnor

1. Capt. Stacey Blurton, a 445th Airlift Wing Yellow Ribbon representative, registers Master Sgt. Anthony Phillips, 445th Civil Engineer Squadron, and his wife during a Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program event March 16, 2018 in Orlando, Florida.
2. The family of Senior Airman Faustino Estrada, 445th Logistics Readiness Squadron, registers at a Mario themed table during the YRRP event.
3. Master Sgt. Brent Pemberton, 445th Airlift Wing Inspector General - Inspections, and his wife interact with (far left) Capt. Keisha Dobney-Boykin, a 445 AW Yellow Ribbon rep, while waiting to register.
4. Teens of Reserve Citizen Airmen work together to pitch tents during a teamwork exercise at the YRRP event.

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