

## Reservist's mountain biking passion fuels competitive edge

By Tech. Sgt. Joel McCullough  
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

A 445th Airlift Wing Reserve Citizen Airman's passion for biking began as a hobby but has grown into more than that. Master Sgt. Zachary Thorsky, 445th Airlift Wing safety office flight safety NCO and wing staff unit fitness program manager, has been riding dirt bikes since he was a young child and now is a competitive mountain bike racer.

"I was one of those neighborhood kids who rode all over the place. I built ramps, wrecked all the time, and even had to go to the hospital. I eventually got into dirt bike racing but unfortunately, it was just too expensive for my parents to afford."

Growing up in Cleveland, Ohio, he and his friends would go to nearby Rays Indoor Mountain Bike Park, the world's largest mountain bike park.

By age 14, Thorsky turned to BMX (Bicycle Motocross). Instead of racing, he turned to free-style (doing tricks) such as front flips, back flips, tail whips, etc. He said BMX was a competitive thing between him and his friends. They continued to push themselves past their limits.

After high school, Thorsky joined the Air Force. He thought this was the end of his riding career until one day while riding at the MetroParks Mountain Biking Area, just outside Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, he came across a flyer for an event in Dayton, Ohio called the Fast Lap series, a series of races once a month over the summer. He signed up for the race, thinking he would win. That was not the case; he ended up 15th out of 25 racers.

"I called my friends after the race to let them know that was the hardest thing I have ever done in my life."

Thorsky had the bug. He started training for future races and linked up with a group of older mountain bikers. At the time, he was in his mid-twenties and

was riding with this group of 40 and 50-year-olds. He had the idea that they would be no competition for him. The group showed him otherwise.

"One hundred percent of them were faster than me.

I am 25 years old. I can run (at the time) an 8 minute 40 second mile and half. I should be good at this! I have the skills to do it, I grew up on bikes! I think most people would have quit at that point and would have decided, well this isn't my sport. I kept doing it. I wasn't going to quit. I was still having fun. I also got lucky that there is a good community for mountain biking around here."

Thorsky started to get to know people in the group, including an ex-Navy Seal named Chris. When they would ride in the woods, Chris would constantly lap him. With hard work and consistency, he started training with Chris and now

they are at a competitive level with each other.

"The Ohio mountain biking scene has blown up quite a bit in the last few years. There are three main super-fast mountain bikers in Dayton, and we are all good friends. We're on the same team. We travel around the east coast doing ultra-marathon races," Thorsky said.

Thorsky signed up for the annual Mohican Mountain Bike 100, a strenuous race being held in Loudonville, Ohio, May 21, 2022.

"As far as the races go, it's the most coveted races that I want to do. It's difficult because it's hot, takes about eight hours to ride and has a high percent of single track, which means, the race is composed of almost 95 percent mountain biking with very little pavement," Thorsky said. "There are national pros, people that do this as a full-time job that show up and do it in



Courtesy Photo

**Master Sgt. Zachary Thorsky, flight safety NCO and wing staff unit fitness program manager for the 445th Airlift Wing, pushes through a transition area at the Frosted Fat Tire relay race that took place in Michigan in January of 2022. Thorsky and three of his friends competed in the 50 mile relay race and placed first out of 18 teams.**

## HQ ARPC announces Reserve Colonel promotions

Headquarters Air Reserve Personnel Center officials announced results for the Calendar Year 2021 Air Force Reserve Line and Nonline Colonel Promotion Selection Boards Feb. 11, 2022.

Two officers from the 445th Airlift Wing were selected: Jessica Bratner, 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron and Thomas Fuhrman, 89th Airlift Squadron.

The selection boards convened at HQ ARPC October 18 - 22 to de-

termine those officers best qualified to assume the next higher grade. Board members selected



229 of 1648 officers considered.

Categories considered were: Air Force Reserve Line of the Air Force-

Air Operations and Special Warfare, Line of the Air Force-Nuclear Missile Operations, Line of the Air Force-Space Operations, Line of the Air Force-Information Warfare, Line of the Air Force-Combat Support, Line of the Air Force-Force Modernization, Line of the Air Force Judge Advocate, Chaplains, Dental Corps Medical Corps, Nurse Corps, Medical Services Corps and Biomedical Sciences Corps.

## Full-time first shirt available for all Airmen

By Ms. Stacy Vaughn  
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs



The 445th Airlift Wing has a full-time Active Guard/Reserve resiliency first sergeant to take care of the needs of all wing Airmen who have issues outside of the scheduled unit training assembly weekends. Master Sgt. Rebekkah Stammen assumed the position in January 2021 but was dual-hatted as the 445th Force Support Squadron first sergeant until this year.

She will hold the position until January 2024.

The AGR position of first sergeant is new for the 445th Airlift Wing. Wing leadership decided that to better serve all Reserve Citizen Airmen, a full-time first sergeant was needed.

Adding this new position to her resume is something she said is needed, and she is ready to take on the role. Stammen said she didn't have interaction with a first sergeant until she became one.

"I have been serving for almost 22 years and have never interacted with a first sergeant on a personal matter. It's a humbling admission because I could have used one on multiple occasions," said Stammen.

Sergeant Stammen attended the First Sergeant Academy in-residence course for four weeks of instruction and graduated in January of 2020. Prior to becoming a first sergeant, she spent 17 years in the legal career field, more than five years of that was as the law office superintendent here at the 445th. In October 2019, she became the traditional reservist first sergeant for the 445th Force Support Squadron.

Stammen has heard from various Airmen that they do not understand the role of the first sergeant let alone how they can help their Airmen.

"I've been told that the role of the shirt is not widely known. I'd like to change that. The first sergeant is there, and wants to be there, to assist in getting our Airmen the help they want, require and deserve. I believe in a life of responsibilities, passions and goals that must be balanced," she said.

Air Force Instruction 36-2113, The First Sergeant, lists the responsibilities of a first sergeant. Stammen said the AFI cannot prepare a first sergeant for the emotional investment the job requires.

"We take on the struggles and the successes of our members. I'm fortunate to be a member of a phenomenal first sergeant council, comprised of first sergeants who go above and beyond for their units as well as for each other. As the sole full-time shirt within the wing, I try to ensure we are all communicating effectively and have the information we require to fulfill our responsibilities," said the resiliency first sergeant.

Stammen has encouraging words for 445th Airmen.

"It is the shirts responsibility to provide our members with the tools they need to accomplish the mission. It is the shirts passion to show care, offer correction, and provide challenges for our Airmen. It is the shirts goal to develop trust and create a healthy environment for our members to grow.

"Every member of the 445th is entitled to those benefits. Wearing the diamond every day has been the greatest privilege in my military career. The individuals I work with inspire me daily, there is no job quite like this one. It's an honor to be the shirt," she added.





BIKING, from page 1



**Six hours in, Master Sgt. Zachary Thorsky, flight safety NCO and wing staff UFPM for the 445th Airlift Wing, pushes his bike up a hill in the last 7-8 miles of the Mohican 100 race in June of 2021.**

about six hours. I am lucky if I am in the sevens. The average person is doing it in 12 to 13 hours.

Thorsky completed the 100 kilometers (approximately 62 miles) version of the race last year in six hours and 47 minutes. He placed 15 out of 118 in the pro/expert class.

"It was the hardest thing I have ever done in my life. There was so many mental battles in that race. Ninety something degrees in temperature."

Thorsky said that was the first time he experienced heat exhaustion and cramping. He said the cramping was fierce.

"It felt like I had the flu for an hour and half. I thought it was, what we call in cycling, bonking, when you haven't eaten enough calories and you've spent all your energy. So I hit an aide station and started drinking a whole jar of pickle juice. It's disgusting but it's full of sodium and I thought that's what I needed. It's supposed to help stop the cramping. Three hours into a seven hour race, my legs were cramping so bad I was laying in the middle of a field screaming at the top of my lungs. It looked like a fist was under my skin."

After a while, he figured out the true issue. He recovered and hit the track again. He thought to himself, "I had finished the single track part which was approximately 58 miles of the 100K race. I have four more miles to go to finish this race." Reinvigorated by that, Thorsky hit the track again. After a short jaunt on a gravel road, he made a right turn. He then came across a hill.

"I've never seen a more steep hill in my life. It's so big you can't see the top. I didn't have enough strength to pedal up the first hill. I was so exhausted at the top of the hill that apparently I was interviewed by a cam-

era crew and don't remember any of it. Now I'm a part of the Mohican 100 advertisement video."

In the interview when he asked them how much longer the race was, the camera crew told him he had about 10 more miles to go. Thorsky replied, "What?"

He described the rest of the 10 miles as steep, steep climbs and then steep descents followed by more of the same.

"I finished the race but I was in another dimension of pain.... I signed up again for the race this year, this time doing the 100 mile race, so there is obviously something wrong with me."

To prepare for his upcoming race, Thorsky has cut down on long distance road biking from his training regiment, adjusted and added more time on actual mountain biking trails.

"That last race took me six hours and 47 minutes to complete; this one is an extra 30 miles, which, if I'm being honest, keeps me up at night."

Thorsky said when he feels he wants to quit, he thinks about something that makes him want to keep going.

"Sometimes when I get to mile three I want to quit. I don't want to be on the bike anymore. I'm not having fun. I want to be done. One thing I have learned is if you just push through that dark point, 15 minutes later, you feel fine again. I just try to remember that pushing myself to this limit is why I am there. I tell myself, 'you did it, you are there, be happy about that.' You have to have a mindset like that if you want make your body and mind do the impossible."



Courtesy Photos

**Master Sgt. Zachary Thorsky, flight safety NCO and wing staff UFPM for the 445th Airlift Wing poses in front of the Mohican 100 sign at Mohican State Park in Ohio, June of 2021. Thorsky participated in the 100 kilometer version of the race.**



# Home station checks keep C-17s mission ready

By Staff Sgt. Ethan Spickler  
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

For every flight hour a C-17 Globemaster III is operational, it takes roughly 20 hours of maintenance to keep the aircraft in peak operational condition. Reserve Citizen Airmen from the 445th Maintenance and Aircraft Maintenance Squadrons perform periodical inspections of the wing's nine C-17s called home station checks, ensuring every nook and cranny of the plane is checked for defects.

Home station checks are normally performed at their home station, thus home station check, and are commonplace throughout the Air Force for most aircraft. This is more in-depth inspection where the goal is to try and catch any issues before they become problems. For instance, the aircraft can be inspected for cracks as part of the HSC, and if one is found a sheet metal specialist can come out to repair it.

"Every 180 days, each aircraft is required to be pulled into the hangar. We will then work with multiple shops

also able to do one time inspections or fulfill other maintenance tasks whenever necessary. We want to keep our planes as green as possible and this is a team effort between squadrons and shops that allows us to meet our objectives," Tompkins said.

The work of the crew chiefs, known as the inspection's conductors, on the aircraft is not system specific; they take care of general maintenance involved with the aircraft, looking at items like engine oil levels, tire condition and landing gear to identify any problems that need to be further investigated by the individual system specialists.

"Flexibility is key when it comes to maintenance," said Staff Sgt. Ryan Edens, a crew chief with the 445th MXS. "While we can perform maintenance at any time, HSCs allow for comprehensive and thorough checks. We can have aircraft ready to go when we understand how our timelines impact the mission."

Inspection schedules that rely on standard maintenance timelines but offer flexibility when ad-



Photos by Mr. Patrick O'Reilly

(left) Airman Alexander H. Gill, 445th Maintenance Squadron aerospace propulsion apprentice, safety wires a latch on a C-17 Globemaster III during a home station check inspection, Feb. 18, 2022. (right) A C-17 sits in a hangar as Airmen prepare to perform a Home station check.

to inspect and diagnose different areas of the aircraft. But our schedule allows us to mainly focus on critical parts of the C-17 and the maintenance items that need addressed in a more timely manner," said Master Sgt. Stacy Tompkins, 445th MXS HSC technician.

While the mandatory HSC conducted every 180 days is a requirement, HSC crews can also inspect planes and schedule repairs at shorter intervals. Each aircraft is scheduled for a different 180-day timeframe. These staggered inspections ensure that there are always planes ready to fly.

"The HSC is important because it's scheduled," said Tompkins. "We can have designated maintenance downtime without negatively impacting the FMC (fully mission capable) timeline, though we are

ditional maintenance is needed are essential for maintaining a high operational tempo. From troubleshooting errors to making hands-on repairs, maintenance professionals spend each HSC ensuring that 445th aircraft are always ready for flight and the wing is prepared to carry out its mission.

"The HSC definitely impacts wing readiness," said Edens. "The Air Force is about air superiority and control and that takes aircraft. Without the steady and concerted effort of flight line maintenance crews, HSC personnel and every single maintainer, these planes won't be able to fly safely and effectively," said Edens. "A lot of what we do day to day isn't necessarily glamorous, but what maintenance does is critical to the success of the Air Force."





# 445th enlisted Airman commissions into Chaplain Corps

By Senior Airman Erin Zimpfer  
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs



**Chaplain (Capt.) Patrick Stalnaker, 445th Airlift Wing Chaplain Corps, administers the Oath of Office to 1st Lt. Darrell Hornback during a commissioning ceremony Feb. 16, 2022.**

After 16 years of service, a 445th Airlift Wing Airman commissioned into the Air Force Chaplain Corps Feb. 16, 2022. Newly commissioned 1st Lt. Darrell Hornback has opened a new door in his Air Force Reserve career.

Hornback's journey began as an active-duty aircraft hydraulics maintainer at Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina. After three years, he applied to the palace chase program and became a reservist.

As a senior master sergeant, Hornback served in the 445th Airlift Wing command post since 2013 both as an air reserve technician and as a traditional reservist.

The former senior master sergeant said he always dreamed of being a chaplain, but at times the road to get there seemed too long and complicated.

"When I first joined, I felt called to be a chaplain but the education requirement was so large that I decided to enlist. Through the help of the Air Force paying for my degree, I obtained my four year master's degree in 2021," said Hornback, adding with a smile, "It only took me 16 years."

Despite the length of time it took for him to complete his degree, the desire to fulfill this dream was bigger than the hurdles to reach it and his time in the Air Force taught him to just keep doing the next right thing and following the process.

"I am excited to serve the Air Force in this capacity. It is super exciting, and I can't wait to be that outlet for people to use and hopefully help others," stated the new officer enthusiastically.

Hornback said he could not have met this goal with-

out the support of his family, especially his wife and children. He also shared he had a lot of support from his church and pastor. Another individual, a fellow Airman and chaplain, was also instrumental in the journey.

Chaplain (Capt.) Patrick Stalnaker, 445th AW Chaplain Corps, has been a friend and mentor to Hornback for the past seven years. The two attend church together.

"It has been a joy to watch (Hornback) in this process," said Stalnaker. "He got his first two-year master's degree and wasn't sure if he would go further. I knew he could do it and it has come full circle."

Stalnaker himself had an interesting path to his chaplaincy and the two have both encouraged each other on their individual journeys. His path took him nine years from the first prompting and desire to receiving his commission four years ago.

"I am really excited to see how 1st Lt. Hornback is going to step in and fill the ranks. We are happy to have him in the office and really looking forward to serving together," said Stalnaker.

Hornback's commissioning ceremony was held at the 445th Airlift Wing headquarters building and the ceremony was personal for the new lieutenant.

His pastor gave the invocation; his young son removed his former senior NCO rank and "punched" on the new officer rank; and his fellow command post worker of the last nine years, Master Sgt. Amber Church, rendered the first salute to the newly commissioned officer.

"Each time I thought I was done with the journey, I felt a draw to keep going," said Hornback. "As a chaplain I look forward to showing people they are not alone, that they have a place to belong."



Photos by Mr. Patrick O'Reilly

**First Lt. Darrell Hornback signs Air Force Form 133, Oath of Office, with Chaplain (Capt.) Patrick Stalnaker.**



# SPOTLIGHT

**Rank/Name:** Staff Sgt. Markell D. Lawson

**Unit:** 445th Aerospace Medicine Squadron

**Duty Title:** Aerospace Medical Technician

**Hometown:** Flint, Michigan

**Civilian Job:** Student/medical technician at the University of Ann Arbor Hospital

**Education:** Bachelor's degree in biology with a minor in health administration, Eastern Michigan University; master's degree in biology, University of Michigan Flint

**Hobbies:** Reading, playing/watching sports, working out, volunteering, visiting museums, traveling, painting, camping, hiking and spending time with family and friends.



**Career Goal:** My military career goal is to eventually commission and to continue learning and working alongside some of the best minds while serving my country. My civilian goal is to become a pediatric health care professional and work in Flint to assist in the treatment and development of under privileged children. I'm also in the planning stage with two of my

closet friends of opening a coaching gym for track and field for ages 6 and up. There will be track coaches, nutrient experts, physical therapists and counselors.

**What do you like about working at the 445th?:** The people and the environment. From my commander on down, I'm surrounded by some very smart and driven individuals. Working in this type of environment and seeing what they have achieved helps fuel me to meet my goals. This goes especially for the 4N0 staff who I look at as family. They truly are the best.

**Why did you join the Air Force?:** To serve, pay for my education, deploy and travel. I was recently deployed voluntarily to assist with the resettlement of more than 15,000 Afghan evacuees at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. Being able to go there and deliver medical treatment was a very rewarding and humbling experience.



Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly

**Firefighters participate in integrated response ensemble training**



Capt. Rachel Ingram

(left) Firefighters raise a ladder to practice functional movement in protective gear. Firefighters from the 445th Civil Engineer Squadron bundled up in layers of protective clothing. The firefighters trained to ensure their readiness to save lives, protect property and critical assets, and fight fire, even in a compromised environment. The specialized suit, which includes some traditional elements of mission-oriented protective posture gear and provides thermal, chemical and physical protection, allows the firefighters to seamlessly transition between breathing pressurized oxygen and the filtered air canister. The Airmen suited up in multiple pairs of pants, heavy duty gloves, and special helmets. They worked through an obstacle course with tasks like dragging a hose in a kneeling position, raising ladders, squatting and carrying objects. (right) Airman 1st Class Jacob Jones secures Staff Sgt. Nathan Jennings' suit during joint firefighter integrated response ensemble training, Feb. 13, 2022.





# News Briefs

## Annual Awards Recognition

The 445th Airlift Wing will honor its annual award winners, Saturday, April 2, 2022 at 3p.m. the 88th Medical Group Auditorium.

Dress for participants is Service Dress for military members and business attire for civilians.

The event will recognize those selected for Airman, NCO, senior NCO, first sergeant, company grade officer, field grade officer, recruiter, honor guard member, civilian, spouse, youth and squadron of the year.

More details will be provided to nominees.

## Promotions

### Master Sergeant

Amanda Crider, AMDS  
Ryan Stark, AMXS  
Kevin Strickland, AMDS  
Michael Trimble, MXS

### Technical Sergeant

Eric Blackford, CES  
Melvin Castro, AMDS

### Staff Sergeant

Abreal Harris, CES  
Richard Manley, SFS  
Brittany Meredith, 87 APS  
Trey Naber, AES  
Sean Stratton, 87 APS  
James Thacker, SFS

### Senior Airman

Tatiana Altena, AES  
Rahassona Davis, AMDS  
Jenna Gassaway-Steere,

### AMXS

Danielle Grill, AMDS  
Wayne Hardy, AMXS  
Jason Howze, SFS  
Ethan Stone, AMXS  
Killian Sullivan, AMXS  
Morgan Reese, OSS  
Charles Zealllear, MXS

### Airman First Class

Steven Benock, 87 APS  
Brooks Lyle, AMDS  
Eddie McCollum, MXS

### Airman

Taiwo Olawore, CES  
Andrew Rose, CES  
Victor Sandoval Gutierrez, AMXS

## Newcomers

1 Lt Stephanie Cooney, ASTS  
SMSgt Anthony Staut, AES  
TSgt Nathan Kendrick, FSS  
TSgt Alex Skaggs, MXS  
SSgt Andrew Duhmel, 87 APS  
SSgt Erin Heberlie, AMXS  
SSgt Alyssa Veopaseuth, FSS  
SrA Cedric Hunt, CES  
SrA Gage Pollock, SFS  
SrA Morgan Reese, OSS  
SrA Altena Tatiana, AES  
SrA Dayvian Wells, SFS  
SrA Benjamin Wilson, CES  
A1C Mary Allen, MXS  
A1C David Asterino, MXS  
A1C Andrei Domasin, AMXS  
A1C Falissia Graggs, ASTS  
A1C Alexandra Harris, MXG  
A1C Ashli Morris, 87 APS  
A1C Nathan Rosenbauer, MXS

A1C Johnny York, CES  
AB Kasin Davis-Hughes, CES  
AB Jacob Jones, CES  
AB Dylan Newman, CES  
AB Steven Shultz, MXS  
AB Shawnte Waugh, ASTS  
AB Jonah Weidner, CES

## Correction

The photos of the NCO and senior NCO of the quarter were misidentified in the February edition of the Buckeye Flyer. Master Sgt. Benjamin Kessler, 445th Maintenance Squadron, is the senior NCO of the Quarter and Tech. Sgt. Matthias Opitz, 87th Aerial Port Squadron, is the NCO of the Quarter.



MSgt Benjamin Kessler



TSgt Matthias Opitz

## Awards

### Air Force Achievement Medal

MSgt Matthew Spuhler, 445 MXG

## PA photo studio

The 445th Public Affairs Office is available to help unit members with photography needs such as official photos, passport photos and unit group photos.

Photo studio hours are 9 to 11 a.m., Saturday and Sunday of the Scarlet UTA and by appointment. Please call the PA office at 937-257-5784 to schedule an appointment.

## Buckeye Flyer

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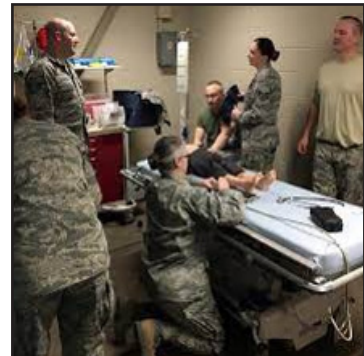
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## 445th Airlift Wing Inspector General Tidbits



### Wing Mission

*Provide Combat Ready Airmen and Rapid Global Response*

### Wing Vision

*The Wright Global Presence: Premier Airlift Capability & Innovative Airmen Ready Today for Tomorrow's Fight*



### Priorities

1. Prioritize Readiness
2. Strengthen the Culture of Resilient Leadership
3. Drive Unit Effectiveness Through Innovation



**Unit Effectiveness Inspection Capstone: March 10-15, 2022**

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