

445th AW enhances readiness during wing-wide exercise

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



Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly

Members of the 445th Airlift Wing provide security and tactical combat casualty care to a simulated patient in a fog-filled training facility at the Warfighter Training Center during exercise Vigilant Elk at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, Oct. 7, 2024. The exercise was created to demonstrate the wing's ability to generate, employ and sustain mission readiness.

The 445th Airlift Wing Inspector General team spearheaded a full-scale wing readiness exercise dubbed Vigilant Elk 24 Oct. 4 to 10. The wing staff and members from each group and squadron participated.

The Vigilant Elk participants included 184 active training participants, 45 Wing Inspection Team members and six IG inspectors.

According to the IG team and Air Force requirements, the purpose of the exercise was to demonstrate the wing's ability to generate, employ and sustain in accordance with appropriate operation and concept plans, time-phased force deployment data, unit type codes, mission directives, mission-essential and supporting collective tasks, and command guidance.

Master Sgt. Shawn McKellop, 445th AW IG inspection coordinator, served as the exercise planner and

manager for the first time in his career. He explained that the generation portion of training started with getting everyone processed and out into the training areas.

Next was the employment phase which included the training events, employment and wartime skills. The sustainment portion, which focused on Citizen Airmen performing their jobs, wrapped up the exercise.

At the different training locations, Airmen were not only tested on job knowledge but also Air Force procedures for scenarios that may take place in a deployed location. Some of the scenarios the Airmen ran through included ground attacks, destroyed assets, cyber-attacks, chemical attacks and malfunctioning equipment.

— See EXERCISE, Page 3

Wing newcomers' briefing first stop to integrating into units

By Senior Airman Angela Jackson
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

When an Air Force Reserve member arrives at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and is assigned to the 445th Airlift Wing, their first stop is building 4014 to attend the newcomers' briefing.

Directed by Department of the Air Force Instruction 36-3009 and administered by the 445th Military and Family Readiness Center, the newcomers' briefing is mandatory for all incoming members to the wing.

The four-hour course allows for new members to complete all the required permanent change of station actions while minimizing the time away from their new units and is an essential first step for successful integration into the wing.

"There is a lot of information up front, and it can be overwhelming," said Master Sgt. Michelle Caswell, 445th Force

Support Squadron M&FRC readiness NCO in charge. "However, all the information presented is important and that is why the regulation directs exactly what material at minimum needs to be covered.

"Every Air Force base has a newcomers' briefing, and although each program may vary slightly, no matter which installation an Airman is assigned, a newcomers' briefing provides pertinent information and connects new members with the resources they need to settle into their wing, base and local community," Caswell said.

The 445th AW receives around 275 newcomers a year or 15-30 monthly. Feedback from participants helps improve the experience, such as adding comfort items as simple as coffee or as involved as adjusting the information flow.

"There are 16 agencies within the wing that present such as lodging services, legal, psychological health and equal opportunity," Caswell explained. "Each speaker caters their presentation so the newcomer can get a general understanding of that office's available support programs and services. The content is generally high level so the newcomer can get the information they need to know while simultaneously emphasizing the commander's intent."

Airman 1st Class Dominic Siciliano, 445th newcomer, agreed that even though it is a great deal of information in a short period of time, the briefing is quite beneficial.

"It can feel like a lot is getting thrown at you when you are new," Siciliano said. "So, to learn about all the resources I may need upfront will be useful to me as I familiarize myself with the wing in the coming weeks."

Along with completing required tasks and absorbing valuable information, understanding the wing's mission is vital for a newcomer's successful start. The briefing aims to provide a valuable experience by stressing the importance of face-to-face communication to help members feel welcome and informed about their new assignment.

"The importance of newcomers is evident in that our wing commander or wing deputy commander speak at each briefing," Caswell said. "It lets the new members know up front how important it is that we have an opportunity to meet with them initially and communicate to the member how important they are to the 445th."



Senior Airman Angela Jackson

Master Sgt. Michelle Caswell, 445th Force Support Squadron Military & Family Readiness Center readiness NCO in charge, briefs new members of the 445th Airlift Wing about M&FRC's office and services provided during a newcomer's meeting at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, Oct. 5, 2024. The newcomers' briefing is a mandatory program for incoming members, providing a comprehensive overview of services and operations at the wing.

EXERCISE from page 1



Airman Gracia Halimoya-Musa, left 445th Force Support Squadron fitness assessment cell specialist, and Senior Airman Samuel Shaffer, 445th FSS services journeyman, provide tactical combat casualty care to a simulated patient during exercise Vigilant Elk at the Warfighter Training Center at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, Oct. 7, 2024.

The training took place at "Stark Air Base" on the west ramp of the flightline and "Snow Expeditionary Air Base" located at the Warfighter Training Center. Most of the initial processing kicked off at building 101, labeled the 445th AW campus.

WIT members are handpicked and appointed by their respective commanders. They are subject-matter experts in their fields, McKellop explained.

"Their role was to help us plan and execute because [the IG team] doesn't know anything about turning wrenches on an airplane or stuff like that," McKellop said.

One of those WIT members was Senior Master Sgt. Jamie Pope, the 445th Force Support Squadron military personnel section superintendent. She oversaw the PERSCO team, or personnel support for contingency operations.

Pope said PERSCO sets up receiving, processing, out-processing, casualty reporting and anything else to do with people and accountability. She added her team has done a phenomenal job during the training.

"I'm getting a lot of feedback from the team," Pope said. "They are loving all the hands-on [aspects of the exercise]. It's helping to make the training all come together for them. And they're realizing some of the

things they thought they knew, when the call to action comes, they really didn't know."

Pope said her Airmen actually asked for more scenarios like the exercise. They gave the example of the weapons familiarization with security forces.

"They asked for quarterly refreshers just to keep the training fresh in their minds," Pope said. "They want the real stuff. They don't just want to sit in an auditorium, watching and clicking through the slides. 'Give us more.' That's their biggest takeaway, that's what they are asking for."

Overall, the hands-on portion of the exercise resonated across the board.

"It's interesting to work alongside other entities outside of civil engineering," said Senior Airman Tristen Flores, 445th Civil Engineer Squadron fuel and water systems maintenance technician. "It gets you out of your comfort zone and helps you understand everyone else's job. You get to see their concepts and how they think about everything in a different perspective."

In every unit effectiveness inspection cycle, units must complete two full-scale readiness exercises. The wing conducted its first exercise for this UEI cycle with Exercise Merciful Valkyrie in 2022. Though the wing was able to get exercise credit with last year's deployment, Vigilant Elk 24 added more preparation for the wing's UEI in calendar year 2025.



Photos by Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly

Senior Airman Stanley Fairchild III, right, 89th Airlift Squadron loadmaster, secures a tow bar onto a C-17 Globemaster III aircraft prior to takeoff during exercise Vigilant Elk at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, Oct. 6, 2024.

Around the wing ...



Tech. Sgt. Joel McCullough



Tech. Sgt. Joel McCullough

1. Col. Robert Wengerter, left, 445th Mission Support Group commander, passes the guidon to Maj. Jefferson Sweet, incoming 445th Civil Engineer Squadron commander, during change of command ceremony at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, Oct. 5, 2024. Col. Jason Bordas, outgoing commander, heads to Tyndall AFB, Fla.

2. Members of the 445th Force Support Squadron taste test chili during the 2024 FSS chili cook-off, Oct 5, 2024. The winners were – best overall chili: Tech. Sgt. Jabrae Jones' "Your Desire" chili and most creative name: Master Sgt. Jared Dexter's "Doe-licious" chili.



Courtesy photo



Tech. Sgt. Joel McCullough

3. Senior Airman Chinou Xiong, 445th Civil Engineer Squadron structures, muds and tapes drywall in the finance and commercial travel offices of the 88th Air Base Wing, Building 1, at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, Oct. 5, 2024. The 445th CES installed a customer service desk for the finance office and built a wall separating the two offices.

4. Senior Airmen Jacob Jones, left, and Aaron Borden, right, 445th Civil Engineer Squadron fire emergency services members, pose with Senior Airman Andrew Blanton, 445th CES fire emergency services member, as he carves a pumpkin titled "Blanton's Baby" at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, Oct. 5, 2024. The different sections of CES competed in a pumpkin carving contest and the winning pumpkin was "Blanton's Baby."



Wing announces 3rd Quarter CY 2024 award winners

CGO



Capt. Kiley Gerritsen, 445th Aeromedical Staging Squadron critical care air transport team, is the 445th Airlift Wing Company Grade Officer of the Quarter. Gerritsen volunteered to deploy in support of Operations Spartan Shield and Enduring Sentinel. He was selected to forward deploy for Operation Shield Wall. Gerritsen rendered life-sustaining care to nine patients on two urgent and six priority missions. He was appointed as the director of medical simulation, utilizing hi-fidelity manikins and providing professional expertise to secure realistic adult and pediatric clinical practice for 118 medical personnel, boosting readiness proficiency from 25% to 54%. Gerritsen coordinated an exercise between pararescuemen and medical group personnel. He evaluated a mass casualty protocol execution for 90 members and reinforced 13 vital prolonged field care criteria in a contested environment scenario. The captain dedicated 98 volunteer service hours at the largest APO in the Area of Responsibility, a four-person team in the sorting and distribution of 33,095 parcels and 138,000 pounds of mail to serve more than 11,000 deployed Department of Defense personnel.

SNCO



Master Sgt. Rachel Hardin, 445th Aeromedical Staging Squadron aerospace medical technician, is the 445th Airlift Wing Senior NCO of the Quarter. Hardin served as Ultimate Caduceus' lead observer, controller and trainer. She empowered 133 medics to execute 18 aeromedical evac missions, moving 474 patients through two geographically separated units. Hardin's leadership throughout the 445th Airlift Wing's mass casualty and stress inoculation exercise bridged two squadrons that merged assets; resulting in increased medical capabilities and allowed 40 additional casualties to be treated and transported. She successfully executed a three-day exercise that evaluated a new unit type code concept of operations for en route patient care/movement with prolonged casualty care under degraded conditions. Hardin leveraged her professional network with the 911th Airlift Wing to garner \$17,000 in mission critical equipment. She organized and coached a multi-game tournament for more than 35 players and their families, raising over \$1,000 in donations for high-risk families.

NCO



Tech. Sgt. Alexandria Fearon, 445th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron avionics technician, is the 445th Airlift Wing NCO of the Quarter. Fearon led a three-person team for repairs on the fuel heavy malfunction by troubleshooting compromised wiring. Her actions led to the uncovering of a critical crack and drove an inspection for nine C-17 Globemaster IIIs that preserved a \$2.3 billion aircraft fleet. Fearon diagnosed a ground-aborted aircraft with a faulty fuel tank display. She replaced the faulty multi-junction probe, beating the standard by two hours. Fearon was part of a four-person team to diagnose a stick shaker fault; she identified an unshielded wire. Her team's abilities ensured a new shielded wire was installed and system integrity was restored reducing aircraft downtime by 25%. Sergeant Fearon organized her squadron's family day meals and activities; she managed eight Airmen, ensuring the distribution of food and beverages boosting the moral of 350 members and their families. Fearon aced the first ever eight-hour advanced fiber optic training course.

AMN



Senior Airman Gregory Knopp, Senior Airman Gregory Knopp, 445th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron communication and navigation system journeyman, is the 445th Airlift Wing Airman of the Quarter. Knopp quickly found and repaired a critical ultra high frequency radio issue during his temporary duty at Naval Station Rota, Spain. His actions directly supported four critical evacuations missions, totaling more than 13 flight hours. Knopp diagnosed a faulty color weather radar system. His troubleshooting expertise led to replacing the color radar processor, which enabled the successful execution of 102 sorties and more than 250 hours flown in August. Knopp led two technicians on the removal and replacement of a delaminated satellite communications antenna. He ensured the completion of 108 tasks two months ahead of schedule. The Airman volunteered 10 hours with Sigma Kappa Epsilon Zeta for their annual Alzheimer's Walk. He spearheaded outreach efforts that indirectly impacted the lives of approximately 6.7 million individuals.



SPOTLIGHT



Rank/Name: Tech. Sgt. Alexis Hymer

Unit: 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron

Duty Title: Aeromedical evacuation technician

Hometown: Franklin, Ohio

Civilian Job: 445th Airlift Wing Financial Management accounting and budget technician

Education: Pursuing a bachelor's degree in business administration at Park University

Hobbies: I enjoy cooking, kayaking, interior design, reading and spending time with family.

Career Goal: Obtain my bachelor's degree in business followed by my Master of Business Administration.

What do you like about working at the 445th? I really enjoy the people I work with and the work we do on the ground and in the air.

Why did you join the Air Force? I initially joined the Air Force for the educational benefits and have continued to serve because I love my job and the people I work with. The Air Force was recommended to me by my dad who is prior Army and said it was one of the best military branches. I am so glad I took his advice because I have the best job in the Air Force.

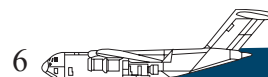
Dayton Public Schools visit the 445th AW



Photos by Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly

1. Staff Sgt. Hannah Elam, 445th Aeromedical Staging Squadron medical technician, demonstrates the use of a tourniquet to a Junior ROTC cadet from Dayton Public Schools during a visit with the 445th Airlift Wing at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, Oct. 18, 2024. During the visit cadets toured a C-17 Globemaster III aircraft and participated in demonstrations with the 445th Aerospace Medicine Squadron and 445th Security Forces Squadron.

2) Master Sgt. Frederick Geck, 445 Airlift Wing recruiter, briefs cadets about the Air Force and answers questions about potential career paths, enlistment requirements, physical fitness standards, specific Air Force roles and educational opportunities.



News Briefs



Fall back

Set clocks back before going to bed Saturday-Nov 2.

Promotions

Master Sergeant
Nathan Ellcessor, SFS
Nathan, Kendrick, FSS

Technical Sergeant
Caleb Errett, AW
Donald Ledman, MX
Samuel Riddle, MX
Nathan Boyer, AES

Staff Sergeant
Austin Dilday, SFS
Austin Wise, LRS
Cleamsman Iguade, ASTS
Katelyn Moenter, AES
Phoebe Weidner, MX
Royce Bridstrup, FSS

Senior Airman
Braxton, Younkman 89 AS
Emmanuel Fraiku, 87 APS
Ethan Perry, SFS
Ishika Menon, 87 APS
Kristopher Garlock, SFS

Airman First Class
David Lopez, 87 APS
Hayden Arnold, SFS

Airman
Evelyn Asamoah, ASTS

Newcomers

1Lt Andrew Tanis, AES
1 Lt Deborah Walker, AW
CMSgt Krystil Reinstadler, AES
TSgt Andrew Emmons, OSS
SSgt Caleb Arnold, ASTS
SrA Abdullahi Ali, LRS
SrA Evan Majeski, MXS
SrA Cera Savage, LRS
SrA Pedro Tineo, AMXS
A1C Josiah Baxter, LRS
A1C Dominic Siciliano, AMXS
A1C Tyler Sutter, AMXS

Buckeye Flyer

445th Airlift Wing Editorial Staff

Col. Douglas Perry Jr.
Commander

Lt. Col. Cynthia Harris
Chief, Public Affairs

Stacy Vaughn
Amanda Dick
Public Affairs Specialists

Patrick O'Reilly
Public Affairs Assistant

5439 McCormick Ave.
WPAFB, OH 45433-5132
Building 4010, Room 171
937-257-5784
445AW.PA2@us.af.mil

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.

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

November is Stress, Early Childhood Mental Health Awareness Month

By Vera Ensalaco
445th Airlift Wing Director of Psychological Health

In November, we raise awareness for stress and early childhood mental health. It's not just about spreading information; it's about breaking the stigma and encouraging open conversations.

The stigma surrounding mental health issues still exists across socioeconomic and cultural boundaries, leaving many to feel isolated, ashamed and like they've failed.

By raising awareness, we can challenge misconceptions and create a supportive environment where individuals feel safe seeking help without judgment.

Early intervention is key in managing and treating many emotional and mental health conditions. Lack of awareness often leads to delays in seeking help, resulting in worsening symptoms and unnecessary suffering. Recognizing signs of distress and seeking early support can empower individuals and assist with coping strategies.

Promoting understanding helps educate the public about various mental health disorders, their causes, symptoms and available treatments. This knowledge fosters empathy and understanding, making it easier for individuals to support their loved ones who may

be struggling. Resources such as counseling, pastoral services, helplines, and community or faith-based programs are available.

When people become aware of these options, they will be better equipped to seek assistance. These efforts play a crucial role in educating others about risk factors and developing healthy coping skills or finding necessary resources.

By raising our collective voice during November and beyond, we can foster a climate that prioritizes caring for one another and offering support to those who need it. Together, we can reduce barriers, provide information, and create an environment where everyone feels valued, connected and belongs – essential elements in positive prevention.

Many emotional and mental health conditions can be managed and treated with early intervention. Lack of awareness often leads to delays in seeking help, which can result in worsening symptoms and unnecessary suffering. Recognizing signs of distress and seeking early support can empower individuals and assist with coping strategies.



445 AW hosts Dayton, Cincinnati media



Photos by Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly



Media representatives from six Dayton and Cincinnati outlets learned about the mission of the 445th Airlift Wing during the 2024 445th Airlift Wing Media Day at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, Oct. 16, 2024. The media attended a mission brief, aircrew flight equipment demonstration and an orientation flight on a C-17 Globemaster III that included a 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron and 89th Airlift Squadron training mission.

1. Master Sgt. Marjorie Butcher, left, 445th AES medical technician, discusses the AE mission to Craig McKee, WCPO 9 news anchor, as Ray Pfeffer, WCPO 9 specialty photojournalist, records.

2. Darren King, right, Spectrum News 1 Dayton photographer, captures Tech. Sgt. Diego Weithoener, 445th AES medical technician, interacting with Alese Underwood, Spectrum News 1 Dayton reporter.

3. Maj. Nate Copen, center, 445th AES director of staff, explains various aspects of the AES mission.



445TH AIRLIFT WING/PA
BUILDING 4014, ROOM 113
5439 MCCORMICK AVE
WRIGHT-PATTERSON AFB OHIO 45433-5132

FIRST CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
USAF PERMIT NO. 1161

