

## D&TF participants excel at basic military training

*By Capt. Rachel Ingram  
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs*

Since 2023, 11 445th Airlift Wing Airmen have graduated basic military training with honor graduate distinction, an award only the top 10% of trainees in a basic military training flight may earn by demonstrating excellence in all phases of academic and military training.

An estimated 150 445th AW and 665th Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance Wing Airmen depart each year for BMT, with about a 50-50 even split between the two wings, according to Tech. Sgt. Chloe Van Hoose, 445th Force Support Squadron career development supervisor.

Data trends are beginning to show Reserve Airmen who participate in the Development and Training Flight program have better outcomes during basic military training and beyond, compared to new Airmen who do not. The nationally standardized program is exclusive to the Air Force Reserve Command, and about 40 Reserve wings across the country have a D&TF.

The wing's program, as it exists today, began in late 2011. Master Sgt. Jason Cordle, 445th AW Resilience Integrator First Sergeant, ran the D&TF program for the past 2 1/2 years before his current position.

"It's really about the basics," Cordle said. "The curriculum consists of in-depth training on topics such



Courtesy Photos

**Senior Airman Salchuk Gafurov, 445th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron communication/navigation journeyman, poses for a photo before and after basic military training.**

as dress and appearance, rank recognition, customs and courtesies, and Air Force history. Those things really help the members get off to a good start when they enter the stressful environment of BMT."

Senior Airman Salchuk Gafurov, 445th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron communication/navigation journeyman, participated in D&TF on unit training assembly weekends for three months before departing to BMT. During his time as a D&TF trainee, he was honest about his lack of knowledge regarding Air Force customs. He grew up in a small village in Russia, immigrating to the U.S. in his teen years.

"I just walked into a recruiter's office and didn't know anything about it," Gafurov said when interviewed in June 2023. "I would like to become a pilot someday."

Cordle told the D&TF trainees about the honor graduate ribbon, encouraging them to strive for it during BMT. Gafurov took those words to heart, and he was one of only four Airmen in his BMT flight recognized as an honor graduate.

Not everyone in Gafurov's flight was so prepared though. According to Gafurov, one trainee in particular began to give up on his Air Force career. Gafurov and his flight's dorm chief developed a mentorship plan, assigning the trainee to a bed next to Gafurov.

"When we got up in the morning, I'd help him so he wouldn't be yelled at or get in trouble," Gafurov



**Senior Airman Ethan Perry, 445th Security Forces Squadron fire team member, poses for a photo before and after basic military training.**



## Around the wing ...



Staff Sgt. Angela Jackson



Tech. Sgt. Joel McCullough

(left) Members of the 445th Security Forces Squadron, take turns defending against an attacker in a "Red Man" suit as a part of expandable baton certification training at Wright-Patterson, Air Force Base, Jan. 12, 2025. The baton is a non-lethal defensive weapon used against actively non-compliant subjects.

(right) Senior Airman Dylan Weaver and Tech. Sgt. Michael Morrow, 445th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chiefs, connect the torque links on the front landing gear of a C-17 Globemaster III at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Jan. 12, 2025. The torque links are disengaged when an aircraft is towed or pushed.



Staff Sgt. Angela Jackson



Daniel Peterson

(left) Airmen from the 445th Aeromedical Staging Squadron access injuries on medical manikins during En Route Patient Staging System (ERPS) training at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Jan. 11, 2025 during the unit training assembly. Airmen were responsible for the care and stabilization of simulated patients while safely preparing them for aeromedical evacuation.

(right) Members of the 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron run through a training scenario during an AE training flight onboard a C-17 Globemaster III, Jan. 15, 2025. The training consisted of transporting injured or sick patients on military aircraft during simulated combat or emergency situations.



## Wing announces 4th Quarter CY 2024 award winners

CGO



**Capt. Devona Bithos**, 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron officer in charge of resource management, is the 445th Airlift Wing Company Grade Officer of the Quarter. Bithos overhauled duty titles for 120 members, led strategic modification of 124-unit manning documents, 55 duty titles and 20 individual updates, resulting in a 25% increase in operational effectiveness. The captain directed the management of a \$1.1 million travel budget and \$300,000 in travel vouchers, implementing resource optimization that ensured 100% mission support, directly advancing the wing's mission objectives and strategic goals. Bithos led a high-performing 10-member team in processing 89 performance evaluations and 11 decorations, resulting in a 30% boost in efficiency and a 70% reduction in turnaround time for personnel records. She also coordinated a cookout for 50 veterans and their families at a Veterans Affairs Veterans House.

SNCO



**Master Sgt. Seth Ravert**, 445th Operations Support Squadron aircrew flight equipment quality assurance manager, is the 445th Airlift Wing Senior NCO of the Quarter. Quarterbacking AFE's quality assurance program, Ravert drove 978 equipment inspections while instructing his team during 122 QA inspections, surpassing Headquarters Air Force's 10% QA policy. A recognized expert, Air Mobility Command consulted him as a subject-matter expert. He led AFE's eight-person flyaway team that directly supported a large off-site survival training event. Supplied with AFE's gear, 70 aircrew experienced realistic water survival training with the U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard with zero equipment failure. Ravert assisted in the transport of over 23,000 pounds of generators, medical supplies, livestock feed and hay, construction materials and food to 150 families in North Carolina displaced due to flooding from Hurricane Helene.

NCO



**Tech. Sgt. Charles Swaim**, 445th Maintenance Squadron aircraft structural maintenance craftsman, is the 445th Airlift Wing NCO of the Quarter. Swaim revitalized the work center's consolidated tool room where he developed a systematic approach to the inventory, inspection and tracking on 395 kits. His efforts corrected 56 errors and ensured serviceability of 954 items. He reinvigorated the forklift training program to certify two trainers and provide classes for 120 members, increasing capability by 77%. Sergeant Swaim identified and processed 30 pieces of support equipment for turn-in and re-issuance. These overages saved \$315,000 in major command funding and re-purposed over 1,000 square feet of hanger space for deployment preparation. As a community emergency response volunteer, Swaim teamed with 350 members to augment first responders in emergency situations and natural disasters.

AMN



**Senior Airman Alexander Hall**, 445th Logistics Readiness Squadron material management apprentice, is the 445th Airlift Wing Airman of the Quarter. Hall coordinated supply chain operations for high-demand aviation parts, ensuring 100% on-time delivery of critical assets to aircrews, resulting in zero delays for 12 scheduled missions and improving flight operations by 15%. He optimized the squadron's parts accountability program by executing a bin inventory for eight aircraft. He inspected 107 assets valued at \$867,000 and identified 11 discrepancies, ensuring asset availability for 200 flight hours and 37 sorties. Hall completed 200 mobility spares kit put aways, valued at \$275,000, ensuring accurate inventory management and operational efficiency for mobility assets for operation Vigilant Elk Exercise. He led a toy and school supply drive, coordinating 12 volunteers to collect 500 items that benefited 100 children in need.





# Wing announces lieutenant colonel promotions

Air Reserve Personnel Center officials recently announced results for the Calendar Year 2024 Air Force Reserve Line and Nonline Lieutenant Colonel Promotion Selection Board. The boards selected 591 Citizen Airmen for promotion.

The selection boards convened at ARPC, August 19-26, 2024 to determine those officers best and fully qualified to assume the next higher grade. Board members selected 591 of 1,284 officers considered.

The 445th Airlift Wing had nine officers selected for promotion to lieutenant colonel.

Congratulations to Joli Beasley, 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron; Ryan Fallon, Benjamin Hollett, Matthew Scholz and Michael Shampine, 89th Airlift Squadron; Ryan Findley, 445th Civil Engineer Squadron; Render Parkman and Andrew Place, 445th Aerospace Medicine Squadron; and Tekara Ray, 445th Aeromedical Staging Squadron.

A complete list of Airmen selected for promotion is



available online by visiting the Air Reserve Officer Promotion page on myFSS.

Categories considered during these promotion boards were: Line of the Air Force Air Operations and Special Warfare (LAF-A), Line of the Air Force Nuclear Missile Operations (LAF-N), Line of the Air Force Space Operations (LAF-S), Line of the Air Force Information Warfare (LAF-I), Line of the Air Force Combat Support (LAF-C), Line of the Air Force Cross-Functional Operations (LAF-X), Line of the Air Force Force Modernization (LAF-F), Judge Advocates (LAF-J), Chaplains, Dental Corps (DC), Medical Corps (MC), Nurse Corps (NC), Medical Services Corps (MSC), and Biomedical Sciences Corps (BSC).

Selection statistics are detailed in the promotion results Air Reserve Personnel Center Memo, found on myFSS.

## Embrace a balanced lifestyle

By Vera Ensalaco

445th Airlift Wing Director of Psychological Health

February is the month most associated with love and romance due to St. Valentine's Day.

The best way to show love for yourself and ultimately others is to take care of you. Focusing on mind-body wellness means finding balance by looking after both your mental and physical health.

It is a trendy and buzz-word type concept, I will give you that, though it has merit. If you can incorporate daily mind-body practices, you may help to lower the stress (which is often inevitable), maintain and build strength, and improve your overall well-being.

Practices like yoga, muscle relaxation and meditation are great for helping your mind and body. Yoga, for example, can increase chemicals in the brain that help with stress and make you feel calmer.

The Consortium for Health and Military Performance encourages these practices to help service members be physically and mentally ready. Deep-breathing exercises, muscle relaxation and meditation can reduce stress. These exercises can assist with stress



Airman 1st Class Erin Baxter

and emotion management.

The National Institutes of Health also suggests doing activities like tai chi and guided relaxation to improve mood and reduce stress. Families can do these activities together to build strong bonds. Family yoga, games either indoor or outdoor, and family walks can not only increase physical health but emotional health which has been proven to be an aide in overall well-being. Outdoor activities like nature walks or scavenger hunts are also great ways to stay active. Incorporating fun activities can help

kids enjoy being outside.

Making time for these simple activities can lead to a healthier, happier life and help you overcome any challenge. If you need something more or would like someone to talk to, please contact the Director of Psychological Health or one of the other helping agencies. We are happy to be of assistance!

I can be reached at 937-257-6267, (cell) 937-701-1124 or email at vera.ensalaco@us.af.mil.

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explained.

In the end, every trainee in Gafurov's flight graduated BMT together, and nobody in the flight was washed back to repeat training.

"As a group, as a team, as a family, we took care of each other and we got through it," he said.

Senior Airman Ethan Perry, 445th Security Forces Squadron fire team member, attended BMT at age 18 and also earned the honor graduate ribbon.

Perry's great-grandfather served as a tail gunner in World War II, but nobody else in his family has a military background. He said the D&TF program was "a big head start" because he already knew facing movements, reporting statements and Air Force rank before ever stepping foot on Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

For Airman Tatiana Rivera, 87th Aerial Port Squadron air freight representative, D&TF gave her a confidence boost going into BMT. She attended D&TF weekend five months in 2023, including one session when a former military training instructor visited the flight and offered an immersive preview of the BMT environment.

"Once I got [to BMT], it was immediately obvious who was a Reservist who'd been in a Development and Training Flight versus the people who didn't get that



Courtesy Photo

Airman Tatiana Rivera, 87th Aerial Port Squadron ramp operations representative, poses for a photo before and after basic military training.

opportunity," Rivera said.

Because of the time she'd spent practicing drill footwork and marching in formation, she was quickly selected as an element leader. She said her MTIs often asked her to demonstrate facing movements and marching for the flight, and her wingmen would ask her for pointers and coaching.

"The [D&TF] training helped me immensely, and it was the best choice I could have made," she said. "I could not have been more prepared."

In tech school, Rivera was placed in another leadership role, completing more than 100 hours of community service and assisting new arrivals to the base. She began drilling with the 87th APS in spring of 2024.

Another trainee, Senior Airman Gregory Knoop, 445th AMXS communication/navigation journeyman, graduated BMT in May 2024 as an honor graduate, then earned 445th AW Airman of the Quarter later that same year.

Attending D&TF weekends prior to BMT sets future Airmen up for success, Cordle said, and the tracked outcomes of the trainees supports that notion.

"It absolutely makes a difference," he concluded.

## MilTax free tax services now available for 2025 tax filing season

The Defense Department's free tax preparation and e-filing software for service members and their families is now available for the 2025 tax season.

Military OneSource MilTax is designed to handle complex, military-specific tax scenarios such as deployments and multistate filings and includes free one-on-one help from specially trained tax experts. With MilTax, service members and immediate family members can file their federal return and up to three state tax returns for free. Survivors are eligible for MilTax, and recent veterans can access it up to 365 days from their separation or retirement.

"Our goal is to empower members of the military community to remain focused and mission-ready

by addressing life's challenges efficiently," said Kelly Smith, associate director of Military Community Support Programs. "During tax season, financial stress can weigh heavily on service members and their families. That's why Military OneSource MilTax is here to ease the burden with free consultations, tax preparation and e-filing services."

Eligibility is verified through the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System, or DEERS.

More information is available at <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/financial-legal/taxes/miltax-military-tax-services/> or by calling Military OneSource at 800-342-9647.





# SPOTLIGHT

**Rank/Name:** Staff Sgt. Cleansman Iguade

**Unit:** 445 Aeromedical Staging Squadron

**Duty Title:** Medical logistics technician

**Hometown:** Edo, Benin City, Nigeria

**Civilian Job:** FedEx Secu-  
ritas

**Education:** I am an un-  
dergraduate student in  
my final year at Purdue  
University in Indiana, pursuing  
a bachelor’s degree in computer  
information technology with a  
concentration in information se-  
curity.

**Hobbies:** Playing pickup soccer



Staff Sgt. Angela Jackson

once everything aligns.

**What do you like about working at the 445th?** I enjoy working at the 445th because the leadership provides a balanced approach, offering both discipline and the time needed for young Airmen to grow. There are numerous opportunities available to everyone, and leadership is always accessible to help guide you onto the right path.

**Why did you join the Air Force?** I joined to actively contribute, learn and connect with the American people, while also taking advantage of the valuable benefits offered.

**Career Goal:** To pursue a master’s degree in business administration, with plans to take the Armed Forces Qualification Test to transition into cybersecurity within the U.S. Air Force. Ultimately, I aim to go active duty

## Chiefs mentor Rising 6 members

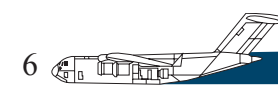
Chief master sergeants from around the 445th Airlift Wing hosted a panel discussion focused on mentoring and career development for junior enlisted wing members Jan. 12, 2025.

The chiefs shared their motivations for joining the Air Force, emphasizing patriotism, educational benefits and family influence. They discussed lessons learned from career setbacks, such as stagnation and poor planning. Key priorities for career growth included completing professional military education, maintaining readiness and seeking mentorship. They also highlighted the importance of balancing civilian and military responsibilities, proactivity, self-awareness and continuous learning. Additionally, the chiefs advised on managing additional duties and the importance of feedback for improvement. The discussion concluded with a question-and-answer session on overcoming career challenges, and the importance of staying informed and prepared.



Staff Sgt. Angela Jackson

**Chief master sergeants from the 445th Airlift Wing participate in a Rising 6 panel mentor session at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Jan. 15, 2025.**



## News Briefs

### Promotions

**Senior Master Sergeant**  
Brenna Pogoy, AES  
David Smart, AW  
Christopher Wise, OSS

**Master Sergeant**  
Joseph Divish, 87 APS  
Mark Everhart, 87 APS  
Christopher Lewis, MXS  
Andrew Schnell, 87 APS  
Kevin Shaffer, 87 APS

**Technical Sergeant**  
Luke Barnes, LRS  
Amaya Hagler, AES  
Ramello Rhodes, ASTS  
Christopher Thrower, CES

**Staff Sergeant**  
Brent Boers, LRS  
Dalton Hargrove, AW

Bruce Hawkins, 87 APS  
Angela Jackson, AW  
Rebecca Johnson, LRS  
Alix McMehrani, CES  
Isaac Moore, AMXS

**Senior Airman**  
Ryan Connor, 87 APS

**Airman First Class**  
Landen Krall, AES

### Newcomers

Lt Col Charles Hunley, ASTS  
Capt Jess Ryan, FSS  
CMSgt Moonyean Vinco, MXG  
MSgt Luke Vincent, AMXS  
TSgt Heston Winter, ASTS  
SSgt Averl Houck, MSG

SrA Randy Foster, 87 APS  
SrA Jada Freeman, ASTS  
SrA Michael Osborne, AMXS  
SrA Michael Rodriguez, ASTS  
A1C Kwabena Asirifi, ASTS  
A1C Zachary Ewald, AMXS  
A1C Amit Phalke, LRS  
AB Emily Cogossi 87 APS  
AB Jared Strong, MXS



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## Annual awards banquet April 5

The 445th Airlift Wing Annual Awards Banquet will be held Saturday, April 5, at the National Museum of the United States Air Force. The reception is slated to begin at 6 p.m. and the program at 7 p.m. A medalion ceremony will be held at 5 p.m. to formally recognize all nominees. Family members and leadership are invited to attend. More details will be emailed to nominees.

The awards banquet will recognize those selected for Airman, NCO, senior NCO, first sergeant, company grade officer, field grade officer, recruiter, honor guard member, civilian (category I GS-09 and below/category II, WG-10, GS-11 and above), spouse, youth and squadron of the year. The winner of each category will be announced at the banquet.

### Cost

The cost of the event is \$55 for adults; \$25 for children 6 to 10; and children 5 and under are free.

RSVP at: <https://einvitations.afit.edu/inv/anim.cfm?i=982936&k=0B6940007851>. Reservations must be received by March 10, 2025.

### Payment method

Online reservations can be made via PayPal. Please see instructions in e-invite. Cash and check payments should be dropped off at the public affairs office in building 4010, room 171.



Staff Sgt. Angela Jackson

### Nominations needed

Wing members are encouraged to nominate co-workers and family members for the following awards: field grade officer, civilian, spouse and youth of the year. Nominations should be submitted on an Air Force Form 1206 to 445aw.pa2@us.af.mil. Individual award packages must include a photograph. If a photo is needed, please contact the public affairs office at 937-257-5784.

NOTE: CGO of the year nominations should go through the squadron and group process similar to CGO of the quarter. Squadron of the Year nominations should be vetted by group commanders prior to submission.





## Third time's the charm: One Airman's road to service

By Capt. Rachel Ingram  
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. Robert Meyers knows a thing or three about military law enforcement. Over the course of 12 years, he's served in three branches of the Armed Forces, now a proud member of the 445th Security Forces Squadron.

"I kind of took an approach in my career that I would take on whatever comes up," Meyers said.

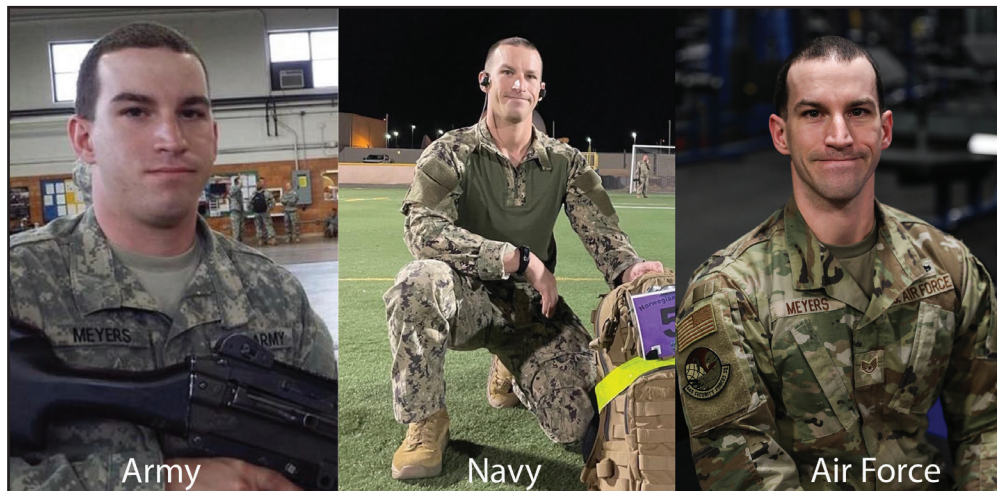
For him, life has always been about taking chances and pursuing new adventures. His military career began with a six-year enlistment in the Ohio Army National Guard, which included a deployment to Guantanamo Bay, working in detainee operations there.

When his Army enlistment was up, he intended to join the Air National Guard, but ran into logistical roadblocks with the recruiter at the time.

"I hopped over next door to the Navy recruiter's office, and next thing I knew, I was serving four years in the Navy Reserve," Meyers explained.

His Navy enlistment took him to Djibouti where he was part of a convoy of tactical vehicles towing boats from Camp Lemonnier to the sea ports for launch.

Returning to MEPS a third time, Meyers joined the



Courtesy Photo

**Staff Sgt. Robert Meyers has served in three branches of the U.S. Armed Forces: Army, Navy and Air Force.**

Air Force Reserve in 2023. He earned an associate degree in criminal justice, then a bachelor's in interdisciplinary studies. But for him, the transferability of the skills he's gained through part-time military service have given him an extra leg up in civilian work sector.

Meyers is currently en-

rolled in a law enforcement academy as a prerequisite to an armed protective security role he recently accepted.

He said that many of the skills required to pass the academy – like de-escalation, use of force, and weapons proficiency – are exact duplicates of hands-on training courses he completes annually as a Defender in the Air Force Reserve.

Other skills he's developed throughout his military career also benefit him in the workforce: discipline, tolerance, communication, and the ability to perform under stressful conditions, to name a few.

"I like to try new things and travel to different places, and I think my career trajectory reflects that," he said.



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