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ON THE COVER

Master Sgt. James Meehan, 78th Air Refueling Squadron, participates in the Philadelphia Mummers Parade Jan. 1. Meehan has marched in the parade every year since he was five.



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Lt. Col. Rod Biggs, 78th Air Refueling Squadron, pilots one KC-10 Extender behind another as part of refueling practice Dec. 1. Biggs received the 2012 Pilots for Kids Award for his years of dedication in helping hospital-ized children. He has been serving with the Pilots for Kids organization since 1999. *Photo by Shawn J. Jones*

Photo by Shawn J. Jones



VIEWPOINTS

Resolutions, wing priorities go hand-in-hand

By Col. Michael J. Underkofler

514th Air Mobility Wing commander

I don't think I've ever set New Year's resolutions. I've always felt that if something needed to be done, I'd do it no matter what the calendar reads.

However, at the beginning of this year, a reporter pressed me for my resolutions. Saying that I don't make them wasn't going to suffice, so I just blurted out a couple new goals: delegate more, fly more and spend more time with my family. If I'm better at the first one, the other two should follow. Besides, the last two are fun and are personal priorities.

Nearly two years ago, I laid out what my priorities were here in the wing. I continually refer to them at ceremonies and briefings, but just like the reporter with the resolutions, someone asked me what my priorities were for the wing in 2013. They haven't changed.

They're not affected by uncomfortable budget times or changes in the world. I think they are simple to remember: Deploy combatready Airmen, Develop Airmen, Defend Citizen Airmen and the way we serve, and Fun have it and incorporate it in what we do.

Use this device: 3Ds and 1 F. Or as one noncommissioned officer jokes, "the grades on my freshman year report card."

DEPLOY COMBAT-READY AIRMEN

Our most fundamental job is to make sure we and our fellow Airmen can fight the fight ever ready technically, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The changing nature of warfare and the real threat from those who wish us harm doesn't allow for spool-up time. Like the citizen soldiers who came before us, we need to be ready at a moment's notice to put down our plows and other instruments of our civilian jobs to fight the fight here at home as well as on foreign soil.

To maintain our readiness, we need to make the most of our training opportunities by getting our hands dirty, practicing things one more time and challenging those around us. When the American public sees us in our uniform, they don't know our career specialties or any duty limitations. Rather, they see warriors, Airmen who should be able to defend and protect, take over in a crisis or natural disaster, perform first aid and restore order. We owe it to them, to the nation, and to each other that we're always ready to do what is required.

Develop Airmen

Every day, we must pass down our knowledge and skills, not just the technical ones,

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Photo by Shawn J. Jones

but those related to mentoring, leading and following. Train your replacement. Take advantage of professional military education and other educational opportunities. Participate in Human Resource Development Council-sponsored events and other developmental programs. Incorporate the best practices of the civilian community into how we teach and train. Tell the stories of great Airmen who went before us. Keep our unit free of harassment, discrimination, and destructive discord. Celebrate our unit's rich cultural and ethnic diversity and teach others how it has made us better. Encourage others in all these endeavors so we continue to be the world's most respected air force.

Defend Citizen Airmen and the Way We Serve

Air Force reservists are vital to the defense of the nation. We bring skills and talents found nowhere else. We also help maintain a vital link to communities, elected officials and private industry. Our military ancestors fought incredibly hard to allow reservists to serve, let's honor and defend that legacy. When making decisions about opportunities for our Airmen, we must allow talent and ability to guide us rather than solely relying on longevity and availability.

As best we can, we must make missions, tasks and deployments more employer and reservist friendly. This is nothing to be embarrassed about. Our normal priorities, in order, should be our family, our civilian employment and our reserve duty. When we need to change these priorities, we should plan for it, communicate about it, support those impacted by it and return to normal as soon as possible.

We must recognize civilian employers and encourage them to be our national defense partners, educate our community and religious leaders about what we do, demonstrate sound stewardship of the taxpayer's trust and resources and help them understand our inherent efficiencies.

<u>Fun</u>—Incorporate It Into Everything We Do.

Hard work deserves fun. Supervisors should make sure annual training and deployments have fun activities included in them. While the mission comes first, the mission can't be done without Airmen excited to learn, serve and grow. After a long shift or a period of several long shifts, take time to recover and recharge. See the world, not just simply serve in the world. Visit a historical or cultural site when off duty. Take along others and make new friendships. Make memories and share them with your family. When possible, include your family in your military experience. Work hard, play responsibly.

Three Ds and one \overline{F} – I'm hopeful that you'll see the merit in these priorities. I think that not only will we get through inspections, deployment and adversity better if we strive to achieve them, but we'll make our service here more meaningful and worthwhile.

Thanks for all you do. Best wishes for 2013 and beyond.

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Chief Master Sgt. Linda Menser (left), Lt. Col. Joe Delgado and Col. Anthony Esposito listen to weapons familiarization briefing in September. The three Airmen are members of the 514th Maintenance Group.

What makes a great wing? It's the people

By Col. Anthony Esposito

514th Maintenance Group commander

Just how great a place is the 514th Air Mobility Wing? Well, to really know, try leaving for a while.

That's just what I did back in 2007. It was a happy departure. I had just been promoted to Colonel and had secured a position on the Numbered Air Force staff – an absolute dream come true for any officer. The work was interesting, demanding and rewarding, yet performing my Reserve duty just wasn't what it used to be.

What was missing? Was it working the flightline in 12-degree weather, the drive down the Jersey Turnpike, the two drill weekends a month or maybe the dining facility?

No, I don't think it was any of that. What was missing was the one thing that truly makes the 514th AMW unique, the people.

It's the people who leave on a Sunday night after a drill weekend who won't see one another until the next month. Yet within the first few minutes of the next drill, it's like they've been together every day.

It's the people we share the birth of our children with and the people who help us get through the death of a parent or a fellow squadron member.

It's the people we get into heated debates with over who will win the next Eagles-Giants football game.

It's the people who love our nation so much that they're willing to leave their families and travel to places we sometimes never heard of to defend it. Since coming home to McGuire, I had the privilege to serve on the Deserving Airman's Commissioning Board, which allows the top enlisted Airmen to interview for officer positions. Serving on the board provided an awesome opportunity to look closely at the future leaders of this wing. Wow, was I impressed! The talent and enthusiasm of these young Airmen gave me great confidence that the future is even brighter than the past.

What impressed me more than anything was not any one candidate, but the overall level of excellence the group had as a whole. Several of the Airmen were first or second generation Americans, representing an amazing cultural diversity, all possessing the same drive and ambition that have brought people to our shores since our nation's founding.

The 514th AMW is a wing with pilots who own no aircraft and with mechanics who own no wrenches, yet we fly the most flight hours and reenlist more Airmen than anyone else in Air Force Reserve Command. These results are possible due to the commitment of our people and the value of the relationships developed though years of hard work and great memories.

Our commitment to each other and our nation drives us to success. We were wingmen way before the term ever became fashionable and we'll continue to be just that!

Ask someone who's left the wing what they miss the most, and I'm pretty sure you'll get an answer that echoes my sentiments – it's the people.

Safety not just for airplanes: A few key decisions can make Airmen safer, richer, healthier

By Lt. Col. Dean Owens

514th Air Mobility Wing safety office

Let's make a few resolutions this year and stick to them. Our families and our units need us to.

In this fast-paced world in which we live, there is a lot of competition for a reservist's time, and it comes from multiple sources—home, work and military duty. When scrambling to satisfy their many responsibilities, some Airmen may find that little time is available for taking care of themselves.

Alarming statistics are mounting that demonstrate the stress and lack of concern for our overall health, be it physical or mental. I want to touch upon three health-related topics—smoking, obesity and a lack of exercise.

Per year, obesity is associated with more than 112,000 cardiovascular disease-related deaths, more than 15,000 cancer-related deaths, and more than 35,000 other deaths in the U.S.

Translation: actuaries are hired by insurance agencies to assess life expectancy rates, and obesity causes a spike in their number of premature deaths by 162,000 a year. Eat less. Eat smart.

If the stats on obesity are considered bad, then the stats on smoking are downright ruthless.

Smoking kills more than all other diseases combined. In strict dollars, someone who smokes two packs a day for 20 years will spend about \$77,000 for the cigarettes alone.

When the costs associated with additional health care and increased insurance rates, that number is significantly higher. If smokers decide to put their cigarette money into an investment yielding a measly three percent annual return, the \$77,000 would grow to \$98,000. Just think of that, \$98,000 going up in smoke. Can you say new car, new boat or college tuition for your kids?

Translation: stop smoking, feel better and buy a new boat.

Obese smokers will actually live about 13 years less than expected!

But it's not all bad news. According to a wellknown Harvard Alumni Study, life expectancy was about two years longer for those who expended 2,000 calories per week during exercise, compared to individuals who were sedentary.

Translation: Go for a jog, pump iron and live long enough to enjoy your new boat.

Each of us is important to our families and our unit. We all have a needed skill set to successfully complete our mission, and I am sure we all want to live as long as possible to spend as much time with our families as we can.

So let's all make and keep a few resolutions this year: eat less, eat smart, stop smoking, work out and have fun spending some of that newly acquired \$98,000 from quitting smoking.



Tech Sqt. James Meehan (far left), an Air Force Reserve first sergeant, performs in the Philadelphia Mummers Parade on New Year's Day with the Two Street Stompers comic brigade.

FROM DRESS BLUES TO BL FIRST SERGEANT PUTS ON A NE

By Master Sqt. Donna T. Jeffries 514th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs

Strutting up Philadelphia's Broad Street to incessant tunes while decked out in a colorful wench dress is no ordinary way to bring in the New Year, but to one Airman, it's the only way.

Born to be a mummer, Tech. Sgt. James Meehan of the 78th Air Refueling Squadron has participated in the Mummers Parade for 32 years. Since he was five years old, Meehan has donned a colorful mummers costume and performed scripted song and dance routines with his family's comic brigade, the Two Street Stompers.

The roots of the parade developed from the customs of 17th century European immigrant. By the 1870's, an unorganized collection of neighborhood celebrations turned into an area-wide parade that brought in the New Year with noisy fanfare. The City of Philadelphia officially sponsored its first Mummers Parade in 1901.

The parade, which can now be viewed on

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television or online, showcases about 10,000 mummers competing in a variety of categories such as string bands, fancies, comic brigades and fancy brigades.

Meehan's Two Street Stompers compete in the comic brigade category and their scripted routines have helped them capture first place three times.

Meehan's family has marched

with the mummers for more than

from about 35 family members

when it started, to more than

175 family and friends now.

This year, the Stompers routine was based on the California Gold Rush. As part of the 40 years. Participants have grown Two Street Gold Rush. the men dressed as miners, complete with the mummer's requisite wench dresses, the

children dressed as dynamite and the women dressed as golden nuggets. The Stompers danced to songs that referenced the gold mining theme, such as Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs "Heigh Ho" and Kanye West's "Gold Digger."

Meehan's family has marched with the mummers for more than 40 years. Participants have grown from about 35 family members when it started, to more than 175 family and friends now. Eighty percent of the club's members are related, said Meehan.

Though New Year's Day is the high point for the Stompers, most mummers say being a mummer is much more than preparing for

the parade.

"Back when I was young, every boy in the neighborhood participated," said Ed McLaughlin, Meehan's uncle and a founding father of Two Street Stompers.

As he became a man,

McLaughlin said he thought it would be interesting to start his own family brigade, so with his brother's help, he did just that. For the first 15 years, the founders headed the Two Street Stompers until the younger men expressed an interest in taking over. The new leaders relied on their business knowhow and trade skills to improve the club.

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The Two Street Stomper's inspiration to showcase miners, dynamite and golden nuggets as their 2013 theme came from the California gold rush.

UE DRESS W YEAR SHOW

"They've taken it beyond where we ever thought it would be with buses, drills, props, etcetera," McLaughlin said.

Meehan likens the present day Two Street Stompers to that of a military organization in that its members have defined roles.

He and five other Stompers constitute the executive board which leads the brigade. Executive board members commit a full year getting ready for the parade. Their year is full of planning, handling finances, designing and building props, creating costumes, choreographing routines and coordinating logistics. Meehan's primary responsibilities involve logistics and equipment.

Planning for each year's theme begins right after New Year's Day when board members gather to discuss themes for the next parade before presenting their ideas to the entire club for a vote.

Meehan said the Two Street Stompers' key to success is the emphasis on the positive and the high energy of the group. That energy has earned the organization the reputation of a club to be reckoned with, as mentioned by this year's parade announcers.

While they did not take first place, Meehan said he was pleased to place in the top four in his competitive category.

"More important than everything, we were together and we had fun," Meehan said.



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Wreaths Across America

Many Freedom Wing Airmen joined more than 20,000 other volunteers at Arlington National Cemetery Dec. 15 in support of the Wreaths Across America program. The volunteers placed more than 110,000 wreaths on the grave sites of service members buried at Arlington. The program was founded in 1992 when a patriotic businessman with an excess of unsold Christmas wreaths decided to ship them to the cemetery as a gesture of respect and gratitude for the service members who fought for America defense. The mission of the program is to remember, honor and teach, and it is carried out in part by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies on a specified Saturday in December at Arlington, as well as veterans' cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states and beyond. Freedom Wing Airmen, led by the 514th Aerospace Medicine Squadron, have participated in Wreaths Across America for the past several years.





College cash available for Airmen

By Shawn J. Jones *Freedom Flyer editor*

Many new Airmen cite education benefits as a top incentive for choosing to serve, yet hundreds of thousands of dollars in Air Force college money go unused every year.

Tuition assistance is one education benefit that Airmen can use to offset the cost of higher learning. The Air Force Reserve provides 100 percent tuition assistance, up to \$4,500 per year and \$250 per semester hour, for the vast majority of reservists.

Senior Master Sgt. Sal Valeo, the 514th Air Mobility Wing's chief of education and training, said an Airman's choice to forego tuition assistance benefits is almost like declining a personal check for \$4,500.

One Airman who doesn't plan to forego his college money is Senior Airman Daniel Condo, who as a

financial management specialist with the 514th AMW, understands the value of tuition assistance.

"I was pursuing a master's degree, and the tuition was very expensive," Condo said. "I knew the Reserve would be able to help me pay for school."

During the fall semester, Condo used \$2,250 in tuition assistance toward his master's degree in criminal justice.

Condo said he is grateful for the benefit because it gives his family greater financial flexibility.

"By saving money on college, my wife and I have been

AIR FORCE RESERVE TUITION ASSISTANCE

- 100 percent of tuition is covered up to \$250 per semester hour or \$167.67 per quarter hour with an annual cap of \$4,500.
- TA is not available for repeat or equivalent courses already paid for through AFRC TA.
- Airmen must be in good standing with their units and actively participating for pay and points.
- Airmen must complete a TA statement of understanding before becoming eligible.
- A degree plan is required by the education office before applying for a 4th class.
- TA benefits are reimbursements that are paid several months after successfully completing the course.
- TA is not authorized for courses leading to a lower or lateral degree than what that student has already attained.
 Exceptions are made for the pursuit of teaching certifications, some language studies and for courses leading toward a Community College of the Air Force degree.

able to plan a vacation to Disney World," he said.

To qualify for tuition assistance, Airmen must be registered in a 2or 4-year degree seeking program. Tuition assistance will only be applied to courses on an Airman's degree plan.

Airmen who have completed a degree, may only apply tuition assistance to a higher-level degree. For instance, an Airman who has completed a bachelor's degree will not be given assistance for an associate's degree or a second bachelor's degree. Additionally, tuition assistance will not be paid toward education beyond a master's degree. Exceptions are made for courses that relate to preparation for defense language proficiency tests, pursuit of teaching certification and completion of a Community College of the Air Force associate's degree.

While tuition assistance is widely considered a benefit for

individual Airmen, the Air Force as an institution also stands to gain from an Airman's pursuit of higher learning.

According to Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh's *Vision for the United States Air Force*, "Education and training are the foundation of our airpower advantage."

Welsh's vision charges Airmen with safeguarding and reinforcing that foundation.

The general wrote, "All Airmen, whether teacher or student, have a role in ensuring that we remain the most technically proficient, best-educated, and best-trained air force in the world."

An INSPECTION BY ANOTHER NAME: Full-scale readiness inspection trimmed to one-day event

By Lt. Col. Rob Kownacky

514th Air Mobility Wing combat capabilities office

We can all take a collective sigh of relief. The operational readiness inspection that was scheduled for April has been pushed back to July.

And the news gets even better. The inspection, which will evaluate our ability to survive and operate, will start and end on July 13.

That's it. No deployment lines. No living in tents. None of the hardships associated with a full-blown inspection. And just when you thought the news couldn't get any better, it does. Instead of the usual 500 personnel deploying for a readiness inspection, the inspector general will inspect only about 150 of our Airmen.

As sweet as it sounds, we still need to be very good at what we do.

In fact, because the inspection won't be as thorough, the inspectors will expect perfection.

This means that the Airmen selected for evaluation need to be our best and brightest. These 150 will represent the wing and we will be graded on their performance. The inspection will look at three major areas: self aid and buddy care, weapons familiarization and chemical warfare skills.

We have several training events scheduled from now until July.

We are working closely with our active duty partners who are also being inspected. Through our joint effort, I am confident we will perform to the inspector's standards or better. Those who aren't selected to participate can still help the wing by supporting those who were selected as they prepare for the grand finale.

Family readiness office helps Airmen recover from Hurricane Sandy

By Capt. Allison Ecung

514th Air Mobility Wing public affairs

New York City goes dark. Rain crashes down as thousands of refugees from lower Manhattan make their way north on foot in search of food and shelter.

It sounds like the plot of the latest apocalypse movie in which a hero swoops in to save the day, but this was reality for many on the east coast in the wake of Hurricane Sandy.

The Airman and Family Readiness Office here has truly stepped forward as the hero of this story by gathering donations and volunteers to assist Airmen and their families affected by the hurricane.

Since Sandy blew through the coast, the office has served as the collection point for donations, assistance and volunteer coordination within the Freedom Wing. Thanks to the generosity of our Airmen, more than \$10,000 and more than one ton of food has been collected for distribution to those in need due to Hurricane Sandy.

Additionally, hundreds of volunteers donated their time and efforts to cleaning up damaged homes and providing assistance to families displaced by the storm.

The Airman and Family Readiness Office can provide other information on financial and mental health resources from agencies like Federal Emergency Management Agency and the American Red Cross. Counselors from the Trenton Vet Center are also available to speak with Airmen about trauma experienced due to the storm. They can be reached at (609) 882-5744.

Service members and their families wanting to provide assistance can donate to the Airman and Family Readiness Office's food pantry year-round. The office can be reached at (609) 754-8229.

Preseason motorcycle briefings

Preseason motorcycle briefs are available for riders to receive information on motorcycle safety and the upcoming course schedule and to review the installation's motorcycle policy. The briefs are an annual requirement for on-base motorcycle riders. All briefs will last about one hour and will be held at the Timmermann Center on the Dix section of the base. Sessions offered are as follows: Feb. 12 and 13 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.; March 6 and 7, at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.; and March 9 at 9 a.m. Attendees must sign for credit. More information is available at 609-562-3082.

Phone system changes for federal employees benefits

Due to the lack of usage and the increase of maintenance costs, the civilian benefits and entitlements service team's interactive voice response system has been decommissioned. The automated phone system allowed certain federal employees to conduct benefits-related actions. Now, all benefits-related transactions must be completed online via the Employee Benefits and Information System (EBIS). Employees may continue to contact a customer service representative for counseling or guidance by calling 1-800-525-0102, but will be directed to login to EBIS in order to accomplish transactions.

Unit coverage in Freedom Flyer?

Is your unit getting enough coverage in Freedom Flyer? If not, tell the public affairs office about it. The next time your unit does something noteworthy or does something that would make a great photo feature, let us know. The PA office can be reached at (609) 754-3487.

PULSE CHECK: What are your winter survival tips?











2nd Lt. **Jane Novesteras** 514th Aeromedical Staging Squadron

"I've got a 'go-bag' that contains batteries, a crank radio and flashlight, candles, canteen, canned goods and water. I'm a nurse so I've got a separate pouch with first aid supplies as well."

Capt.

Darrin McDermott

514th Aeromedical

Evacuation Squadron

de-icer salt, blankets and gloves."





"My winter survival tips are to drink a lot of hot chocolate, eat chocolate donuts and keep warm."



35th Aerial Port Squadron

"My number one winter survival tip is to purchase a generator. Another tip is to stock plenty of canned goods and blankets."

> Senior Master Sqt. Luisita Jordan

514th Aerospace Medicine Squadron

"Have a portable cell phone charger and radio to stay connected, plenty of flashlights and AA batteries. Also, fill up the bathtub with water in order to flush toilets when water is turned off."

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Photo by Senior Airman Chelsea Smith

Spotlight: Tech Sgt. Jason Boudah

Unit: 514th Maintenance Squadron avionics technician

Hometown: Red Lion, Pa.

Civilian Employment: Nuclear power plant control systems supervisor

Interesting fact about you: I'm a gear head and in my spare time, I have a car that I drag race.

Favorite childhood food: Chicken nuggets

A movie you never get tired of watching: The Bourne Identity

Ideal Vacation: A nice quiet cabin on the lake with my family

Most eye-opening moment: When my son was born, and I realized that I'm no longer responsible for just myself.

Person you respect: Colin Powell

An award you recently received: I felt privileged to be promoted through the promotion enhancement program, given all the other well-qualified candidates.

A valuable lesson you've learned: You cannot erase the past. You must let it go. You cannot change yesterday. You must accept the lessons learned.



Air Force Reserve Command Financial Management Noncommissioned Officer of the Year

Tech. Sgt. James H. Moore

514th Air Mobility Wing financial management office



The following enlisted Airmen were recently promoted and the officers were selected for promotion..

Airman

Harold Colbourne, 514 AMDS Steven Schoonover, 732 AS Ashley Sonny, 514 ASTS Marquese Stewart, 514 AMXS Alex Torres, 714 AMXS

Airman 1st Class Chayana Rodriguez, 514 AMDS Ryan Trotta, 514 CES Susan Velasquez, 35 APS

Senior Airman

Edgar Aguilar, 514 AES Clivens Amilcar, 514 AMXS Margaret Brown, 714 AMXS Joseph Campagna, 514 CES Rankin Carter, 714 AMXS Luca Cernuschi, 88 APS Gladielle Cifuentes, 514 AMW Mark Estrada, 714 AMXS Evgueni Fokine, 714 AMXS Anthony Fortino, 42 CBCS Christopher Garcia, 88 APS George Garib, 35 APS Tyrone Lewis, 42 CBCS Johandy Martinez, 514 AMXS Rosa Mavi-Cruel, 514 AMXS Paul Morrison, 714 AMXS Jessica Navarro, 514 ASTS Christina Phay, 714 AMXS Kiara Pollard, 514 MXS Ivonne Ramos, 714 AMXS Tah Silvera, 35 APS Jennifer Sosa, 514 AES Acdel Tapia, 714 AMXS Tyler Wagoner, 732 AS

Staff Sergeant Escamillio Davis, 714 AMXS Rana Johnson, 78 ARS Ian Wulf, 514 CES

Technical Sergeant Shane Clayton, 732 AS Elvin Colon, 714 AMXS Scott Corrigan, 514 AMXS Clifford Hilaire, 35 APS Victor Ramirez-Gomez, 714 AMXS Ricardo Rivera, 88 APS John Wells, 88 APS

Master Sergeant

Christopher Beaz, 78 ARS Jason Browning, 514 AMXS Clarence Lepley III, 514 ASTS Louis Muzyka, 514 ASTS Manuel Torres, 88 APS

Senior Master Sergeant Lance Lynn, 514 MXS

Latice Lytill, 514 MIXS

Colonel

David Argyle, 514 OSS Joseph Dell'Arciprete, 514 MSG Timothy Donnelly, 514 MSG Robert Dunham, 76 ARS Robert Kownacky, 514 AMW Paul Pinkstaff, 514 OG Anthony Polashek, 514 OG FREEDOM FLYER 514th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs 2217 W. Arnold Ave. Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ 08641

FOR THE FAMILY OF:

The Air Force Monument can be seen from Arlington National Cemetery. Airmen from the 514th Air Mobility Wing were in Arlington to place wreaths on the graves of service members who were buried at the cemetery.

Photo by Chief Master Sgt. Chryl Ruff

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