U.S. Air Force celebrates, honors 60 years of excellence

BY AMANDA CREEL

Monday evening as the duty day came to a close, many members of the Air Force joined together to celebrate 60 years of Air Force history. The events ceremony was an opportunity to recognize the many accomplishments of the Air Force and its members over the past 60 years – just one day before the official birthday of the Air Force, Sept. 18, 1947.

"A retreat ceremony is a fantastic way to honor and celebrate the Air Force's 60th birthday. For six decades, we've had men and women from all walks of life who answered their nation's call to serve in a variety of ways – as active duty Airmen, as citizen Airmen in the Reserves or National Guard, as civilian employees or at companies who support the installation and our families. Even the newest and most sophisticated aircraft or weapon systems are ineffective without our talented Airmen to operate and maintain them and the various systems and facilities that support them," said Col. Theresa Carter, 78th Air Base Wing commander.

Brig. Gen. Richard Severson, Air Force Reserve Command assistant vice commander, said celebrating the achievements of Airmen over the last 60 years is "important because of the proud heritage and legacy we have."

General Severson said it was amazing to see how far the Air Force had advanced since his own career began in 1971. "There is no question why we are globe's best Air Force," he said.

Maj. Gen. Tom Owen, Warner Robins Air Logistics Center commander, the most senior ranking member of the base, and Airman Savannah Taylor, the most junior ranking member of the base, and Airman Savannah Taylor, the youngest Airman stationed at Robins, cut the Air Force's 60th birthday cake with a saber during the Air Force 60th Birthday reception Monday.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF WOMEN IN AIR FORCE HISTORY

78th ABW commands' opportunities abound for women in today's Air Force

(Editors note: As part of the Rev-Up 60th Anniversary edition, two articles examine roles of women in the U.S. Air Force and how those roles have progressed over the years. See related article on page A3)

As of here, women's roles in the U.S. Air Force have evolved since the service began in mid-February 1948. Col. Theresa Carter said women's contributions have remained as strong as those of their male counterparts throughout the years.

Col. Carter, 78th Air Base Wing commander since January 2006, had a desire to follow in her father's footsteps in the military service career early in life.

"My dad served in the Navy in World War II," she said. "He was in Air Force ROTC while I was in high school," she said. "I always had an interest in the military and wanted to go to college out of state, something that I wouldn't be able to do without a scholarship."

So, Col. Carter began charting her journey to a military career, carefully choosing her steps with guidance from her family along the way.

She applied for and earned both Navy and Air Force ROTC scholarships and her brother told me that opportunities for women were much better at the time (1981) in the Air Force than in the Navy," she said.

The aspiring military member set her sights on an Air Force career. A lot has changed in the time since the colonel entered the Air Force in 1985 as a distinguished graduate of the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps Program at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind.

"What has changed is the expansion of opportunities for women to serve in almost every career field. Today we have female fighter pilots, whereas in 1985, women were restricted from flying fighter aircraft. As we've seen in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, "the front lines" are bastions of leadership and freedom for women," the colonel said.

The 2007 Tops in Blue team is set to helpRobins celebrate the Air Force's 60th anniversary in style.

The Air Force talent team is set to take its show, themed "The Fly By," to the Warner Robins Civic Center stage at 7 p.m. Oct. 6.

Staff Sgt. Kevin Gay, an airfield systems apprentice in the 53rd Combat Communications Squadron at Robins, will be drumming things up at the show, along with several other Air Force men and women from bases around the world on the 2007 tour.

Linda Hinkle, marketing director for the 28th Mission Support Group’s Services Division, said the show will bring back some of the sights and sounds of the Air Force’s last 60 years.

"People can expect a high-energy show," she said. "The musical tribute is '60 Years of Proud Air Force History.' I imagine they’ll have music from every era over the past 60 years." Ms. Hinkle said the performance will provide entertainment that people of all ages can enjoy.

In keeping with the spirit of this year, the 19th Town Hall brief is set for Sept. 25.

19th Town Hall brief

The 19th Air Refueling Group will host a town hall meeting Wednesday, in the Robins Enlisted Club ballroom from 3 to 5 p.m.

The town hall meeting is open to all 19th ARG military members and their families and will focus on upcoming unit closure issues. Speakers during the town hall will include representatives from the Georgia Department of Labor, traffic management office, Tricare, Airmen and Family Readiness Center, the base housing office and the base Readiness and Closure Relocation Assistance Representative from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base. For more information contact Lt. Col. Todd Robinson, 327-6149.
usually the Middle Georgia Community gets the chance to see Tops in Blue perform during Top's in Blue tour. But since Robins fell near the route of the 2007 Tops in Blue tour and will soon be the 2007 tour's next stop, the Middle Georgia commu-
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The following is a message from the Secretary of the Air Force, General Michael W. Wynne, and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General T. Michael Moseley on the Air Force's 60th birthday, Oct. 18-19.

Sixty years ago today the Air Force became an independent service. Three days before becoming an independent service, the Air Force, W. Stuart Symington, commented on the dedication of the servicemen who have made in the defense of freedom the extraordinary achievements of the revolutionary ideas of aviation and the new technologies. In the face of combat throughout the war of World War II, women showed unprecedented visionary pioneers helped shape the Air Force and the world. As the Air Force continues into the future, the Air Force's role in world has ever known.

Today, our innovative, warfighting culture shines through as clear historical achievements to the airman of the 1930s who first airmen to a great White Airman Chief Operating Officer. He helped to sustain the Air Force's role in world war on terrorism.

Yet, while we are fighting today to remain the world's most effective service, we are modernizing and recapitulat-
ing our force. New aircraft, such as the F-22 Raptor, F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, new combat search and rescue helicopters and replacement air refueling tankers are vital to our warfighting capabilities. We are modernizing and recapitulating our force. New aircraft, such as the F-22 Raptor, F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, new combat search and rescue helicopters and replacement air refueling tankers are vital to our warfighting capabilities. We are modernizing and recapitulating our force. New aircraft, such as the F-22 Raptor, F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, new combat search and rescue helicopters and replacement air refueling tankers are vital to our warfighting capabilities. We are modernizing and recapitulating our force. New aircraft, such as the F-22 Raptor, F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, new combat search and rescue helicopters and replacement air refueling tankers are vital to our warfighting capabilities. We are modernizing and recapitulating our force. New aircraft, such as the F-22 Raptor, F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, new combat search and rescue helicopters and replacement air refueling tankers are vital to our warfighting capabilities. We are modernizing and recapitulating our force. New aircraft, such as the F-22 Raptor, F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, new combat search and rescue helicopters and replacement air refueling tankers are vital to our warfighting capabilities. We are modernizing and recapitulating our force. New aircraft, such as the F-22 Raptor, F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, new combat search and rescue helicopters and replacement air refueling tankers are vital to our warfighting capabilities. We are modernizing and recapitulating our force. New aircraft, such as the F-22 Raptor, F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, new combat search and rescue helicopters and replacement air refueling tankers are vital to our warfighting capabilities. We are modernizing and recapitulating our force. New aircraft, such as the F-22 Raptor, F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, new combat search and rescue helicopters and replacement air refueling tankers are vital to our warfighting capabilities.
Major Nicole Malachowski had a lifelong dream of becoming a pilot. Now, her dream has taken flight and blazed a trail for other women who share similar aspirations.

Major Malachowski is stationed at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., and has been with the Thunderbirds precision-flying demonstration team for almost two years.

Major Malachowski took a leap of faith when she put pen to paper and applied to become the first female pilot on the Thunderbirds.

"In the year that I applied, which was 2005, I wasn't really planning on applying at all," she said. "But, my husband kind of was, and he was like, 'Hey, you'd be a pretty good Thunderbird,' and I was like, 'No, I don't even know if I qualify.'"

Not too long after her husband's boost of encouragement, the pilot did some research and learned that she did in fact qualify to be a Thunderbird and the door of opportunity was wide open.

Major Malachowski dug deep to better understand the Thunderbird mission, and it was then that she was hooked on the idea of making the team.

"The mission is to represent the 513,000 men and women who wear Air Force blue, and that's in the active duty, Guard, and Reserve, and I'd had so many wonderful experiences at that point over my nine, almost 10-year career, and I thought there would be no better way to share the Air Force story," she said.

The major said she couldn't think of any better tribute she could make to her fellow Airmen who work hard and make sacrifices for their country than for her to be an Air Force Thunderbird.

Major Malachowski said while being a female Thunderbird still seems dream-like, she's proud to wear the Air Force Thunderbird patch.

"It's hard for me to get my arms around that concept," she said.

"People will be like, 'Hey, you were the first. You made history. You're a pioneer.' I don't think of myself in those terms. I feel like I'm someone who was given an awesome opportunity by the Air Force: I'm very, very grateful and very humbled to be able to say that I've had this opportunity, to be able to say that I'm a Thunderbird.

Major Malachowski said women have played a supporting role on the Thunderbird team since 1974. And after the major became the first female Thunderbird pilot, Maj. Samantha Works joined her on the team in 2007.

Major Malachowski fell in love with aviation at age 5. Growing up in a patriarchic family where both of her grandfathers were career Navy and having a father who served in the Army, the culture back home to join the service.

In 1992, Major Malachowski entered the U.S. Air Force Academy as a cadet. She graduated in May 1996 and was commissioned as an officer.

The Air Force has been her everything I dreamt it would be when I was a kid," she said. "It has provided me the unique opportunity to be part of something much bigger than myself, and I feel that is the reward. Knowing that you're part of a team, knowing that you're part of an important mission, knowing that together in the Air Force we're all making a difference (is a great feeling). And I get to do this while flying some of the world's greatest fighter aircraft. I think to myself, 'not bad for a gal from Vegas.'"

The female pilot said she feels women bring an enormous amount of talent and contributions to the Air Force mission.

"I think that women are making contributions equally alongside their male counterparts," she said. "Women are willing to step up and be a part of this diverse team, and it is this diversi-
ty that is our strength. If you think about it, we are the greatest air and space power in the world because of our diversity and that's not just limit-
ted to gender. That's all of the things that we are diversity."

Major Malachowski said people's differing backgrounds and perspec-
tives add to the U.S. Air Force's strength in accomplishing its mission and make it a much more efficient organization.

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tives add to the U.S. Air Force's strength in accomplishing its mission and make it a much more efficient organization.

For more information, contact Lisa Mathews at 222-0762 or lisa.mathews@robins.af.mil to sign up.
Most people have heard of hitchhiking a ride, but how about hopping a plane? Active-duty military, reservists on active-duty orders, retired military members and their immediate family members don’t have to pay the hefty price of a commercial airline ticket to reach desired destinations thanks to space available flights.

Armed like the C-9, C-12 or C-21 are most commonly used to transport passengers at Robins to destinations along the East Coast, including Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio; Andrews AFB, Md.; and Scott AFB, Ill.

Airman 1st Class Pitts, a passenger service representative in the passenger terminal in the 78th Logistics Readiness Squadron, said the flights give military members and those retired from military service a way to get place without going broke.

“Military space available (flights) are basically any flights that are available after space required or duty (passengers’) seats have been filled,” he said. “It’s free, so if it works out for you to where you can catch it and get to your destination, then it’s a great opportunity to save a lot of money on trips.”

A boxed lunch, typically containing a sandwich, chips and a drink, is the only fee passengers may pay, and even that is minimal.

Tech. Sgt. Markus Atkins, mobility operations supervisor in the 78th LRS, said active-duty military members and reservists on orders must be on leave and they must turn in a completed DD Form 1835 to their commander before they can take a space available flight.

Active-duty military members are eligible to stay on the waiting list for a flight either for the duration of their leave, for 60 days or whichever expires first, Airman 1st Class Pitts said.

Once a military member’s leave expires, they are no longer able to take a space available flight to their next destination. Retired military members may stay on the waiting list for 60 days.

Airman 1st Class Pitts said military retirees must visit the passenger terminal and complete an AMC Form 140 before taking one of the flights.

Depending on the person’s destination, a passport, visa, or other necessary documentation may be needed as required by the Department of Defense Foreign Clearance Guide, Airman 1st Class Pitts said.

Once on the waiting list, people are placed into a priority based on the time they were put on the list and the nature of their travel, said Senior Airman Robert Minor, a passenger representative in the passenger terminal of the 78th LRS.

“As soon as you sign up, there’s a priority order,” he said.

Potential passengers are placed in one of six categories based on their type of travel. Category 1 includes military and civilian dependents on emergency leave. Category 2 includes military on environmental morale leave; meaning they’re trying to get out of a remote area.

Category 3 includes military members on normal leave. Category 4 includes military dependents on environmental morale leave. Category 5 includes those on permissive temporary duty, military dependents who are overseas and students. Category 6 includes retired military.

Airman Minor said a person’s category and time he or she got on the waiting list determines their overall flight status.

Sometimes changes may occur that will cause someone to be bumped from a flight. Wham that happens, a person’s flight status is the determining factor as to whether someone can take the flight.

For that reason, Sergeant Atkins advises people to be ready with a backup plan at a moment’s notice.

“It’s a starting point for those on leave and military and retirees who live in the local area,” he said. “Space available flights are great. They’re not efficient. But, if you’re trying to get to a destination in a hurry for an emergency situation, such as a relative passing away, it would be in your best interest to find another means of transportation because space available can change at any time.”

Sergeant Atkins said it sometimes takes more than a day to get to and from a place.
The 542nd Combat Sustainment Wing advisory council will sponsor a trip to the Veterans’ Day program at the Veteran’s Hospital in Dublin, Nov. 11. Administrative leave of four hours will be permitted.

For more information or to donate food contact either Joseph Shayon at joseph.shayan@robins.af.mil or Diane Nickels at diane.nickels@robins.af.mil.

**GATE CLOSURE**

Some inbound lanes at Gate 14, the Russell Parkway gate, will be closed Sept. 27 through Oct. 18 due to work on the pop-up barriers. The traffic flow will be as follows:

- Between the hours of 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. there will be two inbound lanes that will narrow into one lane after you enter the gate.
- During these same hours there will be one outbound lane.
- Between the hours of 2 p.m. and 1 a.m. there will be two outbound lanes.
- During the same hours there will be one inbound lane.

If there are any questions or concerns contact Master Sgt. Rodney Summerwell or Staff Sgt. Christopher Nelson at 327-8934 or 327-8941 to obtain it; different ways to communicate with the inbound member and where to obtain it; different ways to communicate with the PCSing member and where to obtain information to send to the sponsor of the person coming that will be as follows:

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**19TH ARG TOWN HALL BRIEF**

The 19th Air Refueling Group will host a town hall meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 26 in the Base Theater from 6 until 8 p.m. The Town Hall meeting is open to all 19th ARG military members and their families and will focus on upcoming unit closure issues. Speakers during the town hall will include representatives from the Georgia Dept. of Labor, traffic management office, TriCare, Airmen and Family Readiness Center, the base housing office and Base Realignment and Closure Relocation Assistance representative from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C. For more information contact Lt. Col. Todd Robinson at 327-6786.
**Islamic holiday allows chance for sacrifice**

On Sept. 13, civilian and military Muslims at Robins, in the local area and around the world began a month-long fast called Ramadan. Ramadan is the ninth month on the Islamic calendar, which is based on the lunar cycle. Fasting the month is in, symbiotically, a returning to the original obedience, innocence and purity found in the new born that is delivered after nine months, and it is a reminder of the commonality and origin shared by all humans.

Ramadan is the month that Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) saw the first revelations of the Holy Qur’an (Koran) from the angel Gabriel. Thus, this is a month in which the entire Holy Qur’an is read by Muslims. It is not only a time for fasting but also a time for spiritual cleansing, deep reflection, devotion, and respect for those who have achieved victory.

Fasting is the fourth of five essential pillars of Islam, and follows Charity (Zakat). The Qur’an states, “O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you (Christians, Jews and others), that you may learn self-restraint and God consciousness.” (2:183).

Fasting is the exercise of a power given us to restrain ourselves. It is the restraining of the strongest creative appetites, the "appetites of the flesh." It involves refraining from eating, drinking (any liquid), and conjugal relations with your spouse. This restrain is from every kind of wrongdoing, in thought and in deed. It includes restrain- ing our anger. This denying of every appetite that is an appetite of the flesh is continuous for the whole month of Ramadan, from dawn until sunset.

For Muslims, Ramadan is a month of heightened God consciousness and piety. It is a month to initiate improvement in one’s character and behavior, deep fasting comes after charity and thus is also a reminder to those who have achieved victory. When we become wealthy they tend to lose their discipline. There’s a tendency to become spoiled by money or wealth. Fasting keeps us in the good life and helps prevent this tendency. For those who eat and have possessions, the main purpose of fasting is to make them conscious of the life of those who have not or are deprived. Generally, the person who is rich, they never have to experience hunger and probably would not if not for God telling them to fast. They don’t know the hunger pains. They don’t know what it is like to go all day without food. But God designed the fast so the rich person will know what it is like to go all day and not eat. It is after observing the fast that many of them sympathize with the needy and becomes anxious to give and to go to the poor.

This practice of being hungry and not eating, they fast until the last day of Ramadan, and is encouraged throughout the month. The month of Ramadan concludes with a special day of celebration called Eid el-Fitr, which means recurring happiness; from obedience to God, fast for three days; during which Muslims give gifts, attend festivities, visit the sick, and enjoy recreational activities. This celebration is significant because it begins with an early morning prayer to thank God for the mercy, and to extend comfort to all followers of God. Fasting not only prepares you to wait for our time to come, it reminds you that you are not the unique one that has had the chance of fasting, and helps you appreciate this opportunity.

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**New community center director has plans for fun at Robins**

**BY HOLLY B. BIRCHFIELD  
holly.birchfield@robins.af.mil**

Ruby Wasway is determined to show Airmen at Robins they don’t have to leave the base to have a good time.

The new director of the Robins Community Center arrived here in late August and she already has a laundry list of ways to get Airmen out of the mundane and into having fun.

Ms. Wasway plans to start a glow in the dark volleyball program and introduce to Robins’ Airmen “Sigar,” a choreographed routine involving clapping hands and stomping feet to a base beat, occasionally moving into formations.

Ms. Wasway hopes the two activities will get Airmen in on the action at the center because she wants to give Airmen a reason to get out and enjoy life.

“I want to do a lot of stuff with the Airmen because I believe they need to come out of the dorms,” she said.

“There’s nothing really for them to do. Instead of them getting into trouble, we want to bring them back into the community center.”

The outgoing mother of two plans to start an Airmen’s Council to get military members involved in planning their social calendars at the center.

Ms. Wasway said she values the ideas of others and wants them to feel they are a part of the community.

“I came from a big family and (my mother) taught me to accept different cultures and different people,” she said.

The community center director, who has previously worked at community centers at Hurlburt Field, Fla. and at Volgograd Air Base, Germany, describes herself as a laid-back person who looks for the fun in life.

When Ms. Wasway isn’t working hard to fill Airmen’s lives with more entertainment options, she enjoys horseback riding, traveling and participating in water sports. The 44-year-old said she is an upbeat person and wants to bring that positive light to the community center.

“I believe in just being a good person, believing in God, and doing the right thing,” she said. “That about sums up who I am.”

The England native said she hopes her outgoing personality and genuine interest in people will easily make the community center a welcoming place to hang out.
Maj. Gen. Tom Owen, Warner Robins Air Logistics Center commander, acknowledged the playing of honors to recognize his arrival by returning the salute of the formation.

Above left, Members of the 19th Air Refueling Group present arms during the retreat ceremony. The group, which will deactivate during the summer of 2008, was given special recognition for their role in Air Force history over the past eight decades.

Above right, Members of the Band of the U.S. Air Force Reserve play in honor of the Air Force’s 60th Birthday during the retreat ceremony Monday.
**Friday**

A cut above the rest

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To have a approved leave printed in the Roberto Rev Up, understand instructions concerning requests to receive or donate annual leave.

**Now Playing**

A bids list for Oct 31 - Nov 10.**

**Saturday**

Let's Celebrate Summer Bash will be held at Roberto Club, Bldg. 956. The event will include rides, specials entertainment, face painting, photo take overs and more. The event is free to the public. Leave tickets are on sale 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Open ranks and grades. For more information call the command center at 926-2105.

**Sunday**

APC Texas Hold ‘em tournament is being held at the enlisted club. The championship round will begin Sept. 29. Participants may bring in your own table or table for $50. All games begin at 9 p.m. For more information call the enlisted club at 926-2105.

**Monday**

Tuesdays from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the enlisted club, located in Bldg. 965. Participants may bring their mug and give them their mug and get refills at no charge. Lunch begins at 7 p.m. For entry call #21 for non members and #21-3 for members.

**Tuesday**

Enjoy M.U.G. and Mic Night on Wednesday at 6 p.m. in the enlisted club located in Bldg. 956. Participants may bring their mug and give them their mug and get refills at no charge. Lunch begins at 7 p.m. For entry call #21 for non members and #21-3 for members.

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**Thursday**

Enjoy karaoke with DJ Warden DTM from 7 p.m. until closing in the enlisted club, located in Bldg. 956. Participants may bring their mug and give them their mug and get refills at no charge. Lunch begins at 7 p.m. For entry call #21 for non members and #21-3 for members.

**Friday**

The Headquartiers Air Force Military Community has moved their website to www.HAFMC.com. (copy of Pedro Pezo and Tech. Sgt. Rocky) The Roberto Services Division, Roberto Food Service Operation Oct 1 through Dec 31, will close during the time frames. Food Service operation will underg a stringent review at the enlisted club. The championship round will begin Sept. 29. Participants may bring in your own table or table for $50. All games begin at 9 p.m. For more information call the enlisted club at 926-2105.

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Good weather welcomes U.S. Air Force Marathon participants

Unlike last year’s marathon, where competitors were welcomed by rain and cold, more than 3,500 runners during the 2007 U.S. Air Force Marathon were treated to crystal blue skies and comfortable temperatures. In fact, the weather was good enough for one runner to set a new record.

The official results, announced Sept. 19, confirmed 32-year-old Josh Cox from San Diego and Mammoth Lakes, Calif. as overall winner in the men’s full marathon. Cox’s winning gun time of 2:20:37, now official, is a new record for the U.S. Air Force Marathon and qualifies him for the U.S. Olympic Team trials to be held in this New York City November. Cox called the route “a great course — definitely challenging.”

“I ran this race for my dad, who passed away this year,” Cox said. “I’m very thankful for the gifts God has given me. I’m not the owner of the gifts, just the bearer.”

Several runners from Robins participated in the race. Senior Airman Spencer Johnson, a communications squadron, Airman Spencer Johnson, a civilian employee. His other Robins military members formed a relay team with two Communications Squadron, Staff Sgt. David Oldenhouse, radar technician for the 54th CBCS and Phillip Rhodes, civilian.

The Air Force marathon is a great event. We didn’t expect to be competing against so many other teams. There were about 250 teams that competed,” Johnson said. “We fielded a fast team and stayed in the top 10 the entire race.”

“Again, I’m extremely proud of him,” said O’Connor. “It’s something I’ve trained the military’s first aviation cadets to set a new path, to set a new record. This time, Airman Spencer Johnson, a physician at Andrews Air Force Base, Md. He finished fifth overall this year with a gun time of 2:34:26. Weather conditions at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base for the 7:30 a.m. start were clear skies, a temperature of 47 degrees Fahrenheit and winds from the northwest at 3 knots.

The marathon course started and finished at the National Museum of the Air Force, tracing a path around the historic Huffman Prairie Flying Field where the Wright Brothers mastered the art of flying and trained the military’s first aviators. Runners were treated to a steady stream of byways by U.S. Air Force airmen during marathon events which included a wheel-chair marathon, marathon, marathon, a 4-person relay and half-marathon.

Including an affiliated 5K road race held Sept. 14 in partnership with Wright State University on their campus, a total of just over 6,500 runners participated in all marathon events, said marathon director Molly Louden. In addition, nearly 2,000 volunteers supported this year’s five events.

The 11th annual race, an official Boston Marathon qualifier, is one of the cape’s events to commemorate the U.S. Air Force’s 60th anniversary as a separate military service.

— Derek Kephart, 8th Base Wing Public Affairs, with additional reporting by Kendahl Johnson

**Flag football**

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**LRI: Senior Airman Spencer Johnson, computer systems operator for the 54th Combat Communications Squadron, Phu Quoc, Phn thrive, Staff Sgt. David Oldenhouse, radar technician for the 54th CBCS and Lt. Col. Paul Hsiao, 532nd Aircraft Sustainment Support Squadron, participated in the four-man relay. The team finished in 2:42:43, good enough for fifth place overall and second place in the men’s division.

**AFA Falcons start season undefeated, prepare for big MWG game against BYU**

**BY KENDAHL JOHNSON**

The Academy will be playing the Cougars at a tough time. BYU has lost its last two games, including an eight-point loss last week at Utah, to which the vaunted BYU defense gave up 53 points.

Although Air Force holds the better record of the two teams, the Falcons enter Lavell Stadium as a heavy underdog, in part due to the fact that the team lost to BYU last season 33-14 at the Academy.

But things have changed at the Air Force. The Falcons have entered the weekend allowing the fewest points amongst MWG teams and is second in total defense. That defense will be tested, as BYU enters the weekend tied with Colorado State as the MWG’s top scoring offense and is the top passing and total offense team.

Fans of the Falcons at Robins will have difficulty watching the showdown, as the game will be carried on the Mountain Sports Network (Mtn.), a channel only available by select cable carriers in the mountain west region.

(Additional reporting by Wayne Johnson, Academy Sports)
The 19th Air Refueling Group "deflashed" the first of several KC-135 Stratotankers as workers sanded off all unit symbols from the aircraft Monday, one of many tasks to get done in time for its deactivation next summer after 40 years at Robins.

"Even though we're getting ready to transfer this aircraft to the Air Force Reserve at McGuire (Air Force Base), we're still focusing on our heritage," said Col. Christopher Bence, the group's commander.

Colonel Bence said October 18 marks the group's 80th birthday since its inception in 1927, pre-dating the Air Force by 20 years.

From the last new guy to the Black Knights that have been there for years, one unvarying sentiment has been that they all work well together as part of the same family.

"I've been in the 19th for three years and it's just been great to see operators and maintainers work so well together," said Chief Master Sgt. Thomas Braschler, quality assurance superintendent for the group. "We are truly one team."

As Chief Braschler prepares to retire after a 29-year Air Force career, one lieutenant has a different challenge facing him, as he'll be the last Black Knight to come into the unit if no one else arrives.

"I'm just beginning to experience what it's like working in the operational Air Force; it's much different than my experience at the Air Force Academy," said 2nd Lt. Tim Balthazar, who has been with the group for one month.

With at least a five-year commitment ahead of him, the Connecticut native is gearing up to learn about the acquisition maintenance career field as the 19th ARG winds down.

"(The biggest challenge) is relieving the cares and concerns of the people," said Colonel Bence. "They all want to know where they're going and what the future holds. Some have been at Robins for an awful long time, so we want to work the personnel piece for them."

Colonel Bence said about one third of the unit has already been pre-identified to receive their next assignment and the rest of the unit will receive orders in the spring prior to the summer 2008 deactivation.

The unit achieved its fourth consecutive and all time flying hour record of 10,000 hours last week and they're still counting. Colonel Bence said it's a true testament to their professionalism because with 12 aircraft, the unit will have flown the most out of Air Mobility Command.

"That's a goal we set for ourselves, so that we know and the command know we still maintain that 100 percent focus on the mission and doing our jobs to the great Black Knight standard," he said.

The 19th ARG, the 12th oldest unit in the Air Force and one of the most decorated, has been at Robins since 1968.

The unit made aviation history in May 1941 when they flew their B-17 Flying Fortress bombers en mass from California to Hawaii. During World War II the unit conducted reconnaissance and bombardment operations against Japanese shipping and landing parties. When the Korean War broke out in late June 1950, the unit attacked the invading forces of North Korea.

In recognition of the distinguished history of the 19th ARG and its accomplishments, the 19th Heritage Group will be hosting a two day event October 18-19. More information may be found at www.19hg.org.