

# JAYHAWKFLYER

NEWS PUBLICATION OF THE 184th INTELLIGENCE WING



## Smoky Hill, Salina airport host Jaded Thunder

*Military forces from around the world participated in a large exercise held in the Salina area* *page 4*

# JAYHAWK FLYER

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[www.184iw.ang.af.mil](http://www.184iw.ang.af.mil)

## Cover photo

**Tech. Sgt. Gary Ledbetter, Detachment 1, Smoky Hill Weapons Range, puts out grass fires started by the impact of aircraft ordnance during Jaded Thunder in June.**

Photo by Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Public Affairs



Photo by Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Public Affairs

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# Bird's Eye View

## Commander's Comments

As we press forward with the creation of the wing's history book, the Jayhawk Flyer staff assembled a culmination of commander's comments from the past. Their words of wisdom not only applied to the time in which they were written, but words that today's generation of Fighting Jayhawks can embrace as well.

"We in the military community should be keenly aware of our heritage as we have dedicated ourselves to protect it. We have been entrusted with the responsibility to insure our freedoms are not endangered by outside influences. It is a grave duty, but one we should be proud to assume. In the past, this unit has met the challenges put before it. A renewed dedication to the principles of this nation will help us achieve our goals in the future."

- - Col. John McMerty, July 1982

## UTA information

August UTA: Aug. 1-4

September UTA: Sep. 6-7

October UTA: Oct. 4-5

Deadline for the October edition of the Jayhawk Flyer is September 15.

Look for the monthly Drill Down for UTA information at [www.184iw.ang.af.mil](http://www.184iw.ang.af.mil).

"Through our Air Guard membership, we have the training opportunities to enhance our technical skills as well as the opportunity to demonstrate our leadership and management potential. As citizen soldiers, we form an important link with our civilian community. Each of us plays a key role in our community image. In this era of budget cuts and forced structure change, America's need for a vital Air National Guard has never been greater."

- - Col. Ed Sykes, March 1988

"Our future? We must make it. They – the unknown "they" – are not going to fix our frustrations [nor] relieve our stress. We – you and I – must do it ourselves. We are a great unit. We have been, and are known as, the best of the best. Our successes are due to one factor and one factor only – you. You have made this unit what it is and you will continue to carry this unit into the future."

- - Col. Russell Axtell, May 1995

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"September 10 was a day of mixed emotion; disappointment over losing the B-1 fight, relief that a decision had been made, and anticipation and confidence that the 184th would succeed in our new mission. Then came September 11... Everyone has pulled together and it has been amazing and rewarding to see. My red hat is off to all of you!"

- - Col. Ed Flora, October 2001

## Have a story idea?

Unit members are encouraged to contact the Public Affairs office for any upcoming events worthy of news coverage. You may submit your ideas by email to: [184iw.PA.1@ang.af.mil](mailto:184iw.PA.1@ang.af.mil)

"This weekend we stand up functionally as an intelligence wing. We will stand up formally as the 184th Intelligence Wing after receiving federal recognition from the Air Force... Many of you will be experiencing a new beginning in your lives as well when you join a new squadron and start your training. I am supremely confident in your ability to succeed... Our 66 years of the Flying Jayhawk spirit transcends equipment and will pulsate throughout our wing, whatever our mission."

- - Col. Randy Roebuck, October 2007

You may also call 759-7561 or 759-7038.

## Smoky Hill, Salina airport host Jaded Thunder

By Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Public Affairs

**Military forces from around the world participated in a large exercise held in the Salina area.**

Over 1,000 military personnel converged on Salina and the surrounding area in June to participate in a joint exercise known as Jaded Thunder. Smoky Hill Weapons Range and the Salina Regional Airport teamed up to host the event.

“Jaded Thunder is an interoperability and integration exercise between special operation forces and conventional forces,” said Stamp Walden, lead planner for Jaded Thunder. “It’s a joint exercise so there [are personnel] from all the services, active duty, reserves and Guard.”

Units representing the Army, Navy, Marine Corp and Air Force, along with each branch’s special operations forces, trained together for two weeks on the range. Various weather conditions, day and night-time scenarios using opposing forces and diverse terrain



**Blackhawk helicopters flown by the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation, Kansas National Guard, transport military personnel from the Salina Regional Airport to Smoky Hill Weapons Range.**

Photo by Master Sgt. John Vsetecka, 184th Public Affairs

offered the participants a variety of challenges.

Each day began with mission briefs followed by equipment preparations. Aircraft then systematically deployed from Salina Regional Airport and headed toward Smoky Hill.

“The Salina airport allows us to put a lot of aircraft out there, they’re easy to work with, have great facilities and are very close in proximity to Smoky Hill,” said Walden.

With 12,300 feet of runway and plenty of room to park aircraft,



**Seven villages called military operations in urban terrain, or MOUT sites, are placed throughout 12,000 acres of targeting area at Smoky Hill Weapons Range.** Photo by Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Public Affairs



**With 12,300 feet of runway and plenty of room to park aircraft, stage equipment and accommodate personnel, Salina Regional Airport was a perfect fit for the exercise.** Photo by Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Public Affairs

stage equipment and accommodate personnel, Salina Regional Airport was a perfect fit for the exercise, according to Tim Rogers, executive director of the Salina Airport Authority.

“We have the ability to accommodate any military aircraft that’s operating today, from rotor wing all the way to the largest cargo aircraft,” said Rogers.

Located just six miles southwest of Salina, Smoky Hill Weapons

Range is a 34,000 acre bomb range, making it the largest range in the Air National Guard. It’s operated and maintained by 23 Airmen assigned to Detachment 1, 184th Intelligence Wing.

Range personnel dedicated months of hard work in preparation for Jaded Thunder.

“All my guys across the board put a lot of work into it and we’re all very proud of what we’ve done to prepare for Jaded Thunder this year,” said Lt. Col. Russ Allen, commander of Detachment 1.

As part of an ongoing effort to provide a realistic experience, the personnel added approximately 20 miles of target roads for remote controlled vehicles and installed remote activated street lights in villages known as military operations in urban terrain sites.

“We just built our seventh Military Operations in Urban Terrain site and two of those are munitions

capable so you can actually drop and engage the village itself,” said Allen.

The range featured 12,000 acres of impact area, over 120 targets and close to 400 individual vehicles and structures which were used by multiple aircraft as well as ground forces, all working at the same time during the large exercise. Artillery units were also brought onto the range for only the second time since World War II.

“Really what we’re getting at is joint training, train like we fight,” said Allen. “Now instead of just one plane and one guy on the ground, we have multiple ground parties working with multiple air parties and we’re really training like we are fighting down range.”

The range’s commitment to providing beneficial training experiences showed during the exercise. According to Allen, communication and feedback were key factors in making effective improvements. Before visiting units wrap up their training, range personnel ask what enhancements can be made to im-



**Staff Sgt. Brett Shouse, 184th CES, installs electrical wiring for street and building lights throughout the villages on Smoky Hill Weapons Range.**

Photo by Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Public Affairs

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prove the training experience.

Besides the size and available training options, Smoky Hill's location was also an attractive feature for Jaded Thunder.

"We're centrally located," said Allen. "We bring in units from all over the nation and everybody's travelling the same distance, they can meet in the middle here."

Both Allen and Rogers agreed that the partnership between Smoky Hill, Salina Regional Airport and the city of Salina benefits everyone involved.

"Salina is a military friendly community," said Rogers. "When military members come to train at the regional training institutes and Smoky Hill, they're welcomed by business owners through Salina's patriot business program."

The community's economic impact during the 15-day exercise was estimated at \$2.6 million.

"That's a big impact on our community," said Rogers.

Those making an impact on the community included Airmen assigned to the 134th Air Control Squadron. Like Detachment 1, the 134th ACS is an organization that



**Tech. Sgt. Gary Ledbetter puts out grass fires following an exercise scenario. Smoky Hill personnel stayed on the range throughout the night to ensure all fires were out before they went home.**

Photo by Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Public Affairs

belongs to the 184th IW. They're a fully deployable unit that specializes in managing airborne assets in a battlefield environment.

The 134th ACS was divided into two main entities consisting of the deployable radar package which was located at Milford Lake, and an air battle execution package positioned at Salina Regional Airport.

"One of the largest challenges we faced during this activity was, this

is the first time in over ten years that we've separated the radar package and the controlling package," said Lt. Col. Rick Young, commander, 134th ACS.

Although air control squadrons often deploy in a separated fashion, they rarely get the opportunity to train that way.

The long-range communications required the data to be sent through a satellite feed which made the

troubleshooting process challenging.

"You take for granted that we're just using fiber optics at McConnell Air Force Base, now you start depending on satellite time and everything else," said Young. "It can create some difficulties and the learning curve is extremely



**Tech. Sgt. Eric Poe (left photo) drives remote control target vehicles including a Humvee (right photo) on roads that were built specifically for these vehicles. The roads and remote controlled vehicles were part of the improvements made in preparation for Jaded Thunder.**

Photos by Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Public Affairs



The deployed radar package belonging to the 134th ACS is set up at Milford Lake. The radar captures information regarding the location of aircraft in the restricted operating zone, then transmits the data to operators who manage the traffic within the airspace. Photo by Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Public Affairs

steep.”

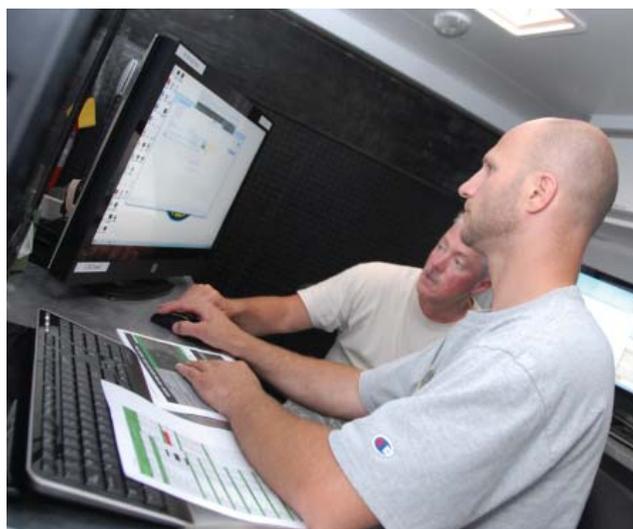
With 50 percent of the Airmen in the squadron being relatively new, many of them had never experienced a deployed exercise on the scale of Jaded Thunder.

“This is the first time in my 13-year career that we’ve actually done two remote locations over a significant distance and actually performed how our unit is designed to work with a remote radar location,” said Master Sgt. Scott Ragan, noncommissioned officer in charge of Radio Frequency Transmission Systems.

Once the radar captures the information, the data is transmitted through a satellite feed to control operators who manage the traffic within the restricted airspace.

“For our operators controlling the air, we’re getting really good dynamic target-

ing training, learning how to clear people into restricted operating zones and making sure everybody stays safe,” said Tech. Sgt. Mike Fear II, weapons director and control technician, 134th ACS. “We’re working with platforms that we’ve never seen before, so it’s a great



Senior Master Sgt. Robert Frey (left), 161st IS, and Tech. Sgt. Josh Bantam, 184th IG, analyze and transmit weapons system video footage at Smoky Hill Weapons Range.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Maria Ruiz, 184th Public Affairs

experience for us.”

In addition to the 184th IW involvement, Airmen assigned to the 184th Intelligence Group and the 284th Air Support Operations Squadron played a supporting role as well. Working from a small trailer stationed at Smoky Hill, they received weapons system video feed from aircraft and sent the images forward to the operations center located at the Salina airport. Officials used the images to get a first-hand view of the combat scenarios.

With this year’s exercise, the partnership strengthened between Jaded Thunder, the Kansas National Guard and the city of Salina. The chances of the exercise returning to Smoky Hill grew stronger as well.

“We definitely see us coming back here on a regular basis,” said Walden.

## Transportable command and control for disaster relief

By Airman 1st Class Lauren Penney, 184th Public Affairs

**Operations center on wheels allows National Guardsmen to communicate during times of disaster.**

Imagine a tornado just ripped through the town where you live and destroyed everything. Everything is chaotic for a while—people are hurt and wandering around because they don't know what to do and the power is out. How do first responders get in touch with outside resources when all of their communications are down?

That's where the Mobile Emergency Operations Center (MEOC) comes in. An easily transportable trailer about the size of a medium camper, the MEOC is used for command and control.

"The idea behind the trailers is that we have everything we need in order to operate," said Airman 1st Class Tyler Parker, an emergency manager, 184th Intelligence Wing's Civil Engineer Squadron. "Take Greensburg, for example. Everything was wiped off the map—there were no communication links, no news coming in, no news going out, nothing. They were completely and totally blind. The fire department was destroyed, the police department was destroyed, so they need somebody to come in and provide command and control so they can get back on their feet again."

The MEOC has flashing lights on the exterior for people to know it's operational. It is also equipped



**The Mobile Emergency Operations Center is a command and control station that is the size of a medium camper trailer. With simple set-up and tear-down procedures, it is ready to be deployed at any time.**

Photo by Airman 1st Class Lauren Penney, 184th Public Affairs

with a satellite phone that can make a call anywhere and an intercom speaker to provide the people near the trailer with news and announcements.

The interior is equipped for any type of response with telephones at every station to make phone calls and order supplies, dry-erase boards making up the majority of the surfaces to make notes anywhere the person happens to be and walls made of carpet to attach tools and other objects with Velcro, the MEOC is fully-designed to essentially become the new, temporary command post. For those people pulling 12-14 hour shifts, there is also a microwave, refrigerator and a coffee maker.

Additionally, the MEOC contains a high-powered camera with long-distance focusing capabilities.

"The commander can look clear across base so he can see what's going on," said Parker. "Like, we're doing a hazmat scenario, and we have the area closed off, and need to get downrange to see what's going on because there's chemicals or fuel burning or something, we can zoom in and see what's going on and see exactly what they're doing."

There are also antennas attached for the MEOC to receive local and national information updates. A smart board inside can display maps and draw perimeters with different colors using fingers.



**Airman 1st Class Tyler Parker, emergency manager, 184th CES, demonstrates the electronics capabilities of the MEOC.**

Photo by Airman 1st Class Lauren Penney, 184th Public Affairs

Along with its many appliances, the MEOC can also make contact to just about everywhere in the world through a radio. It can communicate with military vehicles, aircraft and go long range to communicate with other ground stations that have the same radio.

For meetings, the MEOC has a small conference room. The room contains a large monitor and web camera to have face-to-face conference calls to anywhere in the world. It also has a switch board to see what's on the smart board in the main room and a phone that goes through to the intercom to the other room.

"The key attribute of this Mobile Operations Center versus a lot of other MEOCs is that it is a multi-function platform," said Senior Master Sgt. Jeffrey Welshans, emergency manager, 184th CES. "It is a tool designed to

do many different things. A traditional MEOC would have your law enforcement fire, emergency management and first responder organizations, but this can be used for a military command and con-

trol where you would have a general operating out of here with his command staff, in a traditional military way. Anybody can use it for anything, so it's not designed for one purpose. It's got a great deal of flexibility, and it's able to roll out and set up and have everything ready in ten minutes."

According to Welshans, the MEOC is at the 184th Intelligence Wing to support the four-state Federal Emergency Management Agency Region 7, which includes Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa and Missouri. However, the MEOC could be moved anytime. "We could get a

call today saying, 'Hey, a tornado is in Texas and we need the MEOC there,' and we'd take it down there right away," Welshans said. "We're very proud of it. Very happy."



**Tech. Sgt. Delbert Alt, emergency manager, 184th CES, uses telephone communications to contact both military and civilian emergency responders.**

Photo by Airman 1st Class Lauren Penney, 184th Public Affairs

## State partnership program brings Armenians to Kansas

By Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Public Affairs

### **The Kansas-Armenian State Partnership Program brought IT professionals from Armenia to Kansas.**

Information assurance personnel from the Armenian Ministry of Defense visited the 184th Intelligence Wing in May to increase their familiarization on cyberdefense practices.

The visit was part of the U.S. European Command State Partnership, an initiative designed to build trust and cooperation between the U.S. and its allies. National Guard units in each state are partnered with nations who participate in the program. Kansas has been partnered with the Republic of Armenia since 2003, which formed the Kansas-Armenia State Partnership Program.

The partners exchange knowledge and experience on a regular basis in areas such as emergency management, disaster response, regional security and counterterrorism.

Upon arrival, the Armenians learned about the mission of the 184th IW during a briefing given by the wing's commander, Col. J.J. Jordan.

After a tour of the 299th Network Operations Security Squadron's facilities, the 177th Information Aggressor Squadron offered briefings and classes. The participants were introduced to information awareness and cyberdefense practices while they gained hands-on experience.

"We trained, discussed and dem-



**Information assurance personnel from the Armenian Ministry of Defense gain hands-on experience while visiting the 177th IAS.**

Photo by Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Public Affairs

onstrated a variety of cyberdefense topics from both friendly cyberdefense force and adversary threat perspectives, focusing not only at the technical level, but also at the decision-maker level," said Lt. Col. Lincoln Schroeder, commander of the Cyberspace Operations Flight, 177th IAS.

Topics covered included the overall program and implementation of effective information awareness, network and information system defense, local agency partnerships that improve awareness and defense, and exercising Protect/Detect/Respond/Restore capabilities.

"Kansas National Guardsmen gained a better general view of cyberdefense perspectives and networking experience from our Armenian partners," said Schroeder.

The Guardsmen also learned from the Armenian best practices in improving local and agency partnerships to improve threat awareness and overall cybersecurity.

"Both the Kansas National Guard and the Armenian Ministry of Defense gained valuable knowledge from comparing each other's advantages and disadvantages, and sharing each other's best practices and lessons learned," said Schroeder.

As members of the partnership, the participants were committed to building each other's cyberdefense capabilities and making a significant positive impact on the stability and prosperity of their nations and around the world.

"We built a stronger state partner and identified objectives for future events to continue advancing this program," said Schroeder.

## Security Forces personnel receive wake-up call

By Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Public Affairs

**The 184th Security Forces Squadron prepares to respond at any time, day or night.**

National Guard members have to be ready at a moment's notice for deployments overseas as well as all types of state emergencies. To test response time, Airmen assigned to the 184th Security Forces Squadron received a phone call at approximately 4 a.m. June 9. The call was part of an exercise in preparation for domestic operations, in which the unit may be called at any time to support civilian agencies.

"They were told to respond to the squadron and be prepared for a 72-hour response," said Master Sgt. Eric Smith, 184th SFS.

Despite the early hour, the Airmen arrived at McConnell Air Force Base shortly after receiving the phone call.

"Responding personnel started arriving within 30 minutes and the required manning for the exercise was achieved in 75 minutes," said Smith.



**Airmen 1st Class Oluwatoyin Hunter, 184th SFS, checks weapons for safety prior to issuing them.**  
Photo by Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Public Affairs



**Lauren Cox, superintendent of security training at the Wolf Creek Generating Station, briefs the 184th SFS on nuclear security threats and techniques.**  
Photo by Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Public Affairs

Upon arrival, the Airmen were briefed a scenario in which unruly, anti-nuclear protesters were camping on the property of Wolf Creek Generating Station located near Burlington, Kansas. Local law enforcement agencies were in the process of evicting them when the power plant requested assistance with perimeter security during the eviction.

After the scenario brief, the Airmen were issued fire arms as part of the exercise.

"The situation will determine whether or not weapons are involved," said Smith. "We exercised the scenario as if it required weapons

but weapons were not taken to the facility."

With the exception of returning the fire arms to the weapons vault, the squadron was packed up and ready to go in a relatively short period of time.

When the Airmen arrived at Wolf Creek Generating Station, they received briefings about the security practices and took a bus tour of the facilities.

The recall exercise provided the Airmen with valuable experience in responding to domestic operations. It also gave the squadron's leaders a chance to evaluate their recall procedures and make necessary adjustments prior to a real event.

"Overall, the recall portion was executed very well and minor observations were made regarding processes," said Smith.

## KANG members participate in Lincoln marathon

By Capt. Stacy Fagan, 184th Medical Group

**Kansas Guardsmen represented their home state in a nationally renowned marathon.**

Three Kansas Air National Guardsmen competed in the Lincoln National Guard Marathon on May 4 in Lincoln, Nebraska, running alongside Guardsmen from across the nation.

Each state was authorized one team comprised of Army and Air National Guardsmen competing in the marathon.

Registration for the renowned race was limited to 12,500 participants and sold out in less than 12 hours. Part of its success was due to the huge support it has from the National Guard family.

The Kansas participants required running experience and an interest in representing the Kansas National Guard marathon team.

The Kansas participants this year were Airman 1st Class Travis Rindt, 184th Security Forces Squadron; and Master Sgt. Melinda Kellogg and Capt. Stacy Fagan, both from the 184th Medical Group.

Rindt and Fagan competed in the full marathon, making this the second marathon for Rindt with a finishing time of 4:41.

Fagan began participating in the Lincoln marathon in 2001 and has competed in the event almost every year since. This was her twelfth marathon and she achieved a finishing time of 3:47.

Kellogg opted for the half-marathon and finished in 2:44:06. This



**Left to right: Capt. Stacy Fagan, Airman 1st Class Travis Rindt and Master Sgt. Melinda Kellogg represented the Kansas National Guard marathon team at the Lincoln National Guard Marathon in May.**

Photo courtesy of Capt. Stacy Fagan

was her second half-marathon and she achieved a personal record at the event. Kellogg aspires to run a full marathon in the near future.

This was Fagan's first year serving as the Kansas Guard marathon team coordinator. In 2015, Kellogg and Fagan will coordinate the team together and hope to recruit more long-distance runners for the next Lincoln marathon.

The Lincoln marathon was the host for the National Guard Marathon trials in which Guard members representing each state and territory compete for positions on the National Guard marathon team.

Being on the National Guard Marathon team is quite the experience in that the members travel on military orders with other elite runners to compete in races all over the

United States. The top 45 males and 15 female finishers of the Lincoln marathon typically make the team.

In addition to esprit de corps, preparing for races promotes health and fitness, excelling above military fitness standards and serves as a great recruiting tool for both the Air and Army Guard.

When wearing the National Guard running gear or t-shirt, it affords runners the opportunity to share experiences and tell others about the Guard. There is also a running exposition with a National Guard booth where people can come and inquire about the Guard.

If you have any interest or know of anyone interested, please contact either Fagan or Kellogg at [stacy.fagan@ang.af.mil](mailto:stacy.fagan@ang.af.mil) or [Melinda.kellogg@ang.af.mil](mailto:Melinda.kellogg@ang.af.mil).

## Kansas Air Guardsman brings home national award

By Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Public Affairs

***Intelligence specialist earns national recognition for outstanding performance while serving at home and abroad.***

Master Sgt. Steve Peyton, intelligence specialist assigned to the 184th Operations Support Squadron, was recognized as one of the Air Force's top Airmen in May as part of the Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Award Program.

The award program, known as AFISRAP, is conducted annually and is designed to recognize military and civilian personnel who display outstanding leadership and performance while accomplishing intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance duties. The Airman must hold ISR specialties or significantly contribute to the mission of ISR forces.

Peyton was recognized as the Air Reserve component ISR Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year for 2013.

"We are extremely proud that his accomplishments are being recognized at the Air Force level, and are fortunate to have an Airman of his caliber as a fellow Jayhawk," said 1st Lt. Keith Marshall, executive officer, 184th Intelligence Group.

Peyton recently graduated from the ISR tactical controller course at Hurlburt Field, Florida, and was the first Air National Guardsman to deploy as an ISR Tactical Controller, filling a critical role in



**Master Sgt. Steve Peyton, intelligence specialist, 184th Operations Support Squadron, is recognized as the Air Reserve component ISR Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year for 2013.**

Photo by Master Sgt. Matt McCoy, 184th Public Affairs

a deployed environment.

"Master Sergeant Peyton enthusiastically volunteered for a difficult deployment that no Air National Guardsman had ever attempted, and served with honor and distinction in the high-stress, high-stakes, special operations environment," said Marshall.

During his deployment, Peyton fulfilled ISR requirements while supporting joint terminal attack controllers. His contributions led to enhanced situational awareness during operational missions as he integrated new tactics, techniques and procedures into daily intelligence operations.

Upon his return to McConnell Air Force Base, Peyton was assigned as the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Weap-

ons and Tactics Flight, 184th OSS. During this assignment he planned, integrated and executed a Red Flag exercise in which his unit was the first to provide command and control capabilities for U-2 and RQ-4 missions.

"Bringing his tactical knowledge and experience home from Afghanistan, Master Sergeant Peyton has become the resident expert at identifying tactical problems and providing solutions to improve combat capability and refine mission operations [of his unit]," said Capt. Joe Deeds, chief of the Weapons and Tactics Flight, "He has gained the respect of his colleagues at all levels for his expertise, as well as his eagerness to instruct and improve everyone around him."

## **Tech. Sgt. Jonathon Sills**

### **Fighting Jayhawk since 2002**

#### **Organization:**

**184th Munitions Squadron**

#### **Military Job Title:**

**Munitions Systems Craftsman**



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Maria Ruiz, 184th Public Affairs

#### **Above & Beyond:**

- **Noncommissioned officer of the quarter for second quarter, 2014**
- **Bachelor's Degree in Mechanical Drawing and Drafting, University of Maryland**
- **Community College of the Air Force degree in Munitions Systems Management**
- **Mobilized for 933 days in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Global War on Terrorism from 2002-2007**
- **Provided \$30 million of munitions assets to warfighters in support of war fighting contingencies**
- **Assigned as cost center manager for the Munitions Squadron, interfacing programs for budget analysis**
- **Volunteered as a mentor for Upward Bound math and science program**
- **Served as treasurer for Cerebral Palsy Ranch of Kansas, 2007-2011**

#### **My story:**

I have done a lot of things in the Air Force but the decision to enlist in the Kansas Air National Guard has so far been the best experience of my professional career. I have done everything from a training instructor to a flight chief and a guy that builds and maintains bombs to a resource advisor/cost center manager. I have been professionally blessed with the best leadership a young Airman and NCO could ask for and it's because of them, over my 12 years of service, I'm being recognized.

Wearing the uniform has brought a great deal of pride to me and my family. I met my beautiful wife Tech. Sgt. Jessica Sills while we were both training instructors at the 22nd Security Forces Squadron. We have been married since May 12, 2012 (I think) and we have an amazing son named Sawyer who is now 1 1/2 years old. The Air Force has given me so much to be thankful for. I can honestly say that wearing the uniform is what I was meant to do. My professional goals haven't always been the same, I did not intend on serving for more than six years much less making it a career but I fell in love with the service, the camaraderie and structure that comes with it. Being able to serve my country and community all while being a part of the greatest Airpower in the world is a pretty awesome feeling. I have had the pleasure of working alongside some of the most patriotic and devoted people I have ever met. To those that have led me down the path of success I am forever grateful. I am thankful for the recognition, but I have to give all the credit to my wife who has motivated me to exceed and to my leadership who have groomed me into being a productive noncommissioned officer.

## Different paths that lead to service

By 1st Lt. Matt Lucht, 184th Public Affairs

### ***Airman traded officer commission for enlisted stripes in a career full of twists and turns.***

In 1974, Tech. Sgt. Kirk Porter, a ground mission supervisor for the 161st Intelligence Squadron, 184th Intelligence Wing, had just graduated high school and was on his way to a career path that even he didn't know was there. That unknown path started with attending the Air Force Academy north of Colorado Springs, Colorado.

"When I was going through, you had an option to go to helicopter training or fixed wing training and they only had 25 spots available to academy graduates," said Porter. "There were 75 people that wanted helicopter training and 25 slots. I kind of lucked out and got a slot."

After graduating as a second lieutenant, Porter went to Fort Rucker, Alabama, for Huey helicopter training. But after flying for a number of years, Porter wanted to try teaching.

"I was fortunate to get a sponsorship from the academy to teach math, which required a master's degree," said Porter. "I went to Stanford, graduated in 1986 and went back to the academy as a teacher this time. I taught for four years, mostly engineering math and physics courses."

After his time as an instructor at the Air Force Academy, Porter decided that he wanted to pursue other areas that weren't tied to the military. After 12 years of active-



**After graduating from the Air Force Academy, 2nd Lt. Kirk Porter attended helicopter pilot training at Fort Rucker, Alabama, in 1978.**

Photo courtesy of Tech. Sgt. Kirk Porter

duty service, Porter hung up his wings and started working for Motorola in their semiconductor industry. But by 2006, the semiconductor industry had changed and Porter wanted another change too.

"When I got out of the Air Force, I had no intention of coming back. I didn't even go into the reserves. I thought 'Well, it was a good experience and off to something new,'" said Porter. "But when I saw the opportunity with the Guard in Kansas with the Intelligence Squadron, I thought that I would give it a shot because it sounded interesting and something that I would enjoy."

At the time of Porter's enlistment, the Intelligence Squadron didn't have any officer openings. Porter was interested in the intelligence mission and just wanted to be a part of that mission. As luck would have it, everything went through and Porter enlisted one day prior to the age limit cutoff.

With Porter's diverse background, some fellow Airmen seem

confused about his career path.

"I think a lot of them don't understand and wonder why someone would go from a captain to working in a fairly high-tech industry like semiconductor manufacturing and then to an enlisted position, where the prestige isn't there," said Porter.

"They are probably looking at it 'Is this a decision that a 22-year-old would make?' Well of course not.

But what I hope that they see is that life goes in cycles; you have to approach each phase in your life as the situation presents itself."

Porter is proud that he experienced each phase and also that a part of his background is displayed on his uniform, his pilot's wings, which elicits mixed reactions from others.

"Sometimes it is a goofy look, sometimes it is a salute because they think that I am officer because of my wings and sometimes it just raises a conversation," said Porter.

Porter is set to retire from the Kansas Air National Guard in January 2016, and offers some advice to younger Airmen.

"I hope that the Airmen that I work with say, 'Here is a guy that has taken a completely different career path and he seems to be doing ok,'" said Porter. "I think that it is important for people to see that whatever life throws at you, you can adapt."

# JAYHAWK FLYER

photo finish ► Fighting Jayhawks in action



In May, 1st Lt. Keith Marshall and Lt. Col. Pete Austin talk to students from several towns in Kansas about future opportunities in the Air Force at a career day at Cottonwood Elementary School in Andover.

Photo by Master Sgt. Matt McCoy

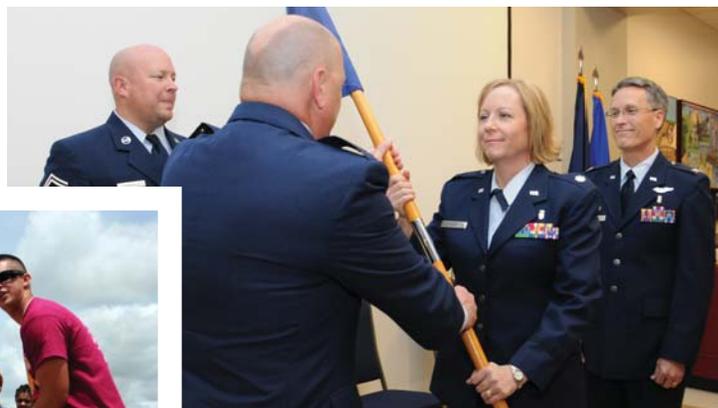


Herschel Walker, former professional football player, tells his resiliency story and how it's okay to ask for help during a visit to the 184th Intelligence Wing in May. Photo by Airman 1st Class Lauren Penney



Tech. Sgt. Kirsten Click, 184th Communications Flight, bowls in the 51st Annual Air National Guard Bowling Tournament in May. The tournament was hosted by the 184th Intelligence Wing for the first time in nearly 15 years. The bowling tournament committee, directed by Senior Master Sgt. Amy Buchanan, spent two years planning and preparing for the three day event.

Photo by Master Sgt. Matt McCoy



Above: Lt. Col. Vonda Wigal assumes command of the 184th Medical Group during a change of command ceremony on May 3. She replaces Col. Rohn Hamilton (right) whose retirement ceremony was held directly after the change of command. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Maria Ruiz



Left: Fighting Jayhawks once again support the Special Olympics in June despite weather conditions that nearly cancelled the games. The volunteers help run events including the long jump.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Justin Jacobs