

HQ INDIVIDUAL RESERVIST READINESS & INTEGRATION ORGANIZATION

The Readiness Report

Beware online scammers

By Master Sgt. Wendy Barraza,
First Sergeant, HQ RIO

About a year ago I began hearing about social engineering scams targeting military social media users, but I didn't really know of anyone impacted by it.

However, in the last few months I have seen and heard of several specific and disturbing incidents of extortion involving fellow service members. These heartbreaking stories concern me and I want to highlight several of them to raise awareness about the threat of internet crimes.

In the last few months I have heard stories of three service members who fell victim to social media extortion involving private videos they didn't want disclosed. These scenarios typically involve a service member, let's call him Airman Snuffy, getting a friend request from an unknown party expressing interest in online dating or friendship. Snuffy engages in conversation, getting to know this new online friend. The "friend" recommends taking things to a new level and encourages Snuffy to exchange videos of an intimate nature. To secure his confidence, the extortionist initiates the first video exchange. Snuffy then returns a video. Moments later, Snuffy gets a link to his video posted online with a demand for \$3000 (in one member's case) or else the video will go viral. Snuffy is now in the Shirt's office, frightened and unsure of what to do. This exact scenario has come up repeatedly across the military, sort of like an *American Pie* movie scene gone bad.

Another tactic I've heard of scammers using involves sales transactions. In one case, Snuffy wants to buy a motorcycle and finds one for sale online for a reasonable price. The seller only wants to be paid via gift cards but wants proof that the buyer is legitimate and able to pay for the bike. He (or she) asks for a confirmation of the funds loaded on the card. The card is drained of all funds and Snuffy never gets his motorcycle.

Finally, although *AFI 1-1, Air Force Standards*, advises us about social media, it may surprise you to know that the FBI can elevate your social media comments to your chain of command's attention. In one situation, Snuffy made a comment on social media, saying "someone just needs to assassinate" and names a candidate running for office, while tagging his unit and the candidate. I don't think I need to elaborate on what happened next.

Remember, social media offers a wide reach for us to know what is happening within multiple circles, both professionally and personally, but it can also make us vulnerable to criminal threats. I urge you to consider those friend requests wisely and slow down a moment to think about who you are allowing into your world, however public that space might be.



SMSgt. Warisar "V" Villarreal, HQ RIO Det 6, is the 2015 AF A1 Senior Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year (Reserve category). (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Kentavist P. Brackin)

Det 6 Airman earns AF-level personnel award

By Master Sgt. Timm Huffman

A Headquarters Individual Reservist Readiness and Integration Organization Detachment 6 Airman was named as the Air Force's Force Support Senior Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year, Air Reserve Component.

Senior Master Sgt. Warisa Villarreal, the manager of IR operations at Detachment 6, located at Hurlburt Field, Florida, was named the top force support SNCO, a feat she also accomplished in 2013.

According to Detachment 6 leadership, Villarreal earned the award for overall job performance, self-improvement and community involvement. She is ranked as HQ RIO's top SNCO.

Col. Clifton D. Stargardt, the HQ RIO Detachment 6 commander, said V, as she is known to her co-workers, produces high-quality performance day-in and day-out. He added that while 2015 was a banner year, it was just a snapshot of the sustained excellence she's been delivering for years.

"V is an all-star leader, mentor, personnelist, and SNCO; and the heartbeat of Team 6. I couldn't be more proud of her selection as the AF A1 Force Support (ARC) SNCO of the Year!" said Stargardt.

Villarreal credited her success to those around her. She said her husband, who is a first sergeant at Hurlburt Field, is incredibly supportive of her work, often enabling her to put in extra hours at the office by taking care of their children and offering advice needed.

She also acknowledged the support of her leadership and co-workers at Detachment 6. "I am very lucky to have supportive leadership that has empowered me and provided me the tools I need to get the job done," she said.

She added that the mentorship, guidance and feedback she received through collaboration with her team were also big factors in enabling her to perform at a high level.

Her support network isn't all that drives her; she has a personal passion for her work. The Individual Reserve is a challenging program, with a lot of ins and outs. She said she gets satisfaction knowing her efforts enable Individual Reservists to accomplish their mission of supporting the active duty.

"I love my job and helping our customers," she added.



HQ RIO Leadership



Col. Carolyn A. Stickell
Commander



CMSgt. Dolores Colella
Superintendent



MSgt. Wendy Barraza
First Sergeant

[Enlisted leader biographies](#)

HQ RIO Quick Links

- [HQ RIO Website](#)
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- [Wingman Toolkit](#)
- [MyPers](#)
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- [Defense Travel System](#)

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www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/home/hqrio.aspx



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News briefs

Total force DU Board to certify RAS Strategist officers

In the second week of November 2016, the Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force, International Affairs, Policy, Programming and Strategy Directorate (SAF/IAP), will convene a Total Force Direct Utilization (DU) Board (Regular Air Force, Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard) for certification of Regional Affairs Strategist (RAS) officers and award of the secondary Air Force Specialty Code 16F1X.

In order to be considered by this board, applicants must comply with all instructions outlined in the [FY17 Total Force RAS DU Memo](#), accessible from a Common Access Card-enabled computer. Incomplete applications will not be considered. The suspense for all complete packages to be received is Sept. 4, 2016.

Board members will evaluate applicants based on the whole person concept. When preparing supporting documents, applicants are encouraged to highlight their depth and breadth of international experience, in both military and civilian capacities.

After reviewing the instructions, if any questions remain, interested candidates can email the organizational email account listed in the memo.

Submit orders requests for October by Sept. 22

IMAs requiring orders in the month of October must submit their requests in AROWS-R no later than close of business on Thursday, Sept. 22.

Submitting requests by this deadline will ensure there is adequate time to generate the order prior to the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30. Beginning Oct. 1, the finance systems used in the process of generating orders will be unavailable for several weeks; HQ RIO will be unable to generate any new orders during that outage.

IMAs who have urgent, last-minute requests for support from their active-duty unit during October must contact their servicing HQ RIO detachment to request Verbal Orders of the Commander (VOCO). IMAs should never proceed to duty without either a certified order or a VOCO in hand. A VOCO is written authorization from a member's HQ RIO Detachment commander authorizing them to travel when time or error prevents the publication of written orders in advance. For more information on VOCO orders, refer to [The Guide for Individual Reservists](#).



Did you know? | Tips for the Individual Reservist

Did you know you can find solicitations and application instructions for all current Air Force awards and boards on the HQ RIO website?

HQ RIO disseminates calls for nominations to eligible Individual Mobilization Augmentee populations via targeted email messaging. This information is then posted on the Awards and Boards portion of the website.

Visit www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/home/hqrio/IRawardsboardsandcourses.aspx to see if you qualify for any current awards or boards. Direct questions to your servicing HQ RIO Detachment



Q&A with the Commander

Col. Carolyn A. Stickell is the commander of HQ RIO. She assumed command June 24, 2015.

What is one thing you've learned about leadership in the past year?

Trusting and empowering your people is a powerful leadership tool. We have an incredible team of professionals with great ideas and tremendous work ethics. Giving people the opportunity to act on their ideas and help make the organization better has resulted in HQ RIO really taking some big steps forward and enhancing the service we can provide to our IRs.

You were an IMA prior to taking command. How did your experiences influence the direction you wanted to lead HQ RIO?

I loved the flexibility of being an IMA! However, some things were just really difficult, and I didn't understand why it had to be that way. My experiences as an IMA fed directly into the ideas I had for leading HQ RIO. More than anything, I'd like to get rid of the "I'm Alone" feeling that so many of our IMAs experience.

You hit the ground running at HQ RIO - how did you prepare for your role as the new commander?

I was incredibly fortunate because I was the IMA to the Vice Commander at ARPC at the time and could watch the standup of HQ RIO, even though I wasn't part of the organization. This allowed me to become familiar with the challenges and growing pains the new organization was facing. I had time to watch what it was going through and develop some ideas about what I'd like to do before I officially took over. I had also been an IMA for 15 years, so I was really familiar with what RIO's customers experience on a daily basis. The key was garnering the support of both the HQ RIO staff and my Det Commanders. I spent a lot of time talking to my staff and to the Det Commanders during my first week as commander. I listened to what they had to say and took their suggestions to heart.

At the very start you empowered personnel to be leaders and make decisions -- do you have specific examples of success based on this philosophy?

Absolutely! I was able to talk to all my Det Commanders within my first week in the seat. I had a list of questions I asked each Commander. Among other things, I asked them what some of their biggest concerns were, and if they were in my shoes, what would they address? Those two simple questions led to a bunch of quick wins. Some were just decisions they wanted me to make, so we made them. A more time consuming effort, which has almost come to fruition, involves having orders writers in the Dets. Because of the experience and judgement of the Detachments, we decided to go with orders writers embedded in the detachments rather than the original plan of having a centralized "orders writing cell."

What were some of your one-year objectives and goals -- Do you feel you've made progress in these areas?

I had (and still have) three main priorities for HQ RIO: (1) Fill our vacancies. We can't have a viable IMA program if we fail to fill our vacancies. We have got to get qualified faces into our empty spaces. (2) Take care of the faces. This includes caring for our Individual Reservists and the active component units they serve, along with caring for every member of HQ RIO who works so hard to serve our customers. (3) Be ready to mobilize our IRs. IRs are trained to help meet and complete the active component mission. HQ RIO has to be ready to get them to fight when called upon.

We have definitely made progress in all three of these areas. With



Col. Carolyn A. Stickell, Commander, HQ RIO

regards to the first priority (vacancies), we haven't filled our vacancies as quickly as I would have liked, but we have multiple initiatives underway that will eventually help us achieve the results we're looking for. When it comes to the second priority (faces), we have made significant improvements in caring for our IRs. We have developed a Detachment-specific welcome program, where the IR's Detachment briefs all our new IRs on what the Det does for them. Once that is complete, we bring the IR here to Buckley for an IR Orientation, which builds upon the information the Det initially provides. We're also constantly growing the resources available for our IRs: we have a great

website, an iPhone app, YouTube videos on confusing processes, and truly dedicated individuals in each of our Detachments to help our IRs navigate our somewhat complicated landscape. We are also actively engaged in educating our active duty partners through online and in-person trainings. Finally, to meet our third priority (mobilization), we hold exercises throughout the year to ensure we are always able to answer our nation's call.

HQ RIO 'Smile Moments' have increased exponentially since you took command -- how do you explain this upward trend in RIOs organizational reputation?

This is all due to the willingness of the professionals throughout our organization to "go the extra mile" when helping our IRs. It shows how much our

people genuinely care about helping our customers. I'm so proud of every person in HQ RIO who has taken our customer service initiatives to heart, and the result of their caring attitude is paying huge dividends.

Where does the term "Smile Moments" come from?

I just made it up! I was on a commercial flight, and there were three totally separate things that happened that made me smile. None of the things that happened even involved me, but they were really cool things to do for the passengers who were affected, and they just made me smile. I found myself reflecting on those "Smile Moments", and thought it would be a great term for what we're trying to do for RIO's customers.

What changes do you still want to make as you enter year two as commander?

There is so much work that still needs to be done! There are so many processes that are still unnecessarily painful for the Individual Reservist. I want to continue focusing on those and trying to make things better. We will be moving the IMA Travel office to Buckley, which will consolidate the Military Pay and Travel Pay functions under one roof. I expect our pay functions to vastly improve as we bring these teams together and leverage all their experience under the expert guidance of the ARPC/FM team. Orders also continue to be a challenge. We will continue working to streamline the process and try to find a better way. The opportunities for improvement are endless!

What legacy do you hope to leave behind with the IMA Program?

When I leave, I hope the IMA program is a little better than when I started. I hope some of the initiatives we undertook really do make life easier for our IRs. I hope all of our customers and all the professionals within HQ RIO recognize and understand what they do for our country. I hope they can think of "smile moments" and can take a few seconds to be proud of what they do.

Your father was a commander, how did the experience of watching him influence the way you lead?

When I took over as the RIO Commander, I joked that if you don't like my leadership style, you could blame my dad. He has always been an inspiration and a stellar example of what an Air Force Officer should be. He just has a way with people, a genuine leadership style, and a quiet confidence. I don't think a child knowingly picks up on that stuff -- it must just develop by watching that example throughout your life.



Initial URC training available on-demand

By Master Sgt. Timm Huffman

A training for newly appointed Unit Reserve Coordinators is now available 24/7 via the Advanced Distributed Learning System. The course, which was released July 26, takes about one hour to complete, is mandatory for all URCs and provides the tools needed to educate commanders on matters related to the Individual Reserve, said Master Sgt. Andrew Sandoval, the member of the Headquarters Individual Reservist Readiness and Integration Organization's Integration Cell team who developed the new training.

URCs are active-duty Airmen appointed by their commanders to serve as a liaison between the Individual Reservist, the HQ RIO detachment and the active-duty unit. It is an additional-duty assignment and there are approximately 1,400 URCs across the Air Force. Additionally, the training provides URCs with the knowledge they need to manage the Individual Mobilization Augmentees assigned to their units.

IMAs are accountable to the Air Force Reserve Command but are assigned to active-component organizations. Their primary role is to provide backfill support for their units when needed but they can also volunteer their service to support exercises, contingencies, deployments and other needs throughout the Air Force and Department of Defense. They are managed by HQ RIO, its seven detachments and eight operating

locations.

Initial URC Training was previously offered on a monthly basis in a live, online format. However, this required too many man-hours for the return on investment HQ RIO was getting, since many URCs could not make the scheduled classes, said Sandoval.

The development of the on-demand course began in September 2015 when the HQ RIO Integration Cell identified the low attendance, only a handful of URCs each month. That is when Sandoval approached the ADLS team and began the process for submitting a new course. After a thorough curriculum vetting process that took him into January 2016, he began compiling the course in Adobe Captivate, the software required by the ADLS learning management system.

Unfortunately, when Sandoval finished developing the course, he discovered the version of the software he was using could not create a file readable by the ADLS servers. After talking with the ADLS and Adobe Help Desk teams, it was discovered that newer versions of the software were not backwards compatible with earlier versions of the software.

Sandoval said that Adobe agreed to help and their engineers made the changes to Captivate that would allow him to move forward with the deployment of his training.

His efforts to get the URC training loaded into ADLS may also inadvertently help others across the Air Force. Sandoval said that during the course of troubleshooting the software issue, he discovered that other organizations had run into the same problems he did. With the software updates, those organizations should be able to publish their trainings, he said.

To access the training, follow the steps listed at <http://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/Portals/4/DRIO/RIO-how-to-locate-Initial-URC-Training.pdf>.



Lt. Gen. Maryanne Miller has assumed the top role as the first female commander of Air Force Reserve Command. During ceremonies at Robins Air Force Base on July 15, Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson relinquished command of AFRC. He led the Air Force Reserve since 2012, retiring from the Air Force with more than 38 years of military service.

Just before the passing of the guidon from Jackson to Miller, the 21st Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Gen. David L. Goldfein, spoke briefly on the historic events unfolding at Robins, home of AFRC.

"Today's ceremony marks a very special moment in history for our Air Force, as well as Air Force Reserve Command," said Goldfein.

"When it came time to select the best commander of AFRC, the choice was obvious. General Miller brings a combination of applied and intense warrior spirit and a passion for the mission for airmen and their families," he said. "There's no leader who is more fit, focused or ready to lead the Reserve triad of citizens, airmen and families."

<https://www.dvidshub.net/video/476780/gen-miller-message>.



Election year dos and don'ts for service members

By Katie Lange, DoD News, Defense Media Activity

I'm sure you've all seen political posts in full effect on Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat recently. The opinions are just going to get louder, too, before the election this November.

As members of the Defense Department, we have a responsibility to be smart about what we post, as well as how we participate in political activity and how we support political campaigns. DoD employees are limited to certain political activities under the Hatch Act, which is meant to protect employees from political coercion at work, as well as make sure employees move up in their careers based on their merit, not political affiliation.

So for those who are politically active, here's a refresher of what limitations you need to be aware of:



Service Members

Political Activity:

Active-duty service members (in and out of uniform) aren't allowed to engage in partisan political activities, meaning no campaigning for candidates, joining in on fundraising activities, serving as an officer in a partisan club or speaking at a partisan gathering. All military personnel are also supposed to avoid implying or appearing to imply that any of their political activities are endorsed or sponsored by the DoD.

However, when out of uniform, service members are allowed to express their personal political opinions, donate money to campaigns or organizations and attend political events as a spectator. But again, that's out of uniform — not in it. Here are more specifics on the rules.

Social Media:

You are allowed to express your personal views and politics via your own social media platforms, but when you're doing that, and you've been identified as a DoD employee on that platform, make sure it's clear that the views you're expressing are your own, NOT the DoD's.

While you're allowed to "follow," "friend" and "like" a party or candidate, you're not allowed to share or retweet information posted to that corresponding social media page. You're not supposed to post links to that page's content, either. It's considered participating in political activities.

Always remember — don't violate the Uniform Code of Military Justice or service regulations. That means don't show contempt for public officials, post unprofessional material or release sensitive information.

[More Guidance for Service Members | http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/defense_ethics/resource_library/faqs_political_activities_armed_forces.pdf](http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/defense_ethics/resource_library/faqs_political_activities_armed_forces.pdf)

DoD Civilians

Political Activity:

While on duty or in a federal building, DoD civilian employees are not allowed to engage in political activities such as sending or forwarding political emails or posting political messages to social media accounts, even from your own devices. Don't ever use government equipment for those activities, either.

However, when it comes to what you can do politically, there are basically two groups of civilians: Further restricted employees and less restricted employees.

Further restricted employees include:

- Those appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate
- Those serving in non-career senior executive service (SES) positions
- Career members of the SES
- Contract appeals board members
- Employees of the National Security Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency and National Geo-Spatial Intelligence Agency

The above people are prohibited from participating in political activity, especially any that's sponsored or supported by a party, political group or candidate up for election. You also can't solicit or receive political contributions. However, further restricted employees can make monetary contributions, express personal opinions and attend campaign events or fundraisers sponsored by a candidate — they just can't actively participate.

Less restricted employees include:

All DoD civilians who aren't listed above, including [schedule C political appointees](#)

These people can volunteer with a political campaign or organization on their personal time. That includes organizing rallies or meetings, making calls on behalf of a candidate, serving as a delegate to a party convention and working for a party to get out the vote on Election Day. Less restricted employees still cannot solicit or receive political contributions, though.

Social Media:

Like the social media rules for service members, DoD civilians are allowed to express personal views and politics via their own social media platforms, but they have to make it clear that the views they're expressing are personal and not the DoD's.

Since further restricted employees (as listed above) aren't allowed to be part of partisan political activity, they also can't share or retweet information posted to the social media page of a party or candidate. They can't post links from a party or candidate's account, either, but they can "follow," "friend" or "like" them.

To get more specifics on how to avoid violating the rules, visit

http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/defense_ethics/resource_library/hatch_act_and_social_media.pdf.



Reservist takes aim at national veteran narrative

By Master Sgt. Timm Huffman

The average American has three categories for all veterans: hero, victim and monster.

So says Capt. Melissa Boatwright, the founder of Battle Tested Veterans, a not-for-profit dedicated to changing the national veteran narrative through the use of data and first-person stories.

The idea for the non-profit came from her own experience leaving active duty and successfully reintegrating into civilian life. She said that story after story depicting veterans as either super-humans or lost souls struggling with addiction, post-traumatic stress disorder and unemployment left her wondering where all of the other well-adapted, successful veterans were.

Boatwright began her transition to civilian life after a decade as a broadcaster when she "started to feel cooped up and wanted to do something else." She left active duty for civilian life and part-time service in the Individual Reserve in 2007. She finished her undergraduate degree within months of leaving full-time service and moved directly to a graduate program.

She said the flexibility of the Individual Reserve, where she first served as an Individual Mobilization Augmentee at Defense Media Activity in San Antonio, Texas, was great for her school schedule. It allowed her to work three to four weeks at a time in between semesters and on breaks and also remain connected with her Air Force family. She added that it was a great way to make good money without having to work the typical college job.

She received her commission in 2010 and now serves as the IMA to the public affairs officer at the 9th Reconnaissance Wing, Beale Air Force Base, California. She has also experienced success as a civilian and she is currently the global head of program management at Thomson-Reuters. She also finished her master's in business administration this summer.

It was in 2011, after her own transition to civilian life was settled that the idea for Battle Tested Veterans began to grow. She said watching her husband separate from active duty that year and experience the same emotions, struggles, successes and questions helped her put a name to the things she had experienced during her separation. This made her aware of the fact that neither of them, or any of their veteran friends, for that matter, fit the popular media narrative.

"I felt compelled to find a way to help people experience veterans and know them like I know them," she said. "I actually first applied to host a TED event focused on veteran stories but they turned me down, so I decided to find my own way."

Her MBA program provided her the means to turn her idea into something tangible. As part of the coursework, Boatwright was required to develop a mock business plan. Instead of a dummy, she took the opportunity to put legs on her idea for a non-profit that would work to reframe the perception of veterans in the corporate world and popular culture.

According to Boatwright, the problems veterans face are not unemployment and high rates of mental disorder, as the popular narrative would lead people to believe. Veterans, in fact, are employed at a higher rate than the general population, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics; and PTSD, while higher than the rate of the civilian population, affects fewer than 15 percent of all service members, according to the Veteran's Administration's Center for PTSD. So, if veterans aren't facing major unemployment or extreme rates of mental disorders, what is the problem?

Perception. Boatwright said the oversimplification of a complex story told over and over by the media, and many veteran-focused non-profits, as well, have led to the popular misconceptions the average population carries around about veterans.

Boatwright sees this problem affecting many areas of life, but one she is particularly passionate about is employment. While she will be the first one to admit that veteran unemployment has dropped below the national average, she will also point out that many veterans are often working jobs far below their experience level. She said employers see veterans as valuable employees, just not at the strategic level. In other words, they might make great baristas but not vice presidents.



Capt. Melissa Boatwright, IMA to the public affairs officer at the 9th Reconnaissance Wing, Beale Air Force Base, California, addresses the audience at the inaugural 2015 Battle Tested Veterans event at the NASDAQ Entrepreneurial Center, San Francisco. Boatwright is the founder of the non-profit which aims to change perceptions of veterans through the use of data and first-person narrative. (Photo by Zephrine Hanson)

"I'm not interested in the number of hires. I'm more interested in where," she said. "How many are professionals? That's what I want to address."

With Battle Tested Veterans, Boatwright hopes to challenge the national veteran narrative using what she knows best: story and data. Her organization is built around TED Talk-style events and podcasts that feature veterans from all walks of life opening up about their lives. Boatwright said the character-driven stories have real power to produce change perceptions because they create empathy.

The first proof-of-concept event was held on Veteran's Day 2015 at the NASDAQ Entrepreneurial Center in San Francisco. The event featured nine veterans sharing their stories with 120 executives and HR leaders from companies such as Facebook, Airbnb and Thomson-Reuters.

Dan Bellis was one of the veterans Boatwright invited to speak at the first Battle Tested Veterans conference. Bellis served as a broadcaster in the Air Force for 12 years. He first met Boatwright in the 1990s when they were stationed together in Germany but lost contact until recently reconnecting via Facebook. He got involved in Battle Tested Veterans when he responded to a post she made asking for interesting veteran stories because, as a stay at home dad, he felt people should hear his perspective.

"We don't all come back to be law enforcement or anti-terrorism officers," he said. "We can be moms and dads, too."

He also wanted to lend a hand in helping Boatwright with her goal by getting out in front. "You don't see the functional vets, just the ones off the rails," he said.

Another former colleague who spoke at the event was Zephrine Hanson. Hanson was Boatwright's roommate at their first duty station in Germany and they have remained close ever since, despite Hanson's departure from the Air Force in 2004.

Hanson was a military photographer and after leaving Europe was assigned to the Wilford Hall Medical Center. She had a strong stomach, so she was assigned to photographically document medical procedures and traumas. She was good at her job and was soon sent to Dover Air Force Base to photograph the remains of soldiers who had paid the ultimate price and were transiting through the Port Mortuary there.

"I am honored and proud that I did that, but there was a cost for me," said Hanson, who wrestles with post-traumatic stress disorder to this day.

"I was still doing my job everyday but I wasn't sleeping at night," she said. "I was really struggling."

(Continued on page 7)



(Battle Tested Veterans, continued from page 6)

After her time at Dover, she returned home to Texas where her symptoms did not improve and eventually resulted in a medical evaluation board that ended her career in the Air Force. After a permanent change of station to Florida with her husband, he also returned to civilian life. The couple again relocated to Los Angeles to attend college and pursue civilian careers. Hanson continued struggling with PTSD until she eventually found a therapist who helped guide her through lifestyle changes that started her recovery. Battle Tested Veterans helped her continue that process.

When Boatwright first approached her old friend to help with her idea to create a TED Talk-like event, the photographer thought she would help with administrative stuff and take pictures. But then Boatwright asked her to speak about her struggle with PTSD.

"I would do anything in my power to support her but it ended up helping me," she said.

In addition to giving her a voice and platform to talk about the struggles and complexities many veterans face in civilian life, including her journey raising her three children with Autism spectrum disorder, the event also offered connections she never would have made otherwise. She said it was the first time she'd been in a large group of veterans since leaving the service more than a decade before. This allowed her to talk with people who shared a common language that she thought she had put away for good. The experience also helped her rewrite her internal narrative regarding what happened to her during her time in the Air Force and changed her perspective on what she could achieve. Hanson also made valuable connections that put her on a path to



Dan Bellis, an Air Force veteran, was a presenter at the first Battle Tested Veterans event in 2015. During his humorous 8:00 minute delivery, he shared about his transition from the active duty military into the civilian world and the challenges of being a stay-at-home dad. (Photo by Zephrine Hanson)

entrepreneurship and even learned ways to improve her marriage.

"[Boatwright] opened so many doors for me, and going to the NASDAQ put me on the global stage to say 'you can be successful with PTSD,'" said Hanson.

Following the nine speakers, many attendees stayed for the social hour, interacting with each other and the veterans. Boatwright had budgeted an hour but was asking the facility staff for more time as her attendees

continued their talks long past the 60-minute mark.

Jim Kleiber, an entrepreneur and mobile app developer who attended the event, said the two-hour program opened his eyes to what it really means to be a veteran, as well as the diversity of paths they take as they reintegrate into the civilian world.

Kleiber, who has developed an app that he says helps people self-reflect, said civilians often don't know the questions to ask or how to make a connection with a veteran. He believes the Battle Tested Veterans program can help veterans open up in real and honest ways that will build a common ground for them and their civilian counterparts.

"I hope it continues to grow," he said. "I see it as a strong platform for helping civilians understand veterans and for the reintegration process."

Boatwright was encouraged by the inaugural event and has plans in place to continue growing her non-profit. This year she will

again hold the San Francisco Veteran's Day event at the NASDAQ and is in the research and planning phase to expand to more events in subsequent years. Following the 2015 event, she also started the Battle Tested Veterans podcast to share even more veteran stories. She hopes to reach 1,000 downloads by the end of the year and has plans in place to reach 3 million in three years.

To learn more about Battle Tested Veterans and listen to the podcasts, visit <http://www.battletestednotbroken.com/>.

IMAs support multinational USSOUTHCOM PANAMAX 16 exercise

By Master Sgt. Timm Huffman

Two Individual Mobilization Augmentees supported U.S. Southern Command's PANAMAX 16 exercise at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, July 29 through Aug. 4.

Col. Mary Johnson and Lt. Col. Charlotte Jackson supported the annual exercise. PANAMAX is a 7-day, multinational exercise simulating command and control of multinational sea, air, cyber and land forces to defend the Panama Canal against threats from violent extremism and to provide humanitarian relief. Nineteen partner nations participated this year.

For Johnson, who is the IMA to the 12th Air Force intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance director, this was her second time supporting PANAMAX. Her role during the exercise was senior intelligence officer within the air and space operations center, or AOC. In that position she was responsible for ensuring all air component ISR support for the exercise was properly executed.

Jackson, an IMA assigned to the 612th AOC Air Mobility Division, has supported PANAMAX four times since 2010, and also participated in a tabletop version in 2015. This year she had the opportunity to take a leadership role, acting as the deputy chief of the AMD, ensuring requests for aircraft were handled correctly, including positioning aircraft, flight times, clearances, weather and crew calls; basically she oversaw everything involved with getting aircraft from point A to B and back again, she said.

One of the most important aspects of each iteration of the exercise is creating, fostering and improving relationships with partner nations in South America, said Jackson. This includes getting all of the involved nations to work and learn together so that in the event of a real world situation there is a unified response to any threat.

Jackson said there were 11 nations represented just within the AMD. This was challenging – they kept Google Translate up on a screen at all times – but also rewarding. Not only were the foreign troops professionals, the experience allowed all parties to watch how the other tackled particular problems.

"If you're not learning you're wrong," said Jackson of the experience.

Johnson, who has over 36 years in the Air Force, echoed her sentiment. She said the coalition of partner nations sat side by side with U.S. personnel to execute the mission. It was also the first time the partner nations were in the lead role for the air, ground and sea aspects of the exercise. As the top ISR AOC officer, she was daily briefing Columbian Brig. Gen. Sergio Andrés Garzón Vélez, who was the Combined Forces Air Component Commander.

Training in a Total Force environment was another important aspect of the exercise. In addition to the IMAs, the 183rd Airlift Squadron, part of the Mississippi Air National Guard's 172nd Airlift Wing, provided the aircrews for the exercise, all of which were new.

Jackson said this was a great opportunity to train the rookies on how things function when working with multinational partners. She added that the IMAs provide great benefit in this area, as they offer continuity that is often lacking in active duty units.

Johnson agreed on the Total Force equation, saying that having the Air Force Reserve and ANG participate is akin to practicing like it's real, since the three components would work together in an actual emergency situation.

In total, More than 35 partner air force officers from about a dozen Western Hemisphere countries participated in the air portion of PANAMAX 16. By the end, Johnson said all those involved were functioning as a cohesive team and working well together. "It was a spectacular success," she said.



IMA intel officer takes pride in helping maintain peace on Korean peninsula

By Gene Van Deventer, Headquarters AFRC

Since 1953, when the armistice ending hostilities on the Korean peninsula was signed, the United States has had a contingent of Airmen supporting the defense of the Republic of Korea. Now, 63 years after the signing, both North and South Korea continue to exist within a tenuous peace that could be easily ignited into a full-scale war if provocations turned into a real-world confrontation.

The August 2015 incident involving a North Korean-emplaced land mine within the demilitarized zone that left two ROK soldiers seriously injured is one indicator of how volatile the peace is between the two countries. Events in recent months, including North Korean claims of an underground nuclear test and its long-range ballistic missile launch, have created an even higher level of uncertainty.

North Korea has the world's fourth largest military, with 70 percent to 75 percent of the force deployed within 60 miles of the DMZ. Since coming into power in 2011, Kim Jong Un has placed a strong emphasis on developing and strengthening asymmetric capabilities like ballistic missiles, the world's largest special operations forces, cyber warfare and chemical weapons, all of which increase the indications and warnings challenge for U.S. decision-makers.

To maintain the peace, the U.S. Forces Korea Command relies heavily on Air Force-provided intelligence information that is planned, collected, processed, analyzed and disseminated by a combined team of U.S. and ROK Airmen. The 694th Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Group, commanded by Col. James C. Mock, carries out this critically important mission providing around-the-clock support at Osan Air Base, ROK.

The group is one of five primary sites for the global Air Force Distributed Common Ground System, operated by the 480th ISR Wing, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia. This incredibly complex worldwide system is powered by innovative Airmen who integrate data from numerous ISR platforms and then distribute real-time and near-real-time critical and actionable intelligence to U.S. military and civilian leaders and their allies.

Maj. Alison Hamel is newly assigned to the 694th as its first individual mobilization augmentee. The establishment of this IMA position at Osan is in line with Air Force Reserve Command commander's guidance to increase execution of intelligence IMA billets at major commands and combatant commands and effectively recruit and place qualified Airmen to support intelligence missions around the globe.

According to command leadership, Hamel was selected for the position based on her record of excellence throughout her career. She was named the 2013 Headquarters Pacific Air Forces Reserve/Guard ISR Officer of the Year, as well as PACAF's Reserve/Guard Officer of the Year during her previous assignment with the 713th Combat Operations Squadron, Detachment 1, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

Lt. Col. William Bernhard, the group's deputy commander and Hamel's active-duty supervisor, said she has quickly acquired specific training and learned techniques and processes needed for her mission deployments to Korea.

"Major Hamel is quickly becoming familiar with our USFK operations plans and associated workings in the gathering and interpreting of intelligence matters in this theater of operations," Bernhard said. "She brings a strong intelligence foundation of knowledge and is now applying that knowledge to the threat issues that face the Republic of Korea, our USFK forces and allied partners."

He said Hamel is also tasked to help improve processes and share best practices between the Korea and Hawaii distributed ground sites to maximize limited ISR assets in the Pacific Command area of operations.

Getting up to speed and qualified as a mission operations commander was a significant leadership training objective for Hamel.

"Getting ops floor qualified as an MOC is a major component of Maj.

Hamel's mission contributions to the group," Bernhard said.

"Being a mission-ready MOC keeps her aware and focused on the needs and concerns of the Airmen executing the DCGS mission, while working on projects to improve execution and collaboration between DCGS sites."

He said Hamel recently successfully coordinated a process change for the Hawaii DCGS that improves intelligence collection and multiple-intelligence fusion opportunities both there and in Korea.

Now that she is a qualified MOC, Hamel is concentrating on building relationships with all of the group's on-peninsula partners, synchronizing the intelligence efforts that encompass U.S. Air Force, Army and national communities to include ROK-associated capabilities.

"I'm quickly learning the connecting links between the intelligence provider and the tip-of-the-spear warfighter," Hamel said. "The lives of more than 51 million ROK citizens depend on the assurance that the military professionals get it right."

This is especially true considering intelligence is distributed between military partners who speak two distinct languages from two distinct cultures.

"The excellent language skills and efforts of both Korean and American linguists who constantly interact in the intelligence arena are critical to ensuring shared understanding," Hamel said.

The skills she has developed with the group will support steady-state, real-world scenarios as well as preparation for annual peninsula exercises involving the South Korean air force, U.S. Seventh Air Force, USFK, PACAF, and other service components.

"Our mission is simple: to provide world-class intelligence so that peace can be maintained in the Northeast Asia theater of operations and, if need be, to provide the right intelligence to the right warfighters at the right time to meet their contingency requirements," Hamel said. "I take immense pride in being part of this extremely important and rewarding mission and in working alongside some very 'intelligent' Airmen who perform around the clock, 365 days a year for a cause much larger than themselves. Doing this job as a Reservist and being the first IMA assigned to the 694th ISR Group makes me even prouder."

