

# HQ INDIVIDUAL RESERVIST READINESS & INTEGRATION ORGANIZATION

## The Readiness Report

### Changing perceptions

By Col. Cliff Stargardt

Recently, I've been privy to a few episodes dealing with IMA promotions, conduct, and related things that give me the impression a few of us fall short of expectations now and again. So I think it's important to re-cage perceptions and expectations for all of us.



As Citizen Airmen we live and operate in a world that is nuanced from the active duty. Most of us are engineers, airline pilots, police officers, stay-at-home moms, or some other civilian profession all year, except for the 4-6 weeks we come on duty to serve our country. Others of us serve in uniform for organizations who want our full-time help. But none of us are in the active-duty Air Force any longer. We all left that force for some reason, but felt compelled to continue to serve in a different capacity. As Citizen Airmen we are now military members who some don't understand, a few don't appreciate, and one or two may just not like.

However, that's not the majority. Most of the time I hear things like "I need my IMAs" or "I can't do my mission without the Reserve." As a Total Force we have all realized we have more mission and responsibilities than we do people. So whenever an active-duty person tells me they don't need their IMAs, I simply say, "So that means you have all the manpower you need to do your job?" I have yet to have someone tell me that's the case. What this says to me, though, is that some supervisors don't feel the juice is worth the squeeze of managing an IMA or three because she's not getting added value. Perhaps that's a perception problem, or maybe it's the truth. If we're not meeting the standards of conduct and job performance set by the active duty, we're reinforcing that perception. You have the power to change this.

Here's my challenge to you: think about what you are doing to add value to your active-duty organization. You may not have the opportunity or availability to perform duty beyond your 24 or 36 duty days per year, that's OK. However, we ought to be killin' it for the short period we are there. Figure out a way to make yourself indispensable. Get so good at your job that your organization wants five more IMAs just like you and will do whatever it takes to keep you around. If you get to that point, as so many of you have already, then when it comes time for OPRs and EPRs, promotions, and recommendations for school and courses, you won't be wondering why your leadership's recommendations aren't stellar. Make your leadership see and understand what you bring to the organization; the rest will take care of itself.



### IMA leads global peacekeeper training

By Master Sgt. Timm Huffman

Col. Carl Magnusson is a member of the profession of arms. But during a recent multinational exercise, he helped shape the next generation of the profession of peace.

Alongside his Mongolian Armed Forces counterpart, Col. L. Gansalem, Magnusson served as co-director for Khaan Quest 2016, held in the Mongolian capital city of Ulaanbaatar and at the nearby Five Hills Training Area, May 22 – June 4.

Magnusson is an Air Force Reserve Individual Mobilization Augmentee assigned as the director of PACOM's Joint Exercise Control Group. As a Reservist, it is his job to support PACOM exercises, such as Khaan Quest, in key leadership roles.

The U.S. Pacific Command-sponsored exercise was the capstone in a series of trainings and involved about 45 peacekeeper instructors-in-training and 1,500 new peacekeepers from more than 40 countries. Before training commenced, the participants gathered for an opening ceremony presided over by Mongolian President Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj and PACOM Commander Admiral Harry Harris.

"During this exercise, multinational forces will work to enhance interoperability and develop common tactics," said Harris. "All of this will ultimately enhance our collective effectiveness to support global peacekeeping operations."

Khaan Quest has been held each year since 2003 as part of the Global Peace Operations Initiative. GPOI is a U.S. Government-funded security assistance program intended to enhance international capacity to effectively conduct U.N. and regional peace support operations by building partner country capabilities to train and sustain peacekeeping proficiencies; increasing the number of capable military troops and formed police units available for deployment; and facilitating the preparation, logistical support, and deployment of military units and peace support operations.

In addition to U.S. and Mongolian Armed Forces, a number of other countries were invited to participate, including Bangladesh, Cambodia, Peoples Republic of China, Fiji, Indonesia, India, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tonga, Vietnam, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Tajikistan, Jordan, Pakistan, Bosnia Herzegovina, Romania, Serbia, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Peru, Uruguay, Australia, Canada, France, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Poland, the United Kingdom, and Russia (as an Observer). With so many countries represented, all training was conducted in English and students were expected to have a rudimentary understanding of the language.

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## 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](#)
- [Detachment Directory](#)
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- [Travel Companion for IRs](#)
- [Wingman Toolkit](#)
- [MyPers](#)
- [AROWS-R](#)
- [Defense Travel System](#)

## Connect with HQ RIO

Email | [arpc.det1.rio@us.af.mil](mailto:arpc.det1.rio@us.af.mil)

[www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/home/hqrio.aspx](http://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/home/hqrio.aspx)



[www.facebook.com/HQRIO](http://www.facebook.com/HQRIO)



[www.Twitter.com/HQRIO](http://www.Twitter.com/HQRIO)



[www.youtube.com/HeadquartersRIO](http://www.youtube.com/HeadquartersRIO)

## News briefs

### SNCO Leadership Course for IMAs, Aug. 20-21

SNCO IMAs can jump start their careers by attending a two-day AFRC SNCO Leadership Course (SNCOLC) being held at Buckley AFB, CO, Aug. 20-21.

This course is centrally funded and formal school requests must be submitted to the member's servicing HQ RIO detachment no later than July 1.

#### Enrolment:

- The member must contact MSgt Andrew Sandoval, HQ RIO Integration Cell, to inform him of their intent to attend - [andrew.sandoval@us.af.mil](mailto:andrew.sandoval@us.af.mil)
- Review the formal school request process on myPers - [https://gum-crm.csd.disa.mil/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/25537/p/16\\_18/c/834](https://gum-crm.csd.disa.mil/app/answers/detail/a_id/25537/p/16_18/c/834) - and provide the required forms and documents to your servicing HQ RIO Detachment
- Member's readiness status must be "Green-to-Go"
- Once eligibility and funding are verified, a TLN will be issued and the member must request school tour orders in AROWS-R

While SNCOLC is not required PME, it is strongly encouraged that all SNCOs attend, as it enhances leadership skills and gives members a competitive edge when meeting boards and applying for job vacancies.

Apply early, as there are 20 class seats available on a first-come, first-served basis. General questions may be directed to the IMA's servicing HQ RIO detachment. Contact information can be found on the HQ RIO website ([www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/home/hqrio.aspx](http://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/home/hqrio.aspx)), under the HQ RIO Directory link.

### Deadlines approaching for three annual awards

The suspense dates for submitting nomination packages for the following awards are fast approaching.

- **Lance P. Sijan U.S. Air Force Leadership Award | Suspense—June 24:** The Lance P. Sijan U.S. Air Force Leadership Award is named in honor of the late Capt Lance P. Sijan, an Air Force Academy graduate and combat pilot, who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his intrepidity while evading capture by the North Vietnamese and during his subsequent captivity as a Prisoner of War. The award recognizes the accomplishments of officers and enlisted leaders who demonstrate the highest qualities of leadership in the performance of their duties and the conduct of their lives. Posthumous nominations are not eligible.
- **The Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy | Suspense—June 24:** The Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy is awarded annually to a living American for significant public service of enduring value to aviation in the United States.
- **GEICO Military Service Awards | Suspense—July 8:** The GEICO Military Service Awards annually recognize enlisted Active Duty, Reserve, or National Guard members from all military service branches for contributions to military or private-sector communities in any of the following three categories:
  - Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention
  - Fire Safety and Fire Prevention
  - Traffic Safety and Accident Prevention

Nominations require active duty unit endorsement and must be submitted through the servicing HQ RIO Detachment. For full details on these awards and the submission process, visit [www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/home/hqrio/IRawardsboardsandcourses.aspx](http://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/home/hqrio/IRawardsboardsandcourses.aspx).

## Did you know? | Tips for the Individual Reservist

Did you know there is a new myPers page just for Individual Reservists?

The page can be accessed by logging into [myPers](#) and selecting the "Air Force Reserve Individual Reservist Program" link under the "I would like to..." section of your myPers landing page.

The new site contains information on the medical line of duty process, reenlistments, assignments, and more. Members must use their common access card (CAC) to access this secure site.





## IMA author selected for 2016 CSAF reading list

By Master Sgt. Timm Huffman

The Air Force's top officer has selected a biography written by an Air Force Reservist for inclusion on the Chief of Staff Reading List 2016.

At All Costs by Chief Master Sgt. Matt Proietti tells the life and death story of Medal of Honor recipient Chief Master Sgt. Richard L. "Dick" Etchberger. It's Proietti's first book and has a narrative fit for Hollywood.

Etchberger was a ground radar superintendent during the Vietnam War and was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in 2010, 42 years after he was killed in March 1968. He was shot while riding in a rescue helicopter following an overnight battle at a mountaintop in Laos, where he helped maintain a secret radar site that aided the U.S. bombing campaign in North Vietnam.

The CSAF Professional Reading Program was created in 1996 by General Ronald Fogleman to develop a common frame of reference among Air Force members -- officers, enlisted, and civilians -- to help every Airman become better, more effective advocates of air and space power. Each CSAF since then has enhanced and continued the Professional Reading Program. The current CSAF is Gen. Mark A. Welsh III. To view the CSAF Reading List 2016, visit:

<http://static.dma.mil/usaf/csafreadinglist/>

Proietti, who is an Individual Mobilization Augmentee, began his journey to write *At All Costs* in 2008 while he was filling in as chief of the Air Force news team in Washington, D.C. The staff heard rumblings that Etchberger might be nominated for the Medal of Honor. He asked his team of junior writers if anyone was interested in researching and preparing an article on the Vietnam War hero. Knowing their supervisor was a history buff, they suggested he take it on himself.

As Proietti began learning more about Etchberger, he became intrigued with the life and career of the man who was credited with saving the lives of two fellow Airmen during the battle for Lima Site 85, one of dozens of dirt airstrips maintained by the CIA as part of its Air America network.

He started his research by traveling to Hamburg, Pennsylvania, Etchberger's hometown. It was there that he met high school friends and family members of the Airman. What he learned was that the future Medal of Honor recipient led a life focused on helping others long before his actions that earned him the nation's highest honor for military valor.

"I got really excited about the story, and I knew one [article] just wouldn't be enough," he said.

From his initial research, Proietti crafted a three-part series on his own time after his Washington duty orders ended. He would have been done with the story at that point except Cory Etchberger, one of the late chief's three sons, reached out to him to ask if he was interested in working with him to write a book about his father. Cory said he contacted Proietti after reading his articles.

"Lots of people have written articles about Dad, but Matt is the only one who got every detail right," he said.

Cory Etchberger, a 25-year veteran of the college lectern, started work on the book in 2006 and had done research, gathered a contact list and developed an outline. However, because he lacked a strong writing background, he knew he would need some help. He talked to his brother, Richard, and they agreed that Proietti was the man for the job.

Despite his rookie status as an author, Proietti had plenty of writing chops to qualify him for the job. He is a 31-year veteran of the Public Affairs career field who has won the Department of Defense's coveted Thomas Jefferson Award for communications four times. He began

writing in grade school, and when the Air Force gave him the opportunity to write professionally, he couldn't believe it.

"Not a week goes by that I'm not thankful to the Air Force for giving me the opportunity to write," said Proietti.

After transition to the Air Force Reserve in 1988, he spent a decade working as a community newspaper editor in Southern California. Since becoming a traditional reservist, and later an IMA, Proietti has served in a variety of roles, writing, editing and mentoring young writers. Until recently he was the reserve assistant to the Public Affairs career field manager at the Pentagon. He is now assigned to 3rd Combat Camera Squadron at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland in Texas and on extended active duty as Public Affairs manager for the Air Force Reserve Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program.

He said his role as a chief master sergeant gave Proietti a unique understanding of the responsibilities Etchberger would have had as an enlisted leader.

Proietti's first met Cory in 2009 at his then-home in Switzerland. They went through his father's old service records and what unfolded, as the GI interpreted them for the late chief's son, was a clearer picture of the career of an outstanding Airman. The biographer said he became fascinated by the narrative because so many Medal of Honor stories are about young Airmen who made a split decision to do something heroic, while the story of Dick Etchberger revealed the full career of a man who lived the Air Force core values, was a good wingman, and was loved and respected by superiors and subordinates alike.

Two years after Proietti's research began, President Obama approved the Medal of Honor for Etchberger, presenting it to his sons during a White House ceremony Sept. 21, 2010. (Ceremony:

[https://youtu.be/HrQCVWWT\\_HQ](https://youtu.be/HrQCVWWT_HQ))

The initial plan was for Proietti and Cory to co-write the book, but as the project progressed, they decided it would be best for the Air Force writer to take over the pen. He spent the next several years doing research, spending hours at the Lyndon B. Johnson presidential library in Austin, Texas, and interviewing and writing letters with Etchberger's former supervisors and the men whose lives he saved, including retired Tech. Sgt. John G. Daniel of La Junta, Colorado.

"He should have a 55-gallon drum full of medals. I wouldn't be alive without him," said Daniel.

In the hours preceding his death, Etchberger defended the Lima Site 85 radar camp against an attack from North Vietnamese special forces. Etchberger used a handheld radio to call for a rescue and air strikes. According to Daniel, they basically had to call air strikes in on themselves, figuring they were dead men anyway.

Etchberger, Daniel and Capt. Stan Sliz survived the night by returning small arms fire and exchanging grenades with the enemy. When the light of day finally brought a CIA rescue chopper, Etchberger repeatedly exposed himself to heavy fire while helping Daniel and Sliz, both of whom had suffered serious injuries, onto an Air America rescue helicopter. Daniel lost

consciousness as soon as he was aboard.

After ensuring his men were safely loaded, Etchberger joined them. As the helicopter peeled away, an enemy round pierced the floor and hit Etchberger, resulting in serious internal injuries and bleeding. He died by the time the aircraft reached safety.

Daniel, who was unconscious until the next day, was confused by the news of Etchberger's death.

"It didn't make sense to me. He was the only one who wasn't injured (that night). I thought, 'what the hell?'" said Daniel. "He told me, 'I'll be right up. I'll see you in a minute.'"

Proietti, who traveled on military business a good deal over the last five years, said he would work on the story everywhere he went. The biography was written on airplanes, in hotel rooms and on weekends at his home in the hills outside of Sacramento, California.

Finally, on December 1, 2014, Proietti said he officially finished writing and began proof reading. The book went to press in early 2015; 5,000 copies paid for by the Etchberger Foundation, which will receive half the profits. The foundation will use the proceeds to educate others about the life and sacrifice of its namesake, provide leadership and service awards to ROTC students, and to assist Air Force families in financial need.





## ARPC gains new commander

By Tech. Sgt. Rob Hazelett

**BUCKLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Colo.** -- Col. Ellen M. Moore took command of the Air Reserve Personnel Center, here, May 26, 2016.

Moore became the 35th commander when she assumed command in a ceremony officiated by Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson, chief of the Air Force Reserve and commander of the Air Force Reserve Command.

Before conducting the assumption, Jackson addressed those in attendance, specifically the members of ARPC. "You are always looking for a better way to do business and take care of our Airmen. That is the part of innovation that our Air Force needs, that is the part of bold leadership that our Air Force needs, and that is exactly the part I want to say thank you to our ARPC team," he said. "I'm going to provide you with exactly the type of leader that is going to make you successful and continue to take it to the next level. I know you'll keep up the great work with your new leader."

Moore is the former Director of Manpower, Personnel and Services, Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, Robins Air Force Base, Ga. She was commissioned in 1987 through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps program at The Ohio State University where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and has a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Oklahoma.

Moore concluded the ceremony by saying, "As we continue to progress forward ... my priority is to always consider the effects on our customers before we make any changes. I always want to balance the needs of the men and women here at ARPC with the needs of our 1.3 million customers world-wide.



In an assumption of command ceremony held at the Air Reserve Personnel Center, May 26, Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson, Chief of Air Force Reserve, handed command of the center to Col. Ellen M. Moore.

### (Peacekeeper | Continued from page 1)

Despite communication barriers, Magnusson said the peacekeepers forged ahead diligently in order to improve their core competencies for future U.N. peacekeeping missions. The training put the attendees through 11 training lanes designed to expose members to what they would face in a real-world peace support operation, including patrolling, cordon and search, IED- and mine-awareness, and building relationships with local communities through healthcare and public service projects.

Pablo Pintos, a GPOI subject matter expert, said the exercise was a great experience for the new peacekeepers and exposed them to a variety of scenarios.

"It's really good to work in a multinational environment... and it is very rewarding because we know that this training will contribute to the safety of the soldiers when they're deployed in real peacekeeping operations," he said.

Following a cordon and search exercise, Nepalese Army Captain "KC" echoed Pintos' sentiment, saying he believes the trainings he and his platoon received on the protection of civilians, rules of engagement and code of conduct will be "very fruitful on our deployment in U.N. missions."

"We were taught about the peacekeeping scenarios," he added. "We were given... [realistic] scenarios... and we knew how to react under those scenarios... and in upcoming days when we are going to deploy in U.N. missions, we can face those types of difficulties."

Mongolia has extensive experience in U.N. and other international peacekeeping operations, having deployed its forces for operations in South Sudan, Darfur (Sudan), Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Balkans, as well as to international coalition operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Exercises like Khaan Quest set the stage for all countries to learn from one another's experiences.

For Magnusson, the exercise helped enhance his understanding of world affairs. As an Airman who came up through the Cold War, sleeping inside a ger (a traditional Mongolian structure, also called a yurt) in a country sandwiched between Russia and China, working with the Mongolians has helped him set aside his old perceptions about the region. He has seen how a former Soviet client state made a conscious decision to pursue democracy. The exercise, he said, showed him how thoroughly committed Mongolia is to peacekeeping operations on a global level and that their quest for interoperability with the U.S. can only lead to increased peace and stability in the region.

"It doesn't matter what color our camo is, we are all here to support the Mongolian capacity to train young peacekeepers," he said.

The opportunity to work at this sort of global-affairs level highlights why Magnusson made the move from KC-135 pilot in the Traditional Reserve to a non-flying role in the Individual Reserve several years ago. The IR, which is made up of IMAs (like Magnusson) and Participating Individual Ready Reservists, directly supports the active duty, Department of Defense, and other government agencies. It can offer reserve Airmen opportunities to gain experience at higher headquarters, joint and strategic levels.

When Magnusson transitioned, he said he was ready to think bigger, get out of his comfort zone, and take his Air Force career up a notch, so he began looking for an IMA billet that would help him accomplish those goals. He found a position with PACOM and has since supported a number of global exercises in key leadership roles.

Magnusson's duties in these lead roles have exposed him to situations and scenarios he wouldn't have otherwise encountered. His participation in Khaan Quest 2016 even gave him the opportunity to deliver the mission brief to the Mongolian president.

The brief, which was scheduled for senior staff, didn't include any indication that the Mongolian head of state would attend. Magnusson said he had a bit of an adrenaline moment when he got the news that he'd be briefing President Elbegdorj. He added that the sovereign was pleasant and interested in the materials. Also in attendance was Harris and the U.S. Ambassador to Mongolia, Jennifer Zidahl Galt.

In addition to expanding his understanding of global relations, the exercise was also an opportunity for the IMA to gain a broader cultural perspective. Sharing a ger with his Mongolian counterparts gave him insight into his host's culture and nightly cultural exchange events set up by the Mongolians allowed him to experience traditions of other nations in attendance.

The mission was also an opportunity for him to work closely with other U.S. services, including the Alaska National Guard, U.S. Army Pacific, U.S. Marines Forces Pacific and medical experts from the Navy's U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Magnusson stressed that these types of joint and multinational assignments are invaluable growth opportunities for Airmen, allowing them to be a part of a mission larger than their own and to see how they fit into the big picture.

"It was an honor and a privilege to take part, and this exercise was an example of how our Total Force efforts transcend services," he said. "From where I sat, we had personnel from the land components and medical experts from the maritime components, working with our international partners. It was quite a mix!"



## AF IMA paints depiction of AC-130 gunner

A new Air Force painting, created by Individual Mobilization Augmentee Maj. Warren Neary, was unveiled during a special ceremony at USSOCOM headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, May 23, commemorating the 25th anniversary of Desert Storm.

Gen. Raymond A. Thomas, III, left, U.S. Special Operations Command commander, and Maj. Gen. Richard S. "Beef" Haddad, Air Force Reserve Command vice commander, revealed the painting, which honors Citizen Airmen manning the 40mm Bofors gun aboard an AC-130 gunship during a mission over the "Highway of Death" in Kuwait during Desert Storm.

Neary is a member of the Air Force Art Program and is also an IMA historian at U.S. Space Command.



## Air Force changes utility allowance for privatized housing residents

*By Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs*

**WASHINGTON (AFNS)** — The Air Force revised its utility allowance policy May 18 to ensure quality on-base housing for military families and continue to cover utility costs for the average energy consumer.

For new tenants, the revised policy for the majority of residents will now be calculated using monthly meter readings instead of a five-year average with a 10-percent buffer the previous policy used. Current occupants will remain grandfathered in the old system for one year.

Under the former policy, military privatized housing projects spent hundreds of thousands of dollars annually on rebates that went to residents whose actual energy consumption rates were above average, said Jennifer Miller, the deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force for installations.

This meant, Air Force-wide, privatized housing income went toward above-average rebates each year diverting funds from key program features, like maintenance support, housing modernization and community amenities.

Under the new policy, the utility allowance will still be determined by the average consumption rates of homes assembled in "like-type" groups at every installation, and will still be carved out of basic allowance for housing (BAH). The new policy still supports the rebate system. However, the rebates will only go to those users who fall

below the average user rate and a bill will be generated for users exceeding the average user rate.

The Air Force estimates 75 percent of residents will be within \$8 of the allowance.

"The new policy empowers residents in privatized housing to manage their energy consumption, much like their off-base counterparts, and rewards those who are more energy conscious," Miller said. "The intent has always been to promote energy conservation by rewarding residents with less-than-average energy consumption through rebates. The new policy allows the Air Force to better meet that intent."

Live billing is when a resident has an identified utility allowance and pays for their utilities to either the project owner or directly to a third-party utility company, depending on the project. Mock billing is when the resident has a proposed utility allowance and has a set period of time to acclimate to the new process of paying directly for the utilities, but does not yet actually pay for their utilities until live billing starts.

Implementation of the new policy will occur in stages with bases already in live-billing status starting first. Bases not yet in live billing will first enter into a mock-billing cycle, allowing residents the opportunity to assess their energy consumption, understand the billing system, and alter routines if they choose.

The housing privatization program uses private sector financing and expertise to provide

necessary housing faster and more efficiently than traditional military construction processes. With more than \$8 billion invested by both the private sector and government contributions, project owners rely solely on BAH income to support all construction, renovation, and maintenance and operation costs for the duration of each 50-year development



agreement.

"Everything we do has a ripple effect," said Robert Moriarty, the director of Air Force Civil Engineer Center's Installations Directorate. "The old policy rewarded higher-than-average utility use and that wasn't sustainable because it diverted funds from long-term maintenance and repair or replacement of the homes."

The multi-decade housing deals must remain financially stable for the Air Force to continue providing quality housing for present and future generations of Airmen, Moriarty said.

For more information on the Air Force's Housing Privatization Program, visit <http://www.housing.af.mil/home/>.



# “Just let me serve the country that has given me everything”

By Master Sgt. Timm Huffman

When Staff Sgt. Olorunyomi Martins talks about the debt of gratitude he owes to his adoptive country, one can't help believing the American Dream is alive and well.

A native of southwest Nigeria, Martins arrived at John F. Kennedy International Airport in 2003 with \$750 in his pocket. He felt like a rich man.

That money and a passion for higher education (the only two things his mother had to give him), along with a student visa, were all he had. Despite this, Martins knew he had finally arrived in the land of opportunity.

“I believed America was a place where you could make it,” said Martins.

Growing up in Nigeria was a sharp contrast to the life he would find in the U.S. Access to clean water was a half-mile walk, electricity was not reliable and sports equipment was minimal. Martins said that in his culture, the order of respect is God, Mother, Church, so when his mother told him the only gift she had for him was education, he took that as gospel, and went with her instinct to pursue education in America.

“I always studied very, very hard and never lost sight of what the bigger world had to offer,” said Martins, who already had a bachelor's degree in geography before leaving for America. “I wanted to make a difference.”

Despite his degree in geography, Martins said that as he tried to figure out how to get from JFK to his school in Conroe, Texas, he had no concept of how far he would have to travel before arriving at his university. After buying his bus ticket, he spent the next four days traveling the 1,800 miles to his new home.

After stepping off the bus in Texas, he began his business studies. He only stayed for one semester, however, before a 2004 trip to visit friends in Maryland turned into a relocation. During the ensuing years, Martins charted a course that developed into a desire to serve in the U.S. Air Force Reserve.

Martins recalled that as a young boy, his mother would tell him that bank managers, with their crisp suits and ties, were respectable men. That left an impression on Martins and the future Airman made it his goal to become one. After returning to the eastern seaboard, he began managing a pizza joint in order to gain the two years of required management, customer service and money-handling experience required for the banking job. He resumed his business studies via a distance learning program and would soon graduate with his degree in business administration. Through hard work and determination Martins achieved his dream job, earned his degree and was doing well financially.

Despite his self-made success, he felt something was missing. He had a needed to give back to the country that had given him so many opportunities. He began thinking about serving in the U.S. military.

Even though he grew up in the years following Nigeria's civil war, Martins always had an interest in military service. He and his brother would watch American war movies and idolize the heroic characters. The pair even participated in the Boy Scouts – an opportunity to wear a uniform and feel big and strong like the American G.I.s in the movies. And, like bank managers, military service was something his mother

always admired.

So, in 2009 at age 33, Martins enlisted in the Air Force Reserve as a Port Dawg with the 46<sup>th</sup> Aerial Port Squadron out of Dover Air Force Base, Delaware. He attended basic training and eventually earned his citizenship, his “golden ticket to a better life.” In 2012 he deployed with his unit to Southeast Asia.

After returning from that deployment, Martins forged ahead in his civilian career and education. He enrolled in a master's program to earn an advanced degree in business administration. He also landed a job at a prestigious investment firm. Life was good, but there's always room for improvement.

In 2014 Martins felt a change to his military life was in order and began the process of transitioning from Traditional Reservist aerial porter into the Individual Mobilization Augmentee program as a paralegal at Dover's active-duty legal office. According to his supervisor, Master Sgt. Michelle L. Palmer, he officially joined her team in May 2015, following his completion of technical training.

Palmer said that her office has a great relationship with their IMAs, including Martins. “They give us a tremendous amount of support and they are an amazing part of our legal office team.” Not even a year into his new assignment, Martins has already made an impact. Earlier this spring he began supporting on 90-day orders, augmenting the legal team during a critical manning shortage. His primary duties include providing administrative and paralegal support to the Legal Assistance and Preventative Law programs, drafting legal reviews for things such as fundraisers and sponsorship agreements, and investigating and processing claims. Palmer said that everything she gives him to work on, he tackles with enthusiasm.

“Staff Sgt. Martins is an amazing [non-commissioned officer] and remarkable person!” said Palmer. “He has an amazing personality and his smile and positive attitude are completely infectious.” The paralegal IMA said he enjoys many aspects of his new career field, including the flexibility and autonomy that come with doing independent research on his cases. The work is an opportunity for him to better understand the Air Force, the law and himself.

He likes these same aspects of being an IMA. He said that being proactive, reaching out and asking questions have been key to his success in the program. He also enjoys the challenge of managing his own career and the opportunities the program gives him to be competitive with himself and others. “Being an IMA is an individual thing and your performance will speak for itself,” he said. “Doing the best I can drives me as an IMA.”

He also enjoys the increased flexibility his new reserve status brings to his service. It provides him more latitude in his civilian pursuits, which now include enrollment in a doctoral program.

The ability to support the active duty also ranks high on Martins' list of things he enjoys about the Individual Reserve. The IR, which is made up of IMAs (like Martins) and Participating Individual Ready Reservists (who participate for points towards retirement only), supports more than 50 active duty and government agencies around the world. He said he enjoys the close working relationship, the willingness of his unit to share knowledge, and the broader perspective he has gained from working alongside the active component.

According to the Headquarters Individual Reservist Readiness and Integration Organization, HQ RIO for short, there are many opportunities for Airmen to transition to the Individual Reserve, especially in the legal field. Program information, position vacancies and instructions on how to apply are all available on the HQ RIO website at [www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/home/hqrio.aspx](http://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/home/hqrio.aspx).

For Martins, who went from near-penniless immigrant to home-owning, well-employed, U.S. citizen, his service comes down to giving back to his country.

“This country has given me so much; I am very grateful,” he said. “[I want to] do everything in my capacity, everything I can, to serve.”

