

Adapting to and surviving



“The times they are a-changin.”

Famous Vietnam War-era singer Bob Dylan wrote a little ditty in 1964, expressing what he felt was a song for the people and the times. Much changed for America throughout the 1960s and 70s. And while the country was turned upside down and flipped around, it seemed to continue its march into history, even to its 200th birthday.

What can one learn from history such as this? If it was just one thing, maybe that change, while sometimes a painful process, is something needed. And more importantly – change is something that should be embraced rather than feared.

The more than 1,400 members of the 302nd Airlift Wing will add another definition to the term ‘change’ soon enough. Beginning this fall, change, viewed by some as one of the most significant points in history for the wing, is coming to southern Colorado. It’s at this time that Active Duty members of the C-130 maintenance and flying communities will join with their Air Force Reserve family at Peterson to form one of Air Force Reserve Command’s newly-associated units.

In development since 2005, Active Duty Airmen will associate with the 302nd AW to perform the mission of tactical airlift. The initial cadre of leadership will arrive during the third quarter of 2009, creating a basic structural make up for the Active Duty squadron, slated to be designated later this year. This change in the wing’s structure will have a direct impact on maintenance and operations

within the wing, a fact not lost upon Col. Jay Pittman, commander of the 302nd AW.

“Total Force Integration is a priority for the Air Force and I agree with the concept behind it ... TFI is about efficiencies,” Colonel Pittman said. “AFRC owns the aircraft at certain locations and Air Mobility Command has a pressing need for access to aircraft. AMC is going to bring a cadre of aircrew and maintainers to our location to join our family. They will fly and maintain the aircraft along side our Reserve Airmen in order to ensure their combat readiness, both as aircrew and maintainers, to support either peacetime or wartime commitments. We need a greater force available to help support that requirement. So that’s what we’re going to do.”

Associating not new to AF Reserve

The association of Active Duty Airmen with their AF Reserve counterparts is nothing new. Beginning in 1973, the Air Force Reserve’s 445th Tactical Airlift Wing was reactivated after a two-year hiatus from operational status. The wing was given the additional designation of “associate” at the end of its title as it combined with the Active Duty Air Force’s 63rd TAW, each based at the now-defunct Norton Air Force Base in California. While each wing belonged to separate organizations and reported to separate commands, both used the same C-141 Starlifter cargo aircraft to get the job of strategic airlift done. Fast forwarding to today, multiple units throughout the entire Total Force spectrum, including the Air National Guard, have gone the way of “associating.” Even AF Reserve and ANG units have combined, most notably at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, N.Y.

For more than 40 years, the Air Force has been moving steadily from the concept of associating units to its implementation. But why associate?

“Fiscal imperatives now drive an accelerated rate of association,” wrote AFRC commander, Lt. Gen. Charles Stenner, Jr., in an editorial on association initiatives in the Air Force. The general’s

critique of associating mirrors the Air Force’s current financial situation, but equally reflects the growing age of the service’s fleet of aircraft and the need to address it. In the C-130 community alone, the continued attrition rate of aircraft means strategic decisions are being made by top brass, ensuring every Airman, whether they fly or not, continues to receive the best training on the best airframes. And when called upon, take that training into combat.

The general continued his editorial, advocating for unit associations while stressing that Reserve organizations should team up with their Active Duty counterparts, all the while ensuring the AF Reserve maintains its unique identity.

“Units within each relationship must be able to retain their unique and separate identity – the unit is a source of pride for members of each component, and can be a powerful source of motivation in accomplishing a mission,” the general wrote. “If unit identity is compromised, so too will the motivation to perform the mission, and the motivation to serve.”

TFI brought to life

Sealing the case for associating units came in 1997 as the Department of Defense released the year’s Quadrennial Defense Review. Out of the 1997 QDR came the term ‘Total Force Integration,’ identifying that each military service branch is capable of blending their units with Reserve or National Guard forces to augment any mission. Embracing this stance, the Air Force adopted early measures for securing TFI strategies that would eventually lead to the mission associations taking place today. Ultimately, the Air Force sees the association of its missions as the catalyst for producing greater and more efficient combat capabilities.

“We have to look at the bigger picture,” Colonel Pittman said. “The Air Force has an urgent need to recapitalize. We need to embrace the TFI concept. The country has a requirement to make better use of what’s available and we’re part of that equation.”

CHANGE

Wing’s transition to active associate C-130 unit most significant structural change since transition from 901st Tactical Air Group

by Tech. Sgt. Daniel Butterfield
Tech. Sgt. David D. Morton
Senior Airman Stephen Collier

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From 'Big AF' to the wing

While the Air Force as a whole continues forward in associating wings, the effects on the 302nd AW and its day-to-day operations won't be seen overnight. Working with an initial cadre, the Airmen and their AF Reserve counterparts will over time beddown in existing facilities.

"AMC is bringing to the table operators and maintainers, however, they're not bringing logistics, civil engineers or communication technicians. We will have to work our way through (the association). There is no handbook to make this successful," Colonel Pittman explained. Do I think TFI is going to have any negative impact on the wing? No. But is there going to be an increased workload? In some areas, there certainly will be."

Associate benchmark

Within 22nd Air Force, the 440th AW at Pope AFB, N.C., is the only C-130 wing that resembles an association construct like the 302nd AW is going through. When AFRC announced the 440th AW would become an associate wing, it was also affected by the 2005 base realignment and closure process, sending the wing's aircraft and people from then-General Mitchell Air Reserve Station in Milwaukee, Wis., to Pope AFB. Because of this special situation, Colonel Pittman said the 440th AW is difficult to compare

with Peterson's active association.

"Pope is really the only organization where 22nd AF has any experience with (associating C-130s) and they have a laundry list of unique challenges," Colonel Pittman said. "We're lucky in that we won't have those challenges here."

Colonel Pittman explained the active duty members may be deployed almost year round, with crews rotating out of Peterson on a continual basis. At Pope, Active Duty members, according to the colonel, take two aircraft, aircrew and maintainers on a deployment. While aircrews and maintainers may redeploy and rotate with others, the aircraft remain in the theater of operations. If the 302nd AW mirrored Pope's situation, two C-130Hs would be deployed with the Active Duty, leaving just 10 aircraft for both Reserve and Active Duty aircrews and maintainers to train on.

"It's going to be a change in how we do business," said Colonel Pittman.

"Having sole access to the aircraft is just something we're going to have to adjust to. We'll do everything we can to ensure these Airmen are combat ready, deployable and the best assets they can be to support AMC requirements. They'll be a part of our family, not outsiders or unwelcome guests. Active Duty will be our family members and I have no doubt this will be a very successful association."

A return on investment

Members of the wing can expect some return on bedding down their Active Duty counterparts.

The Active Duty's availability as a '24 hour a day, seven days a week force' is attractive when it comes to needing immediate, critical maintenance performed on an aircraft due to a mission tasking. And when it comes to moving around the world in support of C-130 operations, Active Duty Airmen benefit from the knowledge of how other units around the globe perform the mission of tactical airlift.

Reservists also bring several attributes to the mission as well, balancing the benefits of their Active Duty counterparts. On average, the AF Reservist has more than 15 years of experience performing their mission. Coupled with being stationed at the same base over a longer period of time, Reservists also bring a vast amount of continuity to their specific job, benefiting the Air Force as a whole. This is especially important when supporting deployments overseas, specifically in Southwest Asia.

"I think there is a good possibility we will be a benchmark active associate wing in the C-130 community within 22nd AF," Colonel Pittman said. "Not only will we be successful, but I intend to create a guidebook to hand to other wings for them to follow in our footsteps in the not-so-distant future. Why should they reinvent the wheel that we have perfected? We'll share what we learn."

Ops ready to make history

The 302nd AW continues to adapt and evolve to meet growing changes within the Air Force as it welcomes the new squadron to the wing. The difference is the new airlift squadron, yet to be designated with a number, will be comprised of Active Duty personnel as part of the active association. But one thing not changing is the new squadron will perform the same tactical airlift duties as the 731st Airlift Squadron.

"We're excited at the opportunity to play a leading role in the associate wing concept," said Lt. Col. Courtney Arnold, 731st AS commander. "Our goals are to maintain our Reserve culture

THE BOTTOMLINE

What you need to know about active duty joining the wing:

WHAT: Active duty Airmen associate with the 302nd Airlift Wing

WHEN: Starting the fall of this year, continuing through 2012

WHERE: Active duty will be located in operations and maintenance

WHY: While there are many reasons to associate, it saves money and increases the wing's efficiency.

Can you tell which of these C-130s is Active Duty or Air Force Reserve?

while providing our new sister squadron with all the tools and opportunities to become a premier tactical airlift squadron. The squadron's air reserve technician cadre is working hard to ensure the process will be as smooth and transparent as possible.

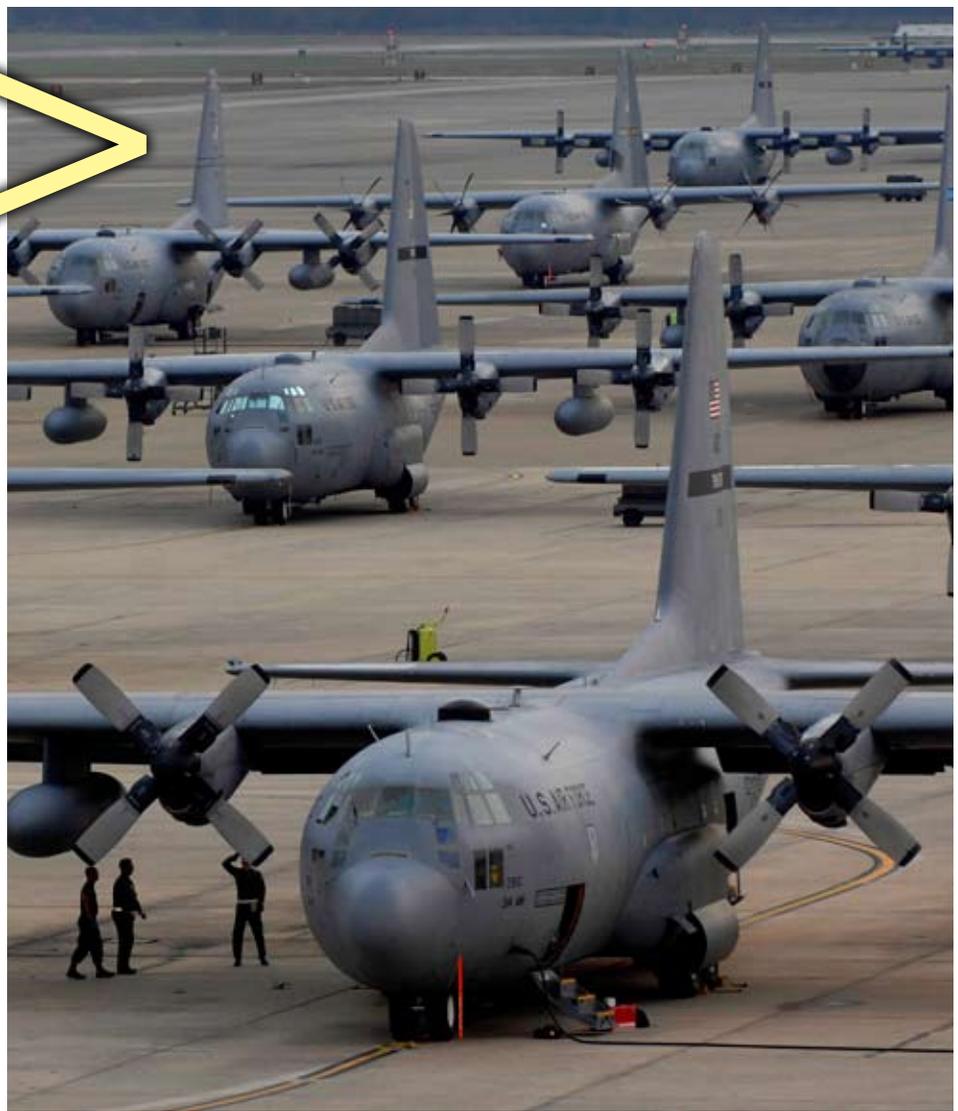
"The 731st AS is working with the 302nd AW and incoming Active Duty leadership now in order to help contribute to building the new squadron's foundation and processes," the colonel continued. "The more we do now to make that possible, the faster our new squadron can commit its resources to the 302nd AW mission."

Lt. Col. Carlos Ortiz, who currently serves as the director of operations for the 53rd AS at Little Rock AFB, Ark., will be charged with standing up and leading the new Active Duty squadron. Colonel Ortiz, a native of New Mexico, is already familiar with the 731st AS and how things are done within the unit.

"I'm excited to have the opportunity to work with the 731st AS again and build the new active associate squadron, and of course, be near the area where I grew up," said Colonel Ortiz. "I've had the opportunity to work and fly with members of the 731st AS from 1996 to 1997 as the wing tactics officer at Ramstein Air Base (Germany) when they deployed as part of the 38th AS (Delta Squadron) in support of the Bosnia airlift missions. I was impressed back then and again recently when I went out to Colorado Springs at the beginning of January for the site activation task force. I can't wait to get there this summer."

Both squadron commanders agreed Active Duty and Reserve members are ready to match their talents and skills, beginning a new chapter of meeting mission requirements.

"In spite of the many challenges this concept entails, all of our squadron



personnel are ready for the chance to mentor and instruct their younger, Active Duty counterparts," Colonel Arnold said. "The 731st AS is also looking forward to learning from them as we know Active Duty will bring many positives to the table. I don't think the Active Duty could have picked a better person to be in charge of the new squadron than Colonel Ortiz. From day one, his goals have matched ours perfectly. I'm confident we have the people in place for both units to make this work well."

Working together and embracing a new concept between the Active Duty and AF Reserve is an ongoing theme throughout the Air Force and implementing the new procedures between the two squadrons will take time. However, everything seems to be on track for a successful merger.

"The bottom line for me as a Reserve member with the same squadron for 25 years is that I've seen a lot of 'us' and

'them' when referring to the differences between Active Duty and the AF Reserve," Sergeant Carey said. "I've done both and now we'll be working together. I think this is an exciting concept for both of us and a lot of new friendships will be developed. There won't be any more 'us' and 'them.' We'll be one big happy family and embrace the forthcoming change."

Ready to fix any situation

Maintenance is another group anticipating a large portion of the Active Duty personnel to Peterson. The influx of these Airmen brings a new set of challenges as well as opportunities for those currently serving in the 302nd Maintenance Group. One of those challenges during the wing's association is the concern over facility space. There are nearly 300

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Employer appreciation day planned for June

The June UTA is your chance to thank your boss for their support of your military career.

On Saturday, June 13, employers of Reservists will be treated to a mission briefing, tour of 302nd Airlift Wing facilities, an orientation flight on one of the wing's C-130s and lunch.

Fill out the form to the right and return it to Public Affairs no later than May 29. Forms can be dropped off at Bldg. 893, Room 138,, faxed to (719) 556-4214 or mailed to 302 AW/PA, 450 W. Hamilton Ave., Peterson AFB, CO, 80914. For more information, call Public Affairs at (719) 556-4117 or e-mail at 302aw.pa@peterson.af.mil.

302nd Airlift Wing Employer Appreciation Day

(Return to the Public Affairs office)

Employer information

Employer's full name _____
 Employer's title/position _____
 Company name _____
 Business address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Work phone _____
 Employer e-mail _____

Reservist information

Rank/name _____ Unit _____ Duty phone _____
 Home address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Mon-Fri E-mail _____@_____
 Home phone _____
 Civilian work phone _____
 Military position title _____
 Civilian position title _____
 Would you like to attend lunch? (check which applies) YES NO

Change, from 9 Airmen in maintenance and estimates show the group is in need of an additional 12,000 square feet. Add Active Duty personnel to the mix and things begin to get crowded.

But as plans to add new personnel to maintenance work stations were in the works, so were plans to deal with the overcrowding. According to Col. Mark Rodriguez, 302nd Maintenance Group commander, it's important to find a solution as efficient as possible with regards to financial and host command concerns for the Active Duty arrival.

Besides the addition of Active Duty personnel in already close quarters, maintenance has concerns with training and getting these Airmen up to speed with the unit's highly-trained Reservists.

The maintenance group will see more junior personnel than they have in the past. And to upgrade their training from three-level to five-level status for the C-130 community, junior enlisted Active Duty members must attend their technical school at Little Rock.

"All those Active Duty folks who require upgrade training will be going (on temporary duty) once they arrive or they're expected to go there en route. This could affect manning as Active Duty personnel shuffle back and forth from Little Rock until everyone

has the necessary qualifications that are important to the C-130 mission.

For members of the 302nd MXG, adding Active Duty personnel will give them some glimpses into the lives of the 24/7 Airmen.

"When we deploy, even though it may be for 60 days, it's still a snapshot. Talking to the maintenance chief at Seymour Johnson, they under-

stand they have a mission to do and if that takes working 12 hours a day, seven days straight for 30 days, that's what they will do," the colonel said.

It's difficult to see how the maintenance group will look years down the road, but Colonel Rodriguez does not see a decrease in the amount of personnel assigned to the AF Reserve side of the house. Maintenance is currently undermanned with several career field vacancies. "By the time this is all done, it's possible we may need more manpower. We have a certain number of vacancies needing to be filled, but as the association evolves, the exact maintenance needs are still unknown," he said.

'It's all about people'

When it comes down to it, at the center of all the change, there is one constant.

"It's all about people. It's people working with people," says Colonel Rodriguez. "That's why even in the worst situations or circumstances, you need the right people working with the right attitude to make the work happen."

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