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57th Wing leadership visits geographically separated units

by Senior Airman Josey Blades

Nellis AFB, Nev.

In October, Brig. Gen. Richard Goodman, 57th Wing commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Jason Trickey, 57th Wing command chief, visited three geographically separated units belonging to the USAF Weapons School.

The visit recognized Airmen who execute the 57th Wing's core mission of building innovative leaders in tactics, training and high-end warfighting to ensure worldwide combat air forces are prepared for future victories.

"We're going to keep producing the world's finest patches, instructors, loads and teams," said Goodman. "We're going to solve some of the most challenging tactical problems and eventually grow you into Air Force leaders."

Airmen from these GSUs went above and beyond by developing and synchronizing procedures, leading during integrated mission planning, and improving plans and sorties. Goodman took time to recognize some of these exemplary Airmen and coined them as a token of appreciation for their hard work and dedication.

The highlighted GSUs were the 29th, 315th and 340th Weapons Squadrons, which operate the C-130 Hercules, intercontinental ballistic missiles and the B-52 Stratofortress respectively.

"You have so much power to make a positive impact," said Goodman. "It would be dangerous to underestimate your influence."

Airmen under the 57th Wing and the U.S. Air Force Weapons School continue to strengthen relationships within the U.S. Air Force by building partnerships between different bases and executing their core mission: know, teach, replicate.

Housed at Nellis AFB, the USAFWS trains approximately 150 weapons officers and enlisted tacticians every six months to become experts and leaders who can effectively control and exploit air, space and cyberspace on behalf of the joint force.



Air Force photographs by Senior Airman Josey Blades

Brig. Gen. Richard Goodman, 57th Wing commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Jason Trickey, 57th Wing command chief, introduce themselves to 29th Weapons Squadron (WPS) instructors at Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., Oct. 19, 2023. The 29th WPS is a geographically separated unit that belongs to the United States Air Force Weapons School.



LEFT: Brig. Gen. Richard Goodman, left, 57th Wing commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Jason Trickey, 57th Wing command chief, introduce themselves to 29th Weapons Squadron students and instructors after an all-call at Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., Oct. 19, 2023. 57th Wing leadership visited GSUs like the 29th WPS in order to encourage their Airmen who fall under their leadership but that rarely get any facetime.



Brig. Gen. Richard Goodman, 57th Wing commander, left, coins Maj. Lionel Alford, 29th Weapons Squadron Weapons Instructor Course Instructor, at Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., Oct. 19, 2023. Alford accurately forecasted and secured 75 C-130J syllabus sorties with Air Mobility Command which provided predictable aircraft sourcing for the command's most limited asset.



Maj. Shawn Riley, 29th Weapons Squadron director of staff, left, shows Brig. Gen. Richard Goodman, 57th Wing commander, the current students enrolled in the Weapons School course during a tour at Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., Oct. 19, 2023. 57th Wing leadership visit Geographically Separated Units in order to encourage Airmen who fall under their command.



Staff Sgt. Peter Joice, 29th Weapons Squadron intel analyst, left, explains the significance of their patch wall to Chief Master Sgt. Jason Trickey, 57th Wing command chief, during a tour at Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., Oct. 19, 2023. The 29th WPS trains weapons officers and enlisted tacticians to become experts on C-130 Hercules aircraft.

Leadership lessons from my deathbed

by Lt. Col. Kera A. Rolsen

Eglin AFB, Fla.

On Aug. 15, 2022, I asked to relinquish command after only 15 months in the seat. My commander, having watched my health rapidly decline over the past few months, including losing large chunks of my hair, agreed.

Less than 24 hours later, I had a suspected cardiac event in the middle of my own staff meeting and was driven to the emergency room. This was my second trip to the ER that year. Three days later, I was pulled from my car by EMTs and hauled back to the ER after my entire endocrine systems decided to take the day off.

I laid in the ER bed and told the nurse I felt like I was dying. She scared the hell of me when she very calmly put a hand on my arm and said, "Honey, you are." The fact that I can sit here and write the lessons I learned from last year is the big spoiler — I lived. I relinquished command, gave up five organs, but I lived, and I learned.

I learned five important things from what is undeniably the worst year of my life: don't ignore your own health, the system doesn't care but people do, know when to set your ego aside for the mission, know when to set your ego aside for yourself, and the mission will go on without you.

"Pull up! Pull up! Pull up!"

Many U.S. Air Force aircraft are equipped with a voice system called Betty, that gives audio warnings meant to cue a pilot when they are ignoring all other indications. Many aviators can tell you of a time when Betty's timely "Pull up! Pull up! Pull up!" saved them and their aircraft from a sudden terrestrial halt.

Like our aircraft, the body gives its own warning signs. Some are subtle and some are not. Through late 2021 and early 2022, I'd been ill on and off. I was tired, I was run down and, I kept getting weird pains. But I was a relatively new commander, determined to bull through the pain and keep the team moving forward. In January, I had what the doctors suspected was a kidney infection from the location of the pain. I got some antibiotics and was determined to push on because the next week I was slated to brief Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. CQ Brown, Jr. I still recall walking out of my office on Friday and telling my director of operations, "I'm either briefing the CSAF or I'm gonna be in the ER." Fun fact: I ended up doing both.

"Pull up! Pull up! Pull up!" indeed.

I completed my briefing to the CSAF and a constellation of other general officers, still in pain but managed by timely doses of Motrin and Britney Spears for morale. What I didn't know was that as I stood there briefing the head of my service, I was very slowly bleeding out inside. As I packed to go home the next morning, the flight doctor called me to say the bloodwork they had pulled "showed anomalies" and I needed to get in ASAP. We set the next available appointment and all the imagery (MRIs, x-rays, mammograms, etc.) that I was scheduled for at the medical group's leisure were put in as an urgent issue and bumped up. It wasn't fast enough though because I collapsed at work a few days later before I could make it to my appointment. Even after diagnostic surgery confirmed I had a chronic illness that had already progressed to stage III, I was determined to white knuckle another year in command and ignore the blatant warning signs my body was giving me.

Like the heroes in a Greek tragedy, my hubris nearly killed me.

The system doesn't care, but people do

After my first surgery diagnosed me with stage III endometriosis, I was put on a course of medication meant to suppress the lesions the surgeon was unable or unwilling to remove due to proximity to vital organs. After only two months, that was deemed a failure, and we made the decision to try a strong and more risky medication. The plan was to essentially shut down various hormone production to allow the lesions to heal over, then restart them slowly. Yes, the human equivalent of "have you tried turning it off and back on again?" This was ultimately a failure as it caused "fun" side effects like hair loss, insomnia, chemical menopause, weight gain, and eventually a near catastrophic shut down of my pancreas and kidneys.

My specialist and I decided that the next step would be to remove the peskiest organs and see what happened next. He did acknowledge that I needed a robotically assisted procedure due to the complexity and severity of my case, something we couldn't do on my base. A referral was put in and a few weeks later I was matched to a clinic 90 miles away. Unfortunately, upon seeing my records, they declined to take my case due to the risks involved. I was a liability, and the system doesn't care about you. What's worse, when I asked for referral management to give me another doctor, they pushed it back to me to figure

out. Trying to find a surgeon, in this specialty, who can do a robotically assisted procedure when my body is a ticking timebomb and I'm recovering from the emotional turmoil of relinquishing command was not ideal.

The system doesn't care, but people do.

So, I did what any Millennial would do: I put out feelers on social media and crowd sourced it. Within a week I had the name of a doctor at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center willing to take my case. Working through the system to get orders to go up to Bethesda, Maryland, was rough but at every turn, there was a human willing to help me navigate the system and get help. Once I arrived for a consultation my doctor quickly diagnosed me as having moved up to stage IV. With organs binding to other organs and bone, my body was literally tearing itself apart inside. My consultation was converted into a pre-operative appointment, and I had a surgery date set.

The system doesn't care, but people do. I don't know what would have happened if I had let the system move at its own pace, but I am extremely grateful to every person who looked at me as a human being and not a case number. As leaders, we should all be willing to see past the trouble, to the person and work for solutions.

Leave your ego at home

I ended my command tour with only 16 of my planned 24 months. If I were being honest, it should have been shorter, but hubris is a real monster. I had a very strong team behind me; they were willing and able to step up, and I believed that I could bear down and get through this little hiccup while they handled the mission. In retrospect, I should have asked to relinquish command sooner. I robbed them of precious months they could have had with a commander who was fully present, capable of handling the long days and stressful situations. Instead, I let my pride bind me to a course. After all, I had worked 15 years to get to that command position. Surely this is temporary. After struggling for months and being told the condition was chronic, I should have bowed out then to allow the mission to operate at its best, not weighted down by a leader who was struggling with health issues. My team deserved better.

In my change of command speech, I apologized to my team, "To my Roadrunners, I fought as long as I could, but you deserve a commander focused on the mission and I deserve to heal." Those were hard words to

say. No one wants to quit early, but I deserved better too. I deserved the time and space to heal my damaged body. Working 15 years to achieve my dream would mean nothing if I died foolishly because I wasn't willing to take the time I needed to recover.

This might be the hardest lesson for leaders to learn and certainly takes the most self-reflection to know when you're at that point, but it's ok to admit you aren't ok. It's ok to step back so you can heal, because that's when I learned the final lesson.

The mission will go on without you

The last week of my command, I had three non-judicial punishment actions being processed with another starting, and we had a hurricane bearing down on the line of travel and locations my team was set to visit later that week. All while trying to coordinate a very last-minute change of command. It was stressful. It was chaotic. We were making contingency plans for the team right up until the change of command. But the moment I passed the guidon, it was out of my hands and on to a brand-new commander who had to pick up the ball and run.

The mission went on. The non-judicial punishments still processed. The missions still executed. Briefings were still briefed, and I got my surgery as well and time to heal.

As leaders, I think we sometimes lose sight of our position. Yes, we lead, but with very few exceptions, any one of us could be replaced overnight and the mission will still move forward. The unit, the team that executes the mission was still there. I should have put my ego on the backburner and stepped aside sooner to let them do their mission.

It is no stretch to say that making the decision to relinquish command early was the most difficult professional decision I've ever made. I had never personally seen a leader willingly relinquish command early, I've only ever seen them removed early for cause. It was a complete unknown to me, and I accepted the risk that I wouldn't get command credit or that it would negatively affect my future career. But by the time I made the decision, I also knew that I could very well die and then what did any of that matter?

Learn from me. Learn that self-awareness and the ability to put your ego aside to look at the whole picture is invaluable. Learn that empathy for yourself and others does more for the mission than letting the system work. Know that it's ok to not be ok, as long as you take action.



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For all submissions, a name and phone number of a person to contact must be included in the event questions arise.

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Air Force photographs by Airman 1st Class Elizabeth Tan

AFOTEC commander at Nellis to visit F-15EX evals

Brig. Gen. Michael Rawls, commander of the Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center (AFOTEC), located at Kirtland Air Force Base (AFB), New Mexico, sits in the cockpit of an F-15EX Eagle II at Nellis AFB, Nev., Nov. 15, 2023. Rawls visited AFOTEC's geographically separated units at Nellis to ensure evaluations and assessments of the F-15EX were being planned and executed.



An F-15EX Eagle II lands on the flight line after a training operation at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Nov. 15, 2023. The aircraft is able to fly at a speed of Mach 2.5, constituting it as the world's fastest fighter jet.



Maj. Michael Tope, right, and Brig. Gen. Michael Rawls, taxi down the runway in a F-15EX Eagle II for a training operation at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Nov. 15, 2023. The EX is the most advanced variant of the F-15 aircraft family, with the capability to carry a great number of missiles in support of the F-35A Lightning II.



An F-15EX Eagle II sits on the flightline at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Nov. 15, 2023. An upgraded version of the F-15 fourth-generation fighter jet, the F-15EX boasts a new electronic warfare system and an open mission systems architecture with advanced battle management systems.



LEFT: Master Sgt. Joe Bland, an advanced special mission aviator instructor assigned to the 34th Weapons Squadron, conducts pre-flight inspections before participating in a combat search and rescue training mission at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Oct. 23, 2023. Special missions aviators ensure the safety of the aircraft and Airmen.

34th WPS conducts **CSAR TRAINING**



LEFT: Capt. Terry Tilgham, a student instructor pilot assigned to the 34th Weapons Squadron, reads flight documents prior to launching out from a combat search and rescue (CSAR) mission at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Oct. 23, 2023. 34th WPS' student pilot instructors qualified in CSAR tactics.



Air Force photograph by Senior Airman Zachary Rufus

LEFT: An HH-60W Jolly Green II assigned to the 34th Weapons Squadron takes off to participate in a combat search and rescue training mission at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Oct. 23, 2023. One of the HH-60W Jolly Green II's primary mission is to conduct personnel recovery operations in hostile environments.




Master Sgt. Joe Bland, an advanced special mission aviator instructor assigned to the 34th Weapons Squadron, conducts pre-flight inspections before participating in a combat search and rescue training mission at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.

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Reaper fires Hellfire in the desert



An MQ-9 Reaper remotely piloted aircraft piloted by Airmen from the 556 Test and Evaluation Squadron flies over the Nevada Test and Training Range and fires an Air-to-Ground Missile-114 Hellfire missile, Aug. 30, 2023. Air Force photograph by Airman 1st Class Victoria Nuzzi

An MQ-9 Reaper remotely piloted aircraft piloted by Airmen from the 556 Test and Evaluation Squadron flies over the Nevada Test and Training Range and fires an Air-to-Ground Missile-114 Hellfire missile, Aug. 30, 2023. The 556th TES performs all software and physical testing to improve the combat capabilities of the MQ-9 Reaper. The MQ-9 can employ four laser-guided Hellfire missiles, which provide highly accurate, low-collateral damage, anti-armor and anti-personnel engagement capabilities.

Air Force photograph by Airman 1st Class Victoria Nuzzi

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RAAF F-35s conduct joint training at NE



Royal Australian Air Force Airmen pose for a group photo in front of a F-35A Lightning II at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Nov. 2, 2023. U.S. and Australian Airmen worked together during training to strengthen relations.



Two F-15E Strike Eagles taxi down the flight line for a joint training operation with the Royal Australian Air Force at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Nov. 2, 2023. Aircraft and Airmen from the 53rd Wing and the RAAF conducted training to maintain readiness and evaluate capabilities in a realistic training environment.



A Royal Australian Air Force pilot conducts preflight checks in the cockpit of an F-35A Lightning II at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Nov. 2, 2023.

Air Force photograph by Airman 1st Class Elizabeth Tan



Air Force photograph by Airman 1st Class Elizabeth Tan
...aining to increase interoperability and



Air Force photograph by William R. Lewis
...nt checks prior to a mission at Nellis Air



Air Force photograph by William R. Lewis

A Royal Australian Air Force F-35A takes off for a training mission at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Nov. 2, 2023. F-35s from the RAAF and various aircraft from the 53rd Wing, conducted interoperability training to evaluate capabilities in a realistic training environment.



Air Force photograph by William R. Lewis

An F-15EX Eagle II takes off for a training mission at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., on Nov. 2, 2023. Several F-35s from the RAAF conducted interoperability training to maintain readiness and evaluate capabilities in a realistic training environment.



Air Force photograph by Airman 1st Class Elizabeth Tan

A Royal Australian Air Force pilot, left, conducts a preflight check at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Nov. 2, 2023. RAAF pilots and Airmen visited Nellis AFB for a joint training operation to increase interoperability and strengthen relations.



Air Force photograph by Airman 1st Class Elizabeth Tan

An F-35A Lightning II aircraft sits on the taxiway at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Nov. 2, 2023. Several F-35s and other aircraft from the Royal Australian Air Force and 53rd Wing conducted a joint operation to evaluate capabilities in a realistic training environment.



Air Force photograph by Airman 1st Class Elizabeth Tan

A Royal Australian Air Force pilot conducts a preflight check with RAAF and U.S. Air Force Airmen at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Nov. 2, 2023. Joint operations such as this strengthen the connection with close international partners.

Veterans Day Car Show brings record crowd to VA Medical Center

The VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System's 6th annual Car Show and BBQ has returned to the North Las Vegas VA Medical Center for the first time since 2019.

An estimated 300 classic cars were on display thanks to the partnership with Las Vegas Cruisin' Association. Art Kam, Director of Las Vegas Cruisin' Association, said that this is the most vehicles he has seen at the VASNHS Car Show and BBQ. "We were so happy that this event is happening again," said Kam. "Many of us are Vets and we are grateful that we are able to get together again at the VA and share in the camaraderie this event brings."

After remarks from VASNHS leadership and Rep. Steven Horsford, the Masonic Service Association provided free food for the thousands of people in attendance. Sen. Catherine Cortez-Masto also came to pay tribute to Nevada Veterans.

The event also featured an information fair for Veterans to speak with VA

representatives and learn about organizations for Veterans in the community. VASNHS provided healthcare outreach and services at informational booths throughout day. Several community Veteran service organizations were on hand, and Vitalant hosted a mobile blood donation unit on site for those who wished to donate.

The Car Show and BBQ focuses on honoring Veterans Day, but the event is free for the general public.

"I'm thrilled at this turnout," said Bill Caron, VASNHS executive director and CEO. "It's a great event to celebrate our Veterans, and I'm glad we're able to host it once again. I'm amazed by the work behind the scenes: the volunteerism, the Masons running the grill, and staff that are here to make sure we put on a great show for our Veterans. Most importantly it's an opportunity for us to give back to the 70,000 Veterans in Southern Nevada that we are privileged to serve."



Courtesy photo

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We boast an outstanding and innovative ambulatory health care center that serves an estimated 190,000 Native Americans, most of whom are Navajo. In addition to our ambulatory services, we offer a vast amount of resources to our patients to ensure they receive health care to the fullest extent.

Winslow, AZ is located just east of Flagstaff, and is at the heart of some of the most picturesque landscapes the United States has to offer. Just south of the Four Corners, we're surrounded by National Parks, like the Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon and Natural Bridges in Utah, and Mesa Verde in Colorado. Phoenix is a short drive south and includes everything you would want in a big city. Whether you like the country or the city, living in the Winslow area means there's something for everyone!

Join the Winslow Indian Health Care team...we are actively recruiting at both the Winslow Indian Health Care Center and the newly opened Dilkon Medical Center.

How to Apply
To apply please visit:
www.wihcc.com

WIHCC Recruitment
500 N Indiana Avenue, Winslow, AZ 86407
Phone: (928) 289-6201 • Fax: (928) 288-9979
email: jobs@wihcc.org • www.wihcc.com





Extend holiday greetings to members of the Armed Forces

Does your business offer military discounts? If so, this special edition is the perfect way to supercharge your holiday sales effort!

In addition to the print edition, the ***Holiday Gift and Greeting Guide*** will also be available in digital format, with all ads being linked to the advertiser's web site.

Make sure the local aerospace and military community knows about the specials you have, including military discounts, at the beginning of this important shopping season.

Reservation deadline: Monday, December 4, 2023

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