

AIRMAN

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE



Building the **FUTURE FORCE**

How is the Air Force building the foundation for the **FORCE OF THE FUTURE?**



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DEFENSE MEDIA ACTIVITY AIR FORCE PRODUCTION

6700 TAYLOR AVE,
FORT MEADE, MD 20755

AIR FORCE PRODUCTION DIRECTOR
MITCHELL L. GETTLE

OPERATIONS MANAGER
JEFFREY B. ALLEN JR.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
BOB HOULIHAN

SOCIAL MEDIA CHIEF
CLAYTON FILIPOWICZ

AIR FORCE NEWS SERVICES/GRAPHICS CHIEF
COREY PARRISH

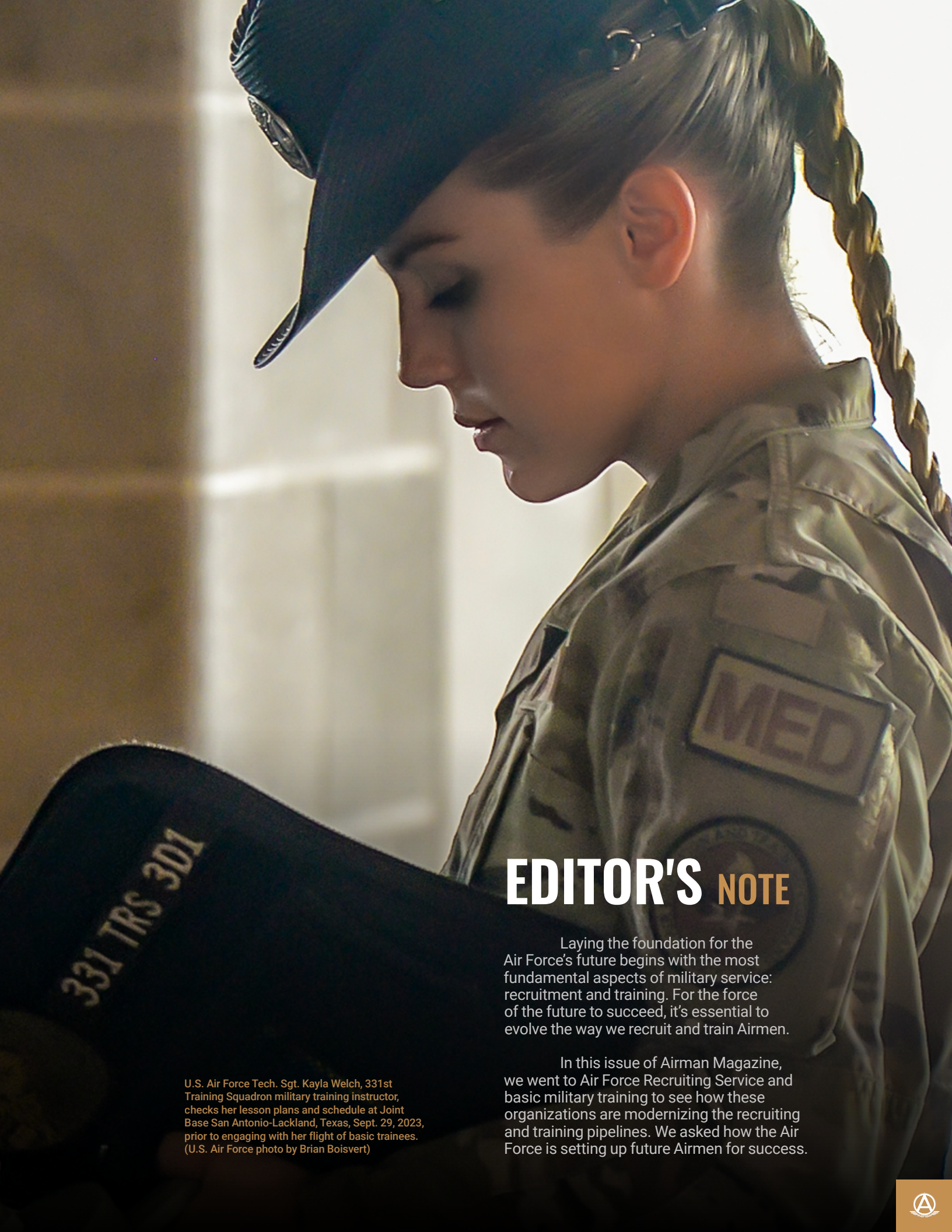
AIR FORCE BROADCAST CHIEF
JERRY CORMIER

AIRMAN MANAGING EDITOR
J.M. EDDINS JR.

LAYOUT/DESIGN/WEBSITE
TRAVIS BURCHAM

EDITORIAL STAFF
TYLER PRINCE
J.M. EDDINS JR.
TECH. SGT. JANIQUA P. ROBINSON
BRIAN ANDERSON

VIDEO PRODUCTION
TYLER PRINCE
DELANO SCOTT



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EDITOR'S NOTE

Laying the foundation for the Air Force's future begins with the most fundamental aspects of military service: recruitment and training. For the force of the future to succeed, it's essential to evolve the way we recruit and train Airmen.

In this issue of Airman Magazine, we went to Air Force Recruiting Service and basic military training to see how these organizations are modernizing the recruiting and training pipelines. We asked how the Air Force is setting up future Airmen for success.

U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Kayla Welch, 331st Training Squadron military training instructor, checks her lesson plans and schedule at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, Sept. 29, 2023, prior to engaging with her flight of basic trainees. (U.S. Air Force photo by Brian Boisvert)





Forging a FOUNDATION

Basic Military Training

Written by Tyler Prince

“The future force requires Airmen at all levels to look at the Air Force we have today and ask ourselves, ‘While [our Air Force] got us here, will it get us there? To get us there, the force needs Airmen who think critically, challenge the status quo, and adapt and evolve to stay ahead.’”

- Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force JoAnne Bass

Brick by metaphorical brick, the Air Force is laying the foundation for the force of 2030. That foundation begins with improving how Airmen develop and learn, starting with **basic military training** and continuing throughout their careers. Leading that effort is the first command: **Air Education and Training Command**.

“We call ourselves the first command because we literally touch every part of the Air Force,” said **Lt. Gen. Brian S. Robinson, AETC** commander. “We’re in the business of producing Airmen, whether they come in through basic military training or one of the officer accessions programs.”

As educational concepts and technology improve, it’s vital that the Air Force keeps up with the status quo to maximize the learning capability of its Airmen and set them up for success once they reach their operational units. To that end, Robinson has directed AETC to adapt and transition to a learner-centric model and incorporate more digital-age techniques.

A U.S. Air Force trainee from the 326th Training Wing pulls himself across a rope while completing an obstacle course as part of the Primary Agile Combat Employment Range Forward Operations Readiness Generation Exercise, or PACER FORGE, Aug. 8, 2023, on Joint Base San Antonio-Chapman Annex, Texas. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Erin V. Currie)



Digital tablets have been issued to trainees at basic military training conducted by the 737th Training Group at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas. The technology more fully engages future Airmen who have grown up using digital information technology and allows more efficiency and flexibility for instructors in keeping information up to date. (U.S. Air Force photo by Joe Gangemi)

EMBRACING THE DIGITAL ERA



U.S. Air Force Col. Billy Wilson poses for a photo, Nov. 7, 2023, at the 321st Training Squadron at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, San Antonio, Texas. Wilson is the commander of the 737th Training group which oversees Basic Military Training. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tyler Prince)

“Modernizing our training methods is important because most of the Airmen that we recruit today have spent their early lives learning in a learner-centric model and through digital means and platforms,” Robinson explained.

“They come into the Air Force to our instructor-based model and get held back because they can’t learn at the pace they’ve become accustomed to. We have knowledgeable, adept people joining our Air Force. That’s why transitioning our teaching model is essential: We can deliver the training they need at the same quality or better and do it faster.”

Col. Billy R. Wilson Jr., the **737th Training Group** commander, oversees BMT and underscores the importance of innovation and evolving how the organization does business.

“We must understand that to meet the demands of the strategic environment, this organization has to remain agile and incorporate more

innovation,” Wilson emphasized. “It’s absolutely essential.”

In September 2022, BMT began issuing iPads to Airmen and Guardians for the duration of their training experience. These tablets have replaced BMT’s various textbooks and learning materials and provide a more robust way for Airmen to study.

“It’s natural for the Airmen today,” Wilson explained. “Because they’re digital natives, they prefer that technology at their fingertips.”

Additionally, BMT uses an adaptive learning application and software designed to help trainees quickly acquire the basic knowledge and skills they learn in BMT. This software enables students to study at their own pace in short practice sessions distributed over a period of time for better memory retention. It also allows military training instructors to monitor academic progress and identify where their trainees may require more instruction.

“The entire curriculum is available, allowing the students to review all the knowledge they will learn while here at BMT,” Wilson explained. “On top of that, it provides a quick avenue for trainees to provide us feedback on how things are going. It could be about anything: the curriculum, their MTI, or the BMT culture and climate.”

This innovation has reduced the cost of creating learning materials and enables BMT to get operational lessons from the field to trainees faster, ensuring they learn the most up-to-date tactics, techniques, and procedures.

“Back in the day, if there were a curriculum update, we would have to reprint reams and reams of paper, which could take weeks or months,” Wilson explained. “Having the ability to deliver an operational lesson from the field to upwards of 6,000 people instantaneously ... it’s a force multiplier.”



PACER FORGE

Basic military trainees march in formation at the Primary Agile Combat Employment Range Forward Operations Readiness Generation Exercise (PACER FORGE) Headquarters on March 15, 2023. (U.S. Air Force photo by Jerome S. Tayborn)

Technology isn't the only way BMT is modernizing its training tactics and techniques. **Primary Agile Combat Employment Range Forward Operational Readiness Generation Exercise, or Pacer Forge,** is a scenario-based 36-hour exercise that has replaced Basic Expeditionary Airman Skills Training or BEAST. After six weeks of instruction that requires adherent and compliant thinking, trainees participate in a dynamic exercise requiring them to develop problem-solving skills through critical thinking. They're coached throughout this process and evaluated based on how their team creates solutions.

"Pacer Forge is an acknowledgment that the strategic environment has changed," Wilson explained.

"Our goal with the exercise is to harden some of the lessons trainees are taught earlier in training. How to problem solve. How to work as a team. How to gather and process information. How to adapt to stressful situations, everything we believe is essential for the future fight."

Wilson explained that Pacer Forge is iterative and adaptable - an evolving assessment designed to keep pace with the needs of the operational Air Force and ensure training remains relevant and anticipates potential challenges.

"We want Pacer Forge to be agile enough so that when the strategic environment changes, we can fold that back into what we're doing here at BMT," Wilson said. "We want to ensure that we set our trainees up for success in the best way possible."



A basic military trainee adjusts her wingman's tactical gear at the Primary Agile Combat Employment Range Forward Operations Readiness Generation Exercise Headquarters on March 15, 2023. (U.S. Air Force photo by Jerome S. Tayborn)



SCAN TO PLAY VIDEO ON YOUR DEVICE



The Versatile Injury Prevention and Embedded Recovery Clinic at basic military training works to ensure trainees remain in the training pipeline. The team's goal is to prevent injuries that would result in musculoskeletal injury attrition, lost training time, and increased Airmen production by inserting sports medicine teams in the training environment. (U.S. Air Force video by Delano Scott)

HOLISTIC APPROACH TO TRAINING

"BMT also seeks to teach intangible skills like resilience – a crucial cultural element for equipping Airmen to face future challenges.

"I think the programs we have now are promoting just that; we also go after some of those human performance aspects: sleep hygiene, nutrition, mental health," Wilson said.

One such program is the **Versatile Injury Prevention and Embedded Recovery** clinic, a team of Airmen and contractors devoted to teaching trainees about nutrition and physiology. These lessons help trainees better understand how to exercise correctly.

"When a trainee gets injured in training, that's a huge burden on the trainee," says Maj. Korey Kasper, **37th Training Wing** Human Performance Squadron sports medicine physician, "that's why injury prevention is such a key to what we do in **VIPER.**"

Injuries to the lower extremities can delay the completion of a trainee's training for weeks and, in the worst cases, cause them to recycle out of BMT entirely. The VIPER clinic provides instructions on how to run, what to eat, and even how to sleep. When a trainee does get injured, the clinic offers physical therapy to help them return to training faster.



Maj. Korey Kasper, 37th Training Wing Human Performance Squadron sports medicine physician, talks about the implementation of the VIPER Clinic. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Janiqua P. Robinson)

Specially selected and trained Military Training Instructors are tasked with mentoring, teaching and molding civilians arriving for basic military training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas. (U.S. Air Force photo)

QUALITIES FOR TOMORROW'S AIRMEN ... AND TODAY'S



We spoke to Airmen who graduated on Aug. 31, 2023, about how they hope to contribute to the force of 2030.

SCAN THE CODES NEXT TO PHOTOS TO WATCH THE VIDEOS.

By design, BMT is a stressful environment intended to push future Airmen past their limits and help them grow into the kinds of leaders that the Air Force will need in the future.

"In this environment, we need someone who can think on their feet, solve problems, ask questions, stay curious, and follow through," Wilson explained. "We also need courageous folks because it takes courage to tell your wingman that, 'hey, that's not the way we need to treat one another,' or 'that's not acceptable.' We also want someone honest and kind who understands that people from all walks of life will enter your sphere of influence."

For MTIs, Wilson says they need Airmen who can exemplify the standard of excellence they're demanding from their trainees.

"That comes down to three things we need: Competence, Commitment, and Courage. You need to be competent at what we're asking you to do.

You need to have that credibility and be that recognized authority. Commitment. We must have highly committed people. There will be days when you don't feel like it because the trainees are many, and the days are long. So we need folks who are highly committed to what we're doing, highly committed to training our next generation of Airmen. Finally, we need courageous

individuals. We need individuals who can correct their teammates and provide honest supervisor feedback."

Across the board, BMT is bringing intellectual and technological advancements to bear, leveraging its resources to create a more agile and knowledgeable force. Wilson says ensuring Airmen leave BMT with more than just information is essential.

"I want them to leave with the impression that we've shown them what right looks like. And I hope that as they depart, our conversations about character, commitment, and courage resonate with them and that they will be men and women of high character in society whenever they return to society," explains Wilson.



U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Christopher Amrhein speaks after taking command of AFRS during a change of command ceremony at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas, June 2, 2023. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Gabriel Jones)



AT ALTITUDE

SCAN TO PLAY VIDEO
ON YOUR DEVICE



Podcast by Joseph Eddins

Brig. Gen. Christopher Amrhein took over command of **Air Force Recruiting Service** in June of 2023 in the middle of the service's first recruiting shortfall in decades. Now he speaks to **Airman magazine** about changes needed to meet future recruiting goals.

The **Air Force Recruiting Service** comprises more than 2,800 Airmen and civilians and approximately 1,040 recruiting offices across the U.S. and abroad. **Amrhein** is responsible for all enlisted accessions and a variety of officer accession programs. **AFRS** accesses more than 45,000 individuals each year for service in the **Air Force active-duty**, **Air National Guard** and **Air Force Reserve** as well as the **Space Force**. **AFRS** also manages all strategic marketing for the **U.S. Air Force**.



RECRUITING

A Path Forward

Written by Tech. Sgt. Janiqua P. Robinson

“I get to spread awareness, and initially walking into that recruiting office, I don’t think I was what you pictured for your picture-perfect model recruit. So, it’s crazy to be back where I’m from, giving back to the same community that I grew up in, talking to the same people.”

- Staff Sgt. Tori Glover

“Wake up, sweetheart. Did you sleep okay? Ready to get dressed and see your teachers?”

It’s 7 a.m. at **Hanscom Air Force Base**, Massachusetts, and Staff Sgt. Tori Glover, **319th Recruiting Squadron** enlisted accessions active duty recruiter, is getting her daughter ready to have breakfast at the **Child Development Center** around the corner. After many hugs, kisses, tears and sighs, Glover begins her commute to downtown Boston, where she screens and recruits curious civilians for the **U.S. Air Force**.

“Our average recruiter covers 2,200 square miles of area per recruiter,” said Chief Master Sgt. Rebecca Arbona, **Air Force Recruiting Service** command chief. “Not everybody has had the pleasure of living near an installation; that being said, some people just don’t know about the military. When I came in the service, 45% of people serving had parents that served, so you’re getting the information at home. Fast forward to now: it’s just 13%, so basically, we’re working from scratch. Our recruiter’s have their work cut out for them, and we, as a service, have to figure out how we can go out and showcase what we have to offer.”

Staff Sgt. Tori Glover, 319th Recruiting Squadron enlisted accessions active-duty recruiter, talks on her experience as a recruiter and the challenges recruiters currently face. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Janiqua P. Robinson)





SCAN TO PLAY VIDEO

ON YOUR DEVICE



Staff Sgt. Tori Glover is an enlisted accessions active-duty recruiter in Boston, Mass. Her office sits on a corner adorned with construction scaffolding, just across from the Boston Common. She manages the ambivalence of balancing her life at home with her responsibilities as an Air Force recruiter. (U.S. Air Force video by Tyler Prince and U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Janiqua P. Robinson)

Glover was introduced to the military through her brother, who joined the Army when she was 16. He got stationed in Hawaii, where he met and married his wife, who was active-duty Navy. When Glover turned 21, the young couple was expecting a child and needed a designated caregiver to fulfill the obligations of their family care plan. Glover had just started working full time but was undecided about her career plans.

"I didn't really have a clear path of what I wanted to do," Glover recalled. "I always wanted to go to college, but being the third child of a single mom, I didn't have the means to afford it. I wasn't going to do the student loans and put myself through that after seeing my brother and my sister try and then ultimately fail."

Her brother invited her to Hawaii to be the nanny for her newborn niece, which she did for nearly seven months before she started looking into the **Air Force Reserve**.

"The biggest takeaway for me was that while living with my brother and sister-in-law, with them being in [the service], they would come home and when they took their uniform off, it was still my brother, it's still my sister-in-law," Glover said. "People that I love and trust and that played a key role in, I think, me even having the confidence to start the process."

Glover attempted to join multiple services but was met with indifference from her initial recruiters.

"I went from one branch to another branch to another branch; things just weren't lining up, and it was exhausting, honestly," Glover recalled. "My brother ended up sending me back to Massachusetts and said, 'You're not appreciative of why we brought you out here.'"

Upon her return, and to prove her brother wrong, Glover started going to the recruiting office in Quincy, Massachusetts, which is 40 minutes south of where she currently lives.

"My recruiter actually gave me a shot and had it not been for him, I wouldn't be here," Glover emphasized. "It's crazy to me because I never really pictured myself being a recruiter. I get to spread awareness, and initially walking into that recruiting office, I don't think I was what you pictured for your picture-perfect model recruit. So, it's crazy to be back where I'm from, giving back to the same community that I grew up in, talking to the same people."

After graduating from **basic military training** and technical training school, Glover was stationed at **Nellis AFB**, Nevada, working as a weather specialist. She was looking through social media sites to find more information about special duty assignments and to gauge the flexibility of a military training instructor's day-to-day schedule. She ultimately decided being a recruiter would work better with her family situation.



Staff Sgt. Tori Glover, an enlisted accessions active-duty recruiter, talks with high school students at a job fair, April 26, 2023, in Boston, Mass. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Janiqua P. Robinson)

Currently, Air Force recruiters are selected from Airmen presently serving in the Air Force through a program known as a Developmental Special Duty. Periodically, specific assignments will become available and are advertised by the **Air Force Personnel Center**. Each career field manager will determine how many Airmen will be selected and released from their current job to fill these positions. Airmen can apply and are then selected based on their eligibility, location and interview.

“We have been able to get approval to grow our line recruiter force by 91 additional recruiters, and those will be phasing in over the next six months or so as we bring them in,” explained **Brig. Gen. Christopher R. Amrhein, Air Force Recruiting Service** commander. “If people want to be a

recruiter, they need to communicate that to their leadership and then get put in for this Developmental Special Duty. Recruiting isn't for everyone, so there's an element of reviewing and making sure that we're identifying the right talent so we don't set somebody up that may not be the best fit.”

If they're selected, they travel to **Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas**, for their technical training school, where they learn the ropes, graduate and travel to their new duty location where the real work begins.

“In any given year, we ask a ton of our recruiting force; it is the leanest of all of the services,” Amrhein emphasized. “This past year we had to ask a little bit more from them; we asked them to go into a sprint and we ran that for almost five

months at, what I would consider, the deployed operations tempo. Each of the commanders realized when it was time to start pulling back that tempo. That's a way of making sure that the command protects the resiliency of our recruiters and what they need. Additionally, it is important to maintain staunch advocacy of the incentives such as their special duty allowance pay and addressing their concerns when they come up.”

One of the most prevalent concerns for Air Force recruiters is making goals. Recruiters are having trouble finding recruits that fully meet current qualification standards, which has led to the Air Force reaching nearly 90% of its fiscal year 2023 goal of enlisting 26,877 recruits. This has also led to revising the Air Force's tattoo policy and



Staff Sgt. Tori Glover, an enlisted accessions active-duty recruiter, helps a curious high schooler navigate their options, April 26, 2023, in Boston, Mass. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Janiqua P. Robinson)

reinstating the Enlisted College Loan Repayment Program. The Air Force has also streamlined its path to U.S. citizenship by shortening the criteria for achieving citizenship from one year of service, to immediately following the completion of basic military training.

“Yes, we missed [the recruiting goal] by just under 11%, but without some of these initiatives and a total surge by our recruiting force, we could have missed by a lot more, probably closer to 16 to 18%,” Amrhein explained. “We’re walking into fiscal year 2024 with a higher bank of folks that are already pre-qualified and waiting; almost twice as high as it was when we walked from 2022 into 2023.”

These policy changes have directly impacted Glover and how she and the 319th RCS have approached recruiting efforts over the past few months. In addition to the 91 added recruiting billets allowing her office to fill two spots that had been vacant for six years, they launched the **Committed Augmentee Recruiting Effort** initiative in July. It allowed Airmen in other career fields to volunteer as recruiter augmentees at local events to help identify eligible recruits and connect them with the 319th RCS.

“They’re fielding leads and they’re trying to basically vet them before getting to the recruiter to try to take some of those extra steps off of us,” Glover explained. “When we did get a lead, they were pre-screened, and we didn’t have to spend 20 to 30 minutes just figuring out if they’re qualified.”

In addition to the **CARE** initiative saving time, the tattoo policy also helped Glover easily clear what used to be a significant hurdle.

“I have an applicant right now who has a rose that covers the back/top of his hand, but the Air Force actually considers the front and back for the hand policy,” Glover explained. “It looks larger, but it only comes out to about 15% of his hand. This is a huge thing because I know in times past we’ve had to always refer them to other services that were more lenient, so that was an easy fix to be able to overcome. It’s the same with small finger tattoos and things of that nature.”



Staff Sgt. Tori Glover, and her daughter accomplish their morning routine, April 27, 2023, in Boston, Mass. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Janiqua P. Robinson)

The changes in processes, standards and policies allow recruiters to focus on the basics, which ensures the best and brightest make it through the application process and join the ranks of the world's greatest Air Force.

"I think my favorite thing about this job is knowing that I am that initial point for someone else, but my own recruiting narrative is not a typical story," Glover emphasized. "I think that having gone through what I've gone through, and speaking with multiple recruiters in multiple branches, it's kind of come full circle. To be able to help as many people as I can is my entire goal in this job."

Though Glover's been in the Air Force for nearly eight years and plans to stay in recruiting by moving up to the tier-2 portion of the job, she explained that she wasn't really committed until after she gave birth to her daughter. She didn't enjoy the Air Force at first, and even had a chief master sergeant decline her application to retrain out of the weather career field into a different specialty prior to her applying for recruiting.

"He said there's a freedom that comes from fully committing to something," Glover explained. "He was talking about the Air Force because I was one foot in and one foot out. I had started my initial separation briefs prior to getting pregnant with my daughter. I went through the whole first enlistment thinking 'when I get out, when I get out, when I get out,' and not realizing everything that I'd fought so hard to gain.

"Even when I had a bad day or I had a bad week, at the end of the day, I still had everything that I wanted and everything that I needed. I have no one to thank but myself and the Air Force for that. When I finally decided, 'I'm just going to do 20,' I realized that I could use tuition assistance for myself, and now my daughter has my GI Bill. The Air Force has not only provided amazing opportunities, education and the life that I have now, but it also has now provided a future for my daughter. Twenty-one-year-old me was never planning for that."



AIR FORCE RECRUITING RESOURCES



(U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Erik Cardenas)

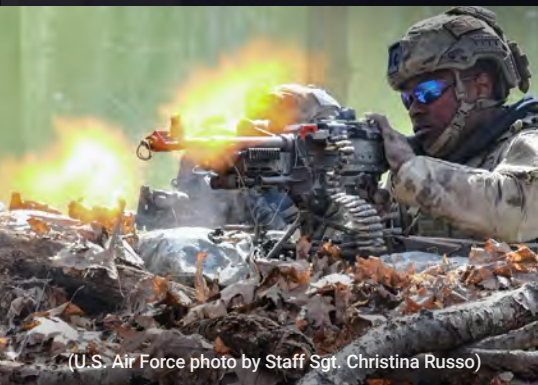
WE ARE ALL RECRUITERS (WEAR)

The We Are All Recruiters program may grant individuals permissive TDY status if they participate in an event that directly enhances the recruiting mission. All Airmen, regardless of their Air Force Specialty, are recruiters.

A WEAR event is an event where the interaction of Air Force personnel educates and increases public awareness of the Air Force and could potentially provide numerous leads for recruiters. Approval for WEAR is limited to those events where Airmen are directly speaking to potential applicants or influencers about Air Force opportunities. Applicants are defined as individuals within the 17- to 39-year-old range; and influencers are defined as parents, community leaders, teachers, counselors, coaches, etc.



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(U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Christina Russo)

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