



See pages 4, 5

# E-3 maintainers rock engine-swap time



photo by Tech. Sgt. C. A. Campbell

### On the cover

Left to right: Airman 1st Class Seth Hammont and Senior Airman Robert West from the 380th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron push an E-3 Sentry engine while Senior Airman Rodney Poe, 380th EAMXS, guides it Aug. 24. They are all deployed here from the 552nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Tinker Air Force Base, Okla.

### Table of Contents

Perspective .....	2
News .....	3
Feature.....	4, 5
News .....	6



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*Submit stories and photos to 380aew.pa@adab.afcent.af.mil. The SAND SCRIPT staff reserves the right to edit all submissions for content, policy and style.*



photo by Tech. Sgt. Christopher A. Campbell

### Load 'em up

Members of the 380th Expeditionary Air Transportation Operations Center load compressed helium onto a C-17 Globemaster aircraft here Aug. 7. The ATOC has loaded several trucks of helium in support of Operation Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. The C-17 is out of McChord Air Force Base, Wash.

## Action Line

► If you have a question or comment you would like to direct to the wing commander, send an e-mail with subject line "Commander's Forum" to: [380aew.pa@adab.afcent.af.mil](mailto:380aew.pa@adab.afcent.af.mil). The commander will provide a response by e-mail for most issues; however, Public Affairs may consolidate duplicate questions and print the responses in a future issue of the Sand Script. People are encouraged to work issues through their chain of command prior to using the forum.

## The Airman's Creed

***I am an American Airman.  
I am a Warrior.  
I have answered my Nation's call.***

***I am an American Airman.  
My mission is to Fly, Fight, and Win.  
I am faithful to a Proud Heritage,  
A Tradition of Honor,  
And a Legacy of Valor.***

***I am an American Airman.  
Guardian of Freedom and Justice,  
My Nation's Sword and Shield,  
Its Sentry and Avenger.  
I defend my Country with my Life.***

***I am an American Airman.  
Wingman, Leader, Warrior.  
I will never leave an Airman behind,  
I will never falter,  
And I will not fail.***

# Perspective

## Find your passion and pursue it

Maj. Rob Matlock  
12th Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron Commander

*"... find out what you are passionate about and pursue it."*

**- Maj. Rob Matlock,  
12th ERS commander**

What are you going to do when you grow up?

I've heard high school students, college students, Airmen and older business men discuss what they really want to do when they grow up.

The most common answer I've heard is, "I don't know," because they are likely asking the wrong question. Instead of trying to figure out what they are going to do, they should be trying to figure out what they are equipped to do, enjoy doing and are passionate about. As Airmen, we have access to government-funded education programs to pursue bachelor's degrees, master's degrees and various types of certificates. The biggest decision can be figuring out what to do after completing one of these programs.

However, many people don't realize what they are best equipped to do. They need help to identify their strengths, talents and abilities and to adopt a longer-term perspective about their futures. There are several tools aimed at identifying individual strengths and weaknesses. Some programs break these into four personality dimensions: interests, abilities, temperament and work values. The break downs can be very helpful in directing and educating someone who is searching for their particular strengths. Some systems I've used are available on the Internet and in books and can be very accurate in assessments (no, you can't ask my wife).

In addition to an overall description of your personality, they can also identify areas of strengths and struggles based on your personality. A chaplain can direct you to multiple "spiritual gift" inventories. These inventories start with the premise that each person is uniquely designed by God and given unique talents for a purpose. Using some of these tools can make it easier to identify your strengths, which in turn help identify education requirements for potential career fields.

Whether you are retiring in 18 years or getting out of the Air Force after this assignment, I encourage you to find out what you are passionate about and pursue it. The Air Force will benefit from better educated Airmen. You will benefit by being better prepared for life during and after the Air Force.



photos by Airman 1st Class Alexandra Sandoval

Far right: The 380th Air Expeditionary Wing's newest Command Chief, Chief Master Sgt. Martin Smith (second from right), stands next to 380th AEW Commander, General H.D. Polumbo, Jr., (far right), during retreat here Aug. 22.



Above and right: 380th AEW Honor Guard members fold the flag at the retreat ceremony before presenting it to the officer of the day.



# New command chief shares impressions, goals for year tour

By Tech. Sgt. Denise Johnson  
380th AEW Public Affairs

The new 380th Air Expeditionary Wing Command Chief arrived here Aug. 18.

Chief Master Sgt. Martin K. Smith said it's an honor to be here to serve the 380th AEW Commander, Brig. Gen. H.D. Polumbo, Jr. He said it's twice the honor being here to serve the Airmen, as well.

His expectations are simple, he said, "I'm optimistic. I want the people to continue to excel; maintain the high standards they've already established."

Chief Smith arrived here on a one-year tour from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. He was first notified about the assignment the same day he was reunited with his wife, Maj. Mary Smith, upon her return from a tour in Afghanistan. He said he and his wife hope to continue to serve; they take their commitment to the Air Force to heart.

"We're pleased to have the chief with us; he brings a wealth of experience to the wing," said General Polumbo. "I look forward to having him on our team this year."

The command chief position entails many different duties but they

revolve around two concepts, the chief said. "My job is to get the commander's policies out while representing the enlisted people."

Representing the enlisted corps to the wing leadership takes a lot of interaction and familiarization. "I do that through one-on-one contact: through the first sergeants, through the group chiefs, the squadron chiefs, the senior (noncommissioned officers) and NCOs, and also through the feedback I get from the Airmen," Chief Smith said.

Representing a large body of individuals requires honest communication and candid feedback. "If I ask an opinion, I expect honest feedback. When the general asks how we are doing, we need to reply respectfully, but candidly. Anything less is a disservice to one's peers and the Air Force."

The chief sewed on command chief in June, 2006, when he became the command chief for both the 88th Air Base Wing and the Aeronautical Systems Center at WPAFB. He said he often refers to his experience as a first sergeant when weighing decisions.

"I call on my first-sergeant experiences when considering how to approach a new job. It's easier for me to come in and adapt to procedures already in place for 1,600 to 1,700 people – they work for a reason – than to ask them to adapt to me," Chief Smith explained. "I'm not in the business

of saying, 'change this, change that ...' I'll evaluate things and look at how things are going and formulate impressions and then perhaps make recommendations."

With 26 years behind him in active-duty service, the chief could have retired in lieu of agreeing to take this assignment, but he said the opportunity to be a command chief in the area of responsibility was too great.

"I couldn't pass up the opportunity to lead Airmen in the AOR; to advocate for them; to be a part of the global war on terrorism – it wasn't a tough decision," he said.

Chief Smith said he walked into this assignment with an open mind and so far he's found reassurance not only in the statistics, but also in the people he's met. "I'm impressed with many things, to include the low discipline numbers and the high mission capability numbers. The people here are doing their job well, and that makes my job easier."

First impressions can be lasting, and if the chief's first impressions last, he will see a lot of good things over the next year. "I'm impressed with the Airmen, the way they look, act, operate and take care of things," he said. "You can see it in the little things and in the big things, too, like when those jets take off ..."



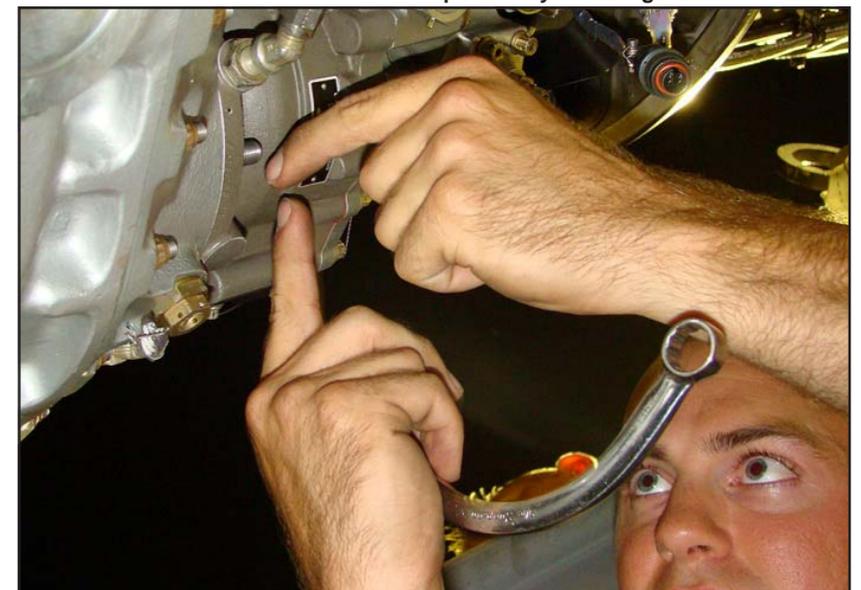
**Right:** The 380th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron's Staff Sgt. Ryan Pierce, an aero repair specialist, ensures all parts are accounted for after removing a hydraulic package from an E-3 Sentry's engine Sunday. The parts will be inventoried and stored for future use. Accounting for all the parts is a prevention measure toward mitigating foreign object damage to aircraft.

**Below:** The 380th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron's Airman 1st Class Christopher Chartier, hydraulic specialist, is removing the hydraulic pump from a new outboard engine for an Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft, or E-3 Sentry, Sunday. The hydraulic package is only required on an inboard engine, so it will be removed for future use.

**Left:** Members of the 380th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron move the broken outboard engine off to the side to make room for the new engine. The E-3 Sentry is a 4-engine jet, with two engines on each wing. The outboard engine is the one on the end of the wing as opposed to the inboard engine, near the body of the jet.



photos by Tech. Sgt. Denise Johnson



# Maintainers halve jet-engine swap time

By Tech. Sgt. Denise Johnson  
380th AEW Public Affairs

Maintainers swapped out what they hope is the last of six jet-engine replacements over the course of 120 days here Sunday.

Replacing six E-3 Sentry, or AWACS, engines in one deployment rotation is unprecedented, according to Master Sgt. Chuck Ratajczyk, 380th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron lead production superintendent.

The 24-year veteran said his home unit at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., has changed out one engine for a significantly higher number of the Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft, in the same period of time. "The dust, the heat and exposure take their toll on these older aircraft," Sergeant Ratajczyk continued. "The aircraft age and the climate eats 'em up."

The number-4 engine surpassed allowable exhaust-temperature limits resulting in this latest engine change. "During take-off it over temped past triple nickel, which is 555 degrees Celsius," said Senior Airman Rodney Poe, 380th EAMXS engine systems specialist.

Although the jets are not kept in hangars and the austere environment doesn't show any mercy, the maintainers have faced their deployment and its challenges as a team to make sure the jets can meet the air tasking order.

"Everyone pitches in on this deployment – regardless of his or her duty title," Sergeant Ratajczyk said. "I have been doing the flightline-maintenance thing for over 20 years and I can honestly say this has been the best group of maintainers I've ever had the opportunity to work with."

The Airmen haven't disappointed their pro-super, or their leadership. The normal fix-time to remove and replace an E-3 engine is 18 hours. The maintainers here have become so adept at the process; they can remove

and replace an engine in less than nine hours.

There are several factors that can be attributed to the expedited maintenance times. The high number of engine swaps is likely to have increased their expertise. It is also possible the crossflow of various areas of expertise by different members of the team has been beneficial overall. Some folks, however, tend to lean toward the intangible, less-obvious reasons for the exceptional engine-replacement times.

"These guys are awesome; they have literally cut our time on the ground in half. But it's not just the rapid repairs that make them amazing; it's their dedication and camaraderie," said Lt. Col. Mike Shea, 380th EAMXS commander. "I think they enjoy it – they know they're winners. You can see it in the smiles they're wearing while they're working, and you can hear it in the good-natured ribbing and the laughter.

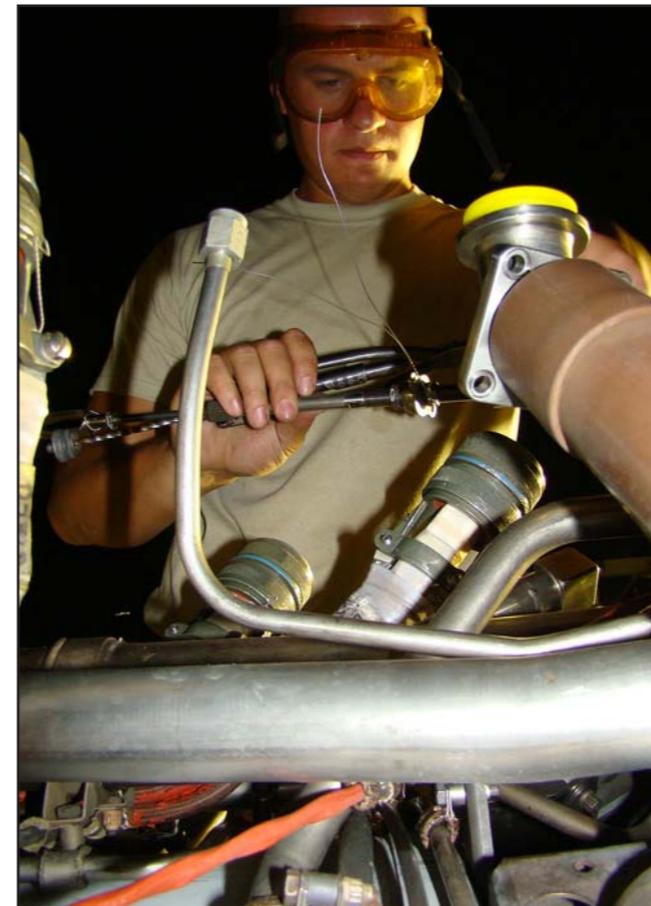
"They have formed an invincible team; I don't think there's much we could throw at 'em they couldn't handle together."

Members of the 380th EAMXS prepared the number-4 engine for removal from the E-3 Sentry just after midnight. The replacement engine arrived on a C-130 from the 379th AEW by 1:15 a.m. The maintenance crew was there to greet it.

The jet was down for the count. Without that engine, the 960th Expeditionary Airborne Air Control Squadron could not fulfill their flying missions. "We don't waste time. The jet had a hole on the wing and we needed to fill it," Sergeant Ratajczyk said.

And fill it, they did. By 9 a.m. the engine was ready for its green run and trim run. "It '(operations) checked' good and the following day it was in the air, meeting the ATO," said Tech. Sgt. Richard Offutt, 380th EAMXS flightline expeditor.

*more photos on page 6*



**Left: Staff Sgt. Bradley Barnes, an engine systems specialist with the 380th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron, applies safety wire to a canon plug during an engine replacement on an E-3 Sentry, here Sunday. The safety wire will prevent the canon plug, used as a cap, from falling off and causing damage to the engine.**

photos by Tech. Sgt. Denise Johnson

**Right: Staff Sgt. Bradley Barnes (standing), an engine systems specialist with the 380th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron, prepares the throttle cable during an engine replacement on an E-3 Sentry, here Sunday. Senior Airman Marcus Wilson, 380th EAMXS electro-environmental specialist, assists crew mates on the removal of the hydraulics package under the engine. This rotation of 380th EAMXS E-3 maintainers has replaced an unprecedented six engines in 120 days.**

**Left: Members of the 380th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron prepare the broken outboard engine to be moved off to the side to make room for the new engine. The E-3 Sentry is a 4-engine jet, with two engines on each wing. The outboard engine is the one on the end of the wing as opposed to the inboard engine, near the body of the jet.**



# Some military members eligible for extra earnings

You'll want to put this piece of information into safekeeping, along with your DD-214. If you had military service prior to 2001, you may be entitled to extra monetary benefits when filing for Social Security. Use the information below to ask Social Security officials the right questions.

This benefit is not just for the military retiree community, but includes all veterans with active-duty service from 1957 through 2001.

Under certain circumstances, special extra earnings for your military service from 1957 through 2001 can be credited to your record for Social Security purposes. These extra-earnings credits may help you qualify for Social Security or increase the Social Security benefits.

The information that follows applies only to active-duty military-earnings from 1957 through 2001. Here's how the special extra earnings are credited on your record:

#### Service in 1957 Through 1977

You are credited with \$300 in additional earnings for each calendar quarter in which you received active-duty basic pay.

#### Service in 1978 through 2001

For every \$300 in active-duty basic pay, you are credited with an additional \$100 in earnings, up to a maximum of \$1,200 a year. If you

enlisted after September 7, 1980, and didn't complete at least 24 months of active duty or your full tour, you may not be able to receive the additional earnings. Check with Social Security for details.

Special extra-earnings credits are granted for periods of active duty or active duty for training. Special extra-earnings credits are not granted for inactive-duty training.

Based on your period of military service, you may qualify for an increased social security payment, but payment may not be automatic.

Using your DD-214 to establish eligibility is the key for up to \$1200 per year of earnings credited at time of application. Bring your DD-214 with you to the Social Security Administration when making your application for benefits. Ask them to ensure you are being credited with the extra earnings for your military service.

In January 2002, Public Law 107-117, the Defense Appropriations Act, stopped the special extra earnings that have been credited to military service personnel. Military service in calendar year 2002 and future years no longer qualifies for these special extra-earnings credits.

Visit the Social Security website for more information:

<http://www.ssa.gov/retire2/military.htm>

## 380th AEW Judge Advocate releases Article 15-actions

The 380th Air Expeditionary Wing's Judge Advocate office released the Article 15 actions for the month of July.

Non-judicial punishment or Article 15 of the Uniformed Code of Military Justice is an unfavorable administrative action a commander initiates against an Airman for minor misconduct. Goals of an Article 15 are to rehabilitate Airmen and to reach a speedy resolution regarding the misconduct for both the unit and member. Currently, the 380th Air Expeditionary Wing has the second lowest Article 15 rate per one-thousand Airmen in the United States Air Force's central area of responsibility. The Article 15s listed below are cases that occurred in the 380th AEW during the month of July:

A senior airman assigned to 380th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron received an Article 15 for not following Technical Order procedures. The Airman received a suspended reduction to the grade of airman first class. This means if the Airman is involved in any misconduct over the next six months, the commander may decide to reduce the Airman to airman first class by vacating the suspended reduction.

An airman first class assigned to 380th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron received an Article 15 for stealing. The airman first class received a reduction to the grade of airman, forfeiture of \$196 pay and a reprimand.

An airman assigned to 380 ESFS received an Article 15 for stealing. The airman received a reduction to the grade of airman basic, forfeiture of \$196 pay and a reprimand.

*(Information courtesy of the 380th AEW/JA office.)*



photo by Tech. Sgt. Christopher A. Campbell

## Evaluating our Airmen

By Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley

To truly develop our Airmen we must accurately and honestly assess their strengths and weaknesses and chart their course to success. While giving our Airmen proper feedback is a crucial first step, it is vitally important to follow through and provide an accurate evaluation of performance, abilities, and potential on enlisted performance reports.

We have incredible Airmen serving in our Air Force, but not every Airman is a "firewall" 5. Simply put, average Airmen should not receive the same evaluation ratings as those Airmen who are "truly among the best." When the majority of our Airmen receive the top rating, there is no way to distinguish between our truly exceptional performers and those who are just meeting standards.

Inaccurate evaluations are not fair to our top performers. When these outstanding Airmen see others receiving the same ratings they work so hard to earn, it can be demoralizing. Airmen need to know their above and beyond efforts will be recognized and rewarded. It is every supervisors responsibility to provide the correct evaluation of their Airmen.

We've had a constant challenge with over inflated performance reports; Airmen who clearly aren't "truly among the best" but still receive the top rating. We must correct this problem by providing frank and honest feedback, complying with and enforcing established standards, and holding our Airmen accountable. Supervisors must not hesitate to take action when corrections are needed.

Airmen deserve to know areas where performance can be improved. Much of this should occur during day-to-day interaction and on-the-spot corrections, but for those Airmen who need to make a concentrated effort to improve, the formal documented feedback session may be the incentive required to tackle those performance shortfalls.

Our Air Force needs sound, reliable documentation to base personnel actions, advancement, and increased responsibility decisions on. The bottom line: We want our Airmen to be successful and continue to improve. Inflated performance reports negate performance as a factor in an Airman's professional development. The process we have to accomplish this is the enlisted evaluation system, a system that must be grounded in integrity.

**Left: Airman 1st Class Anh Nguyen from the 380th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron, cleans up asphalt in the Vehicle Search Area Aug. 18. Airman Nguyen used a jackhammer to break up asphalt in an attempt to locate a faulty water-supply line and evaluate the damage. Airman Nguyen is deployed from the 27th Air Force Special Operations Squadron, Cannon Air Force Base, N.M., his hometown is Riverside, Calif.**