

Air Force unveils new television commercials

By Tech. Sgt. R.R. Getsy
Headquarters United States Air Force

Evoking feelings of "pride and patriotism, fascination and diversity," the Air Force has wrapped up test screenings of its new television commercials, premiered Aug. 25 in movie theaters and Saturday on network and cable TV.

The unveiling for Pentagon media Aug. 23 is another initiative to address Air Force recruiting and retention challenges and increase the visibility of the service. Even though the Air Force has met this year's recruiting goal, recruiters are not resting on their laurels.

"These commercials are the next offensive in our war on recruiting and retention," said Secretary of the Air Force Whit Peters. "At the heart of the issue is retaining the quality people we have in America's Air Force today and getting our story out to people considering what to do with their lives — and to the people who influence them."

General Mike Ryan, Air Force chief of staff, expects the new ads to help boost recruiting and retention by focusing audiences on the challenges and rewards of Air Force service.

Brigadier Gen. Ron Rand, Air Force director of public affairs, said the six new commercials consistently portray the dedication and professional-

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Whit Peters
Secretary of the Air Force

ism of Air Force people performing important missions every day. "We did a lot of research," he said, "that told us we need to advertise on television to help us reach potential recruits and the general public, and also to recognize the people currently serving."

"These ads convey important messages: the Air Force does a lot for our country, the Air Force is a diverse family of extraordinary Americans, the Air Force is hiring, and the Air Force values and appreciates its people," General Ryan said.

Describing the cost of the project, General Rand said, "We spent \$4.4 million producing the ads, and another \$28.2 million on television and theater advertising which will reach millions of people during the coming year."

The job of directing the new commercials went to Bob Richardson, an Academy Award winner whose credits include being director of photography for box office hits such as "Platoon," "A Few Good Men," "JFK" and "Wag the Dog."

The ads depict scenes of a KC-10 tanker refueling a B-2 Spirit and F-117A Nighthawks, aerial shots of the F-22 Raptor and F-16 and F-15 fighters flying over the Mojave Desert.

But it's not just glitzy airplanes that are showcased in the commercials. Bill Coker, assistant director, said the ad campaign's central theme was to show what it means to be an Air Force member.

He said the commercials also serve as a salute to those who work in support roles. All airmen "should see themselves as role models," he said.

The commercials also tested a new theme line for the Air Force, "America's Air Force — No One Comes Close."

"No One Comes Close" really describes our Air Force," said General Rand. "People in the focus groups interpreted this to mean no other country in the world comes close to the U.S.; no other Air Force in the world comes close to doing what we do; and no other endeavor comes close to the high-tech opportunities available to people in the Air Force."

"Ultimately, we want these ads to evoke strong positive feelings and a greater understanding and awareness of the Air Force, our people and our mission," Secretary Peters said. **(Ray Johnson, Air Force Flight Test Center public affairs, Edwards AFB, Calif., contributed to this article)**

Mission

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The baby was born Aug. 14 at Camp Lester Naval Hospital on Okinawa, Japan. She was quickly diagnosed to be suffering from meconium aspiration syndrome -- a condition caused by feces getting into her lungs, which leads to persistent pulmonary hypertension. Odds of survival were bleak.

The Camp Lester doctors immediately called Wilford Hall -- home of the only piece of equipment in the world capable of keeping the child alive on such a long journey. The ECMO, or extra corporeal membrane oxygenation device, is essentially a heart-lung bypass machine, said Maj. Robert DiGeronimo, a Wilford Hall doctor who was part of the 15-person ECMO team that flew the mission to Japan and back.

Ironically, the Yokota medics were originally not included in the planning, Adams noted. However, when

his staff got word of the intricate mission, Yokota leaders made some critical decisions.

A Yokota C-9 and aeromedical personnel were sent to Kadena and put into crew rest just in case they were needed, Adams said. One of the original plans was to airlift the baby and family to Texas on the same KC-10 that transported the ECMO team to Japan.

However, that plan was scrapped when Yokota medics pointed out that the tanker's electrical system might not support the machine. So the C-9 was used to get the infant and her family to Yokota to meet up with the C-17.

Exactly two hours after the coffins were carried down the back ramp of the C-17 by a United Nations honor guard, a medical team gingerly wheeled the ECMO machine up the same ramp.

The baby was lying face-up on top of the half-million-dollar apparatus, her

tiny feet sticking out from beneath her blankets.

The C-17 and Charleston crew departed at 7 p.m., just an hour behind the tanker's departure from Okinawa. The KC-10 refueled the C-17, allowing it to avoid extra landings, which might have complicated the child's condition, said Lt. Col. Carol Vermilion, of the 374 AES.

This mission was the farthest distance the Wilford Hall ECMO transport team has ever attempted. The team is the only existing ECMO transport available in the world, providing the service since 1992.

Thibodeaux said an unexpected obstacle arose when the first six attempts at aerial refueling failed. The C-17 would not accept fuel from the tanker.

"That was a major cause of concern," he said. "If we wouldn't have been able to refuel, we would have had to land at Elmendorf."

However, after resetting the C-17's

refueling system, the aerial refueling was a success and the mission pressed on.

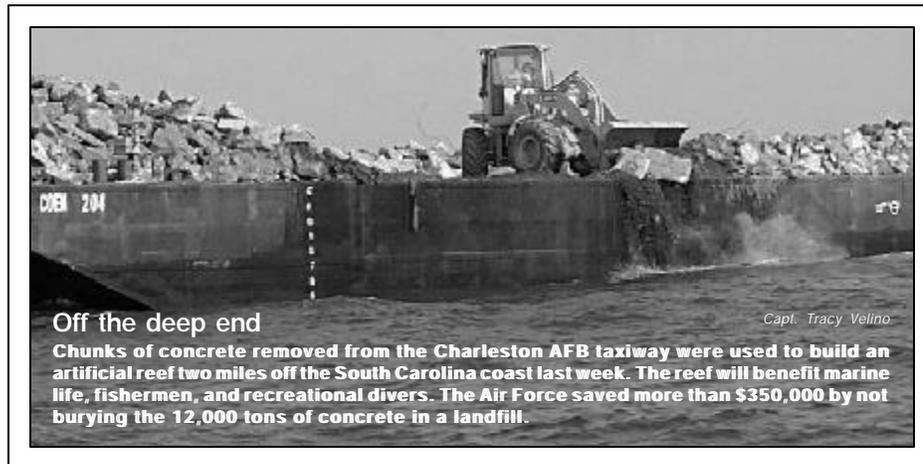
The C-17 later landed at Kelly AFB, where it was met by another crew of medical specialists from Wilford Hall, who quickly transported Alexis to the hospital's neonatal intensive care unit at 6 p.m., Aug. 19.

The baby was successfully transferred to ECMO equipment in the unit and was in stable condition.

Thibodeaux said the Charleston aircrew soon received good news about baby Alexis.

"One of the doctors said the baby's chances of dying before arriving at Yokota was 80 percent," he said. "Now, the baby's chances of surviving at Wilford Hall are 80 percent."

(Courtesy of Pacific Air Forces News Service. Sue Campbell, Wilford Hall Medical Center Public Affairs, and Staff Sgt. Michael Duhe, 437 AW Public Affairs, contributed to this article.)



Off the deep end

Chunks of concrete removed from the Charleston AFB taxiway were used to build an artificial reef two miles off the South Carolina coast last week. The reef will benefit marine life, fishermen, and recreational divers. The Air Force saved more than \$350,000 by not burying the 12,000 tons of concrete in a landfill.

Capt. Tracy Vellino

Vote

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always mail the hardcopy of the FPCA ballot after it has been faxed.

"This is necessary because many LEOs are required to maintain a hard copy with an original signature on file," advises the newsletter.

Generally, all U.S. citizens 18 years or older who are or will be residing outside the United States during an election period are eligible to vote absentee in any election for Federal office. In addition, all members of the Armed Forces, their family members and members of the Merchant Marine and their family members, who are U.S. citizens, may vote absentee in state and local elections.

Armed Forces Voters Week, held Sept. 3-9, is designed to get the word out about the importance of voting for military members and their families. The services have also organized a 2000 Get-Out-the-Vote campaign.