

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
PRESENTATION TO THE  
COMMISSION ON THE NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES

SUBJECT: AIR FORCE RESERVE FAMILY READINESS

STATEMENT OF: MS LAURA COSEGLIO  
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## Laura M. Coseglia

Laura M. Coseglia serves as the 512th Airlift Wing Family Support Director at Dover AFB, Delaware. She serves as the focal point for program planning, development, and implementation for a wide variety of family services. She serves as an advisor to the Wing Commander on all issues affecting readiness and quality of life issues for our service members and their families. Primary services include Leadership Consultation, Crisis Assistance, Information and Referral, and Readiness Planning (predeployment, sustainment, and reintegration).

Laura Coseglia was born and raised in Buffalo, New York. After enlisting in the Air Force Reserve in 1985, she served as an Administrative Technician and became the Family Support Director for the 914<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, Niagara Falls, NY in 1999. During her tenure at Niagara, she helped develop the Family Support program and a Reunion & Reintegration Team that has provided reintegration services to our military families. The Family Support center at Niagara was recognized at the “Outstanding Family Support Center” for three consecutive years (2003, 2004, & 2005) under her leadership. Ms. Coseglia served faithfully at the 914<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing for twenty years as a Civilian employee prior to accepting her current position at Dover AFB. She still holds her Reserve position, now serving at Dover AFB and has won the Outstanding Family Support Center for 2006 at this location.

She earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Organizational Management in 1994. In 1998 she attended the New York Institute of Massage and earned a National Certification and New York State license in Therapeutic Massage Therapy. Laura Coseglia holds two Associate Degrees from the Community College of the Air Force; the first is in Administrative Management and the second in Social Work. She has received numerous military and civilian awards and currently manages a “Key Family Member Volunteer Program” that has served as a model for the Air Force Reserve Command.

### **CAREER ASSIGNMENTS:**

2005 – Present 512<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Family Support Director, Dover AFB, DE  
1999 – 2005 914<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Family Support Director, Niagara Falls, NY  
1993 – 2005 Social Science Program Specialist, 914<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, Niagara Falls ARS, NY  
1995 – 1997 Budget Analyst, 914<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, Niagara Falls, NY  
1993 – 1995 Accounting Technician, 914<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, Niagara Falls, NY  
1989 – 1993 Military Pay Technician, 914<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, Niagara Falls, NY  
1988 – 1989 Orders Clerk, 914<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, Niagara Falls, NY  
1985 – 1988 Administrative Assistant, 914<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing (Services), Niagara Falls, NY  
1985 OJT, 914<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, Niagara Falls, NY  
1985 Student, Air Force Basic Military Training, Lackland AFB, TX

### **AWARDS:**

2006 Outstanding Family Support Center Award, Air Force Reserve Command  
2005 Outstanding Family Support Center Award, Air Force Reserve Command  
2004 Outstanding Family Support Center Award, Air Force Reserve Command  
2003 Outstanding Family Support Center Award, Air Force Reserve Command  
2002 John E. Foley Award  
2001 Outstanding Campaign Coordinator for Combined Federal Campaign  
1997 John E. Foley Award

Mr. Chairman, and distinguished members of the Commission, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to represent the Air Force Reserve's Family Readiness Program. The statement, "We recruit the member, but we retain the family" is not a cliché but has been a reality in the Air Force Reserve for many years. The quality of life we provide for our Airmen and their families is a distinct determining factor in how long they remain in our service. The sacrifices our "Citizen" Airmen, their spouses and children make throughout a typical career are enormous. Today, our country depends on the Reserve Components to an extent unprecedented in history. The men and women of the Air Force Reserve are making a significant impact to the joint warfighting capability of our nation's defense. As our operations tempo increases and deployments lengthen, our Air Force Reserve families are presented with many unique challenges not experienced by their civilian counterparts.

### **Background**

Until Desert Shield/ Storm (DSS), the Air Force Reserve did not fully address family readiness issues but rather relied on active duty installations to provide this support. During 1991, a study commissioned by the Chief of Air Force Reserve indicated Reserve families were not prepared for mission requirements. The study also identified gaps in service and that Reserve families needed a support network for responding to a high operational tempo.

As a result of that study, in 1992, Air Force Reserve funded one-deep full time positions at 15 of our stand-alone bases, with two part-time enlisted traditional reservists assigned to each of these locations as well as our co-

located wings on active duty (AD) host bases to augment the program during monthly Unit Training Assemblies. In 1998, Air Force Reserve Command funded additional one-deep full time positions at six large Reserve associate wings that are co-located on active duty bases. Two part-time enlisted traditional reservists were also assigned to provide services during monthly Unit Training Assemblies. Initial key mission areas focused on information and referral, outreach, and deployment support during peacetime operations.

### **Operational Support**

However, for the past sixteen years the Air Force has been engaged in combat and the Air Force Reserve has been an integral part of our nation's combat efforts. Our participation has demanded sacrifices on the part of our families, employers and reservists themselves yet we remain dedicated and committed to the same priorities as the Regular Air Force: winning against terrorism; developing and caring for our Airmen and families. When our Reservists deploy in support of operations, their families become part of that deployment and support the war from home.

The events of September 11, 2001 and subsequent operations have changed lives of both Citizen Airmen and their families with approximately 66,000 requirements having been filled by members of the Air Force Reserve. According to the Contingency Tracking System (CTS) Deployment File for Operations Enduring Freedom & Iraqi Freedom, over 13,000 Air Force Reservist have more than one mobilization tour, thus, increasing the challenges in delivering various types of services to Reservists and their families which are

critical to mission success. These types of “Reserve-Specific” services as well as the level of support requires more detailed, comprehensive planning for personal and family readiness. Just as reservists are participating at far greater rates, family readiness work has now grown to a 365-day a year program.

## **Challenges**

The military commitment that Reservists make has a profound effect on their families. There is no denying the military lifestyle, the possibility of unexpected deployments, often into areas where there is unrest, can play havoc on a family. In fact, supporting the emotional well being and reducing stress during deployments are among the top issues facing the Air Force Reserve.

Although there is a strong partnership with staff of the Active Duty Airman and Family Readiness Centers, Reserve Family Readiness Program’s infrastructure is vastly different to their full scale operation. The marked differences are in the types and methods of service delivery due to the geographically dispersed population of Reserve communities; thus, our inability to provide direct financial/family life services. The Reserve Family Program has service delivery requirements to families residing in locations ranging from 22 to 35 states. New requirements are creating challenges in providing support with such limited staff to meet today’s full-time demand, especially when members and their families do not live in close proximity to an installation. Active Duty Airman and Family Readiness Centers and Reserve Family Readiness Offices are engaged in an active partnership to ensure all families are receiving the necessary services. This includes a range of support from individual/family life

situations, crisis assistance, transition and employment assistance, combat-wounded to mass casualty, natural disaster response, relief and recovery.

## **Improvements**

The Command is working towards improving its family readiness programs by making connections with families stronger, helping them become better prepared, and having a proactive outreach program to meet the needs of units and individuals. In particular, the Air Force Reserve is focusing on strengthening all predeployment, deployment, and post deployment Airmen and family wellness programs as detailed in the Office of Secretary of Defense report to Congress, Transition Assistance Personnel and Disabled Transition Assistance Program, dated May 4, 2006. Specific areas of improvement include a standardized pre-deployment checklist and education, extensive deployment sustainment support, comprehensive redeployment services, post-deployment health assessment and reassessment, access to non-clinical counseling, and reunion/reintegration challenges the “Citizen” Airman and family face.

To meet their needs, Air Force Reserve is seeking opportunities to enhance community support programs and provide services for both married and single Airmen, regardless of duty status, at home station or deployed or mobilized. Many of these programs are outlined in more detail below. Together they demonstrate the Air Force and Air Force Reserve’s strong commitment to

ensuring our Airmen and their families have the right tools to cope with the challenges that may arise from deployments.

### **Outreach Programs**

Taking care of our Air Force Reserve family members back home and helping to keep them in contact with the deployed member is extremely important to the morale and well being of our Airmen. Our Family Readiness Offices provide pre-deployment “must know and must do” information in preparing for activations and mobilizations. We also provide support for spouses and families during deployment that includes 100% contact with each spouse/family through phone calls, newsletters/postcards, free phone and videos calls and Key Family Member Support Groups. These important programs help to keep families connected with their deployed spouse and up-to-date on programs offered by the home station. In addition, information is distributed via email, websites, Military OneSource on topics such as “suddenly military”, financial survival during deployments, parenting skills, and how to keep long-distance relationships healthy. DoD funded Military OneSource uses toll-free telephone numbers and web sites to deliver information and services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from any location in the world. In addition, Military OneSource provides access to pre-paid family assistance counseling services on issues ranging from parent-child communications to reunion/reintegration of the family following deployments. Family Readiness Offices work with other on-base entities as well

as community organizations to sponsor special activities for children and spouses of deployed reservists, such as family dinners, holiday events, recreational fairs, and Family Days.

Reintegration and redeployment support begins for Airmen while in the area of responsibility (AOR) when Chaplains or mental health staffs provide initial information and resources and Airman complete a post-deployment health assessment. Families can begin reintegration planning by working within our Key Family Member Groups and with Family Readiness Offices focusing on developing communication skills and realistic expectations for the reunion process and homecoming to help them reconnect with family, their workplace, and their community. Upon arriving at home station, formal redeployment processing and services are provided to Reservists prior to their departing to their home/state of residence. With reunion and reintegration needs, Reserve Family Readiness has a responsibility to provide follow-up interaction after they come off orders to determine if there are any residual problems that are surfacing now that the member is back with the family. This holds especially true with those personnel who deployed overseas in support of terrorism efforts. Issues concerning health care, family conflict and communication, employment issues and potential precursors to post traumatic stress often come to surface once the deployment or long term orders are over and the member is trying to reintegrate back into civilian life.

### **Child Care**

Citizen Airman must balance the competing demands of family, parenting, civilian employment and military service. This is particularly challenging in today's environment of higher operational tempo, increased mobilizations and longer periods of time away from home. Available, high quality and affordable child care are workforce issues with direct impact on mission readiness. Air Force Home Community Care program is offered at 15 locations and reduces out-of-pocket expenses for Air Reserve Component members by providing free in-house quality child care during their scheduled drill week-ends. Working in partnership with the civilian community, Operation Military Child Care (OMCC) provides child care fee assistance for Reserve (Air National Guard also) who are activated or deployed and whose children are enrolled in non-DoD licensed child care programs. OMCC provides help in locating licensed child care options in the member's community and offers reduced child care fees through a subsidy. Members are eligible to participate during the period of deployment and for 60 days after their return. Returning Home Care program provides 16 hours of free child care per child to Air Force Reserve members (Air National Guard and Regular Air Force also) returning to their home stations after deployment in support of contingency operations.

### **Youth Programs/Services**

Access to youth programs and activities are a key component of our strategy to support the quality of life of Airman and their families. Two ongoing partnerships with Boys & Girls Clubs of America and the US Department of Agriculture's 4-H program provide additional means to reach families living both

in communities and on installations. Mission Youth Outreach program provides a one-year free membership in a local Boys & Girls Club for Reserve families (Air National Guard/Regular Air Force also) who do not live near a military installation to have access to a safe and positive place for youth activities. The 4-H program fosters the development of clubs and provides access to other resources for Air Guard and Reserve families through specially appointed State Military Liaisons.

## **Conclusion**

As we look back over the years since 9/11, we can see how our lives and priorities have changed. Our military members have served and sacrificed and been able to mount a significant response to the terrorist threat. We are grateful to them, but they could not have accomplished it alone. Our military families are one of the columns of support that enables the Reserve Components to meet the needs of the country and we appreciate the sacrifices that families have made and will continue to make. Our families directly contribute to the mission success of our great nations' airmen by allowing them to concentrate on the job they are doing thus ensuring our safety for generations to come.

As we continue to grow the Reserve Family Readiness Program, the command is extremely proud of the hard work and dedication our personnel put forth daily to not only prepare our Citizen Airman for deployment but also ensure we are supporting their families before, during and after. The highlights I have shared with you today demonstrate that our professionals never forget the importance of what we are charged with accomplishing. Through innovative

programs, use of technology, the hard work of our dedicated personnel, and the support of the community, we continue to provide critical mission capability for our commanders and vital support for our members and their families.