



Andy Deacon

USAF 1995-2022



Andy Deacon Interview Transcript

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Nathan Bachand

All right, we are recording. Go ahead and give me just a little bit of your background: where you grew up, what made you join the Air Force, and how you became a TACP.

Andy Deacon

Alright, I grew up in Granger, Indiana, so about 11 miles from Notre Dame, South Bend area, right on the Michigan border. Basically, I joined the Air Force because my cousin got me to join the Air Force. He was 30 days behind me in age. We did everything together and he joined a year prior. College didn't work out at first for either of us. So joining the Air Force seemed to see the thing to do. I did check out all the recruiters like everyone else does, but I started flying at age 14, got my pilot's license at 17, all that good stuff. Wanted to keep going down that road, but Gulf War I happened and gas prices spiked and I had to quit flying, which is kind of funny because it didn't go up that much compared to the prices today.

So I joined at 20, or just after 21. Like most guys who were high speed back in the 90s, that was 1995. It was PJ or CCT that they pushed it to recruiters unless you had a guard or something. I mean, TACP was still the unknown at that time. Went to the OL, did the CCT, double-rated pushups as usual. Hey, you double-red, you're out. There was none of this wash back start over stuff. But they said, hey, you're a good dude. And then they sent the guys over to TACP school. Recruiter there at Lackland, Warren Garner, as a lot of us know, Warren was a great influence and really laid it down. I was like, man, this is still right up my alley.

So I just crossed right over from there and went to Hurlburt that summer of 95 and joined from there. I was like, man, getting to work with airplanes still, being a pilot. I still wanted to be a pilot. Just didn't know how yet. Air Force taught me all that later on. And yeah, joined there. That was a fun schoolhouse here because we had Hurricane Opal come through in 95. It's the largest CAT-3 on the coast, which was a direct hit to Hurlburt. That made the field exercise cold. I think I got hypothermia for the first time. It was was it nine mile and 10 mile creek was more like nine foot and 10 foot deep with the water and then graduated December, middle of December there in 95 and then got assigned to Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Showed up between Christmas and New Year's.

Nathan Bachand

Gotcha. So tell me about the schoolhouse. So what was that experience like? What was the training like and was that training relevant when you showed up to the 19th?

Andy Deacon

I'm going to say that the training was close, only because everything moved slower in the 90s compared to what we're used to today. We were the last class to be trained on the PRC-77 FM radio. And they even said that, you are not going to see this radio again, you know, maybe some Army units, you know, had that and whatnot. Still had the KYK-13, the PRC-113, the 104, and whatnot. Hey, when you get your unit, there's this thing called SINCGARS, of course, that's already came and gone. But you know, digital radio and the first real digital was awesome. So kind of had the old school Vietnam era radio still going through the schoolhouse. You know, the JRC-206 with the mod where the pallet was still in the backseat, so you only had the one passenger before they moved to the V3 and the V5 mods that came just a few years later.

Yeah, that was the thing we really didn't get when we had old school radios and radio theory. But that was the cool thing. It's still radio theory. Like, doesn't matter if you get new radios, how do you use it, make it work. The in that sense it was awesome. Was it a camera was like a DCT, the data, the data burst link thing that could do the timeline, all that equipment is like, that's been replaced by a Samsung telephone. The BCT and the DCT, that's what it was. Got to see some of that old school stuff. KOI-18, I was at the crazy KYK-15 to generate your own fills. Yeah, a lot of that stuff and it's gone by the end of end of the 90s, really.

Nathan Bachand

What was the big thing at the time that washed people out? I know this has gone back and forth, but were a lot of guys washing out during the land nav.

Andy Deacon

Um, we had in my class, probably two or three. I wasn't a big class as always, you know, and half of us come from, PJ, CCT, or either medical red, just need time to, to heal. But for those off the street, maybe they didn't understand what they were getting into. Of course, some funny stuff. You get the kids that grew up in a big city out there in the woods. That was some funny radio calls. I do remember a few, one of my buddies, Vargas and you just started, where are you at? I don't know, but there's a big ass lake in front of me. It's like how he says

stuff like that. You're like, okay, you know, I was at the Eglin range, which I thought was a really cool place to trade. That was awesome.

Nathan Bachand

So, one thing a lot of guys talk about that went through the 90s was the kind of disparity between your armored guys and your guys that go to the airborne units. Was it weird going to the 19th where you're kind of in between, like you're not really with the mech and you're not really airborne because it's air assault?

Andy Deacon

It's air assault, 160th just got, hey, this is the 160th because Mogadishu was 93. So that was kind of a big thing. So being attached to the airborne, I think it was first of the 332nd. So each brigade had that little air wing attachment. So you kind of work with them for sling load, whatnot, couple helicopter rides, which was really awesome. So got to riding everything out there.

Nathan Bachand

We're guys going to airborne out of the 19th at the time?

Andy Deacon

No, if they went and it sucks, you're going to go unfunded, like permissive... Man, as a Senior Airman, that's a lot... that's a big deal. Other than that, slots came few and far between. It was mechanized airborne or basically an infantry unit out of TACP school that you went,, guys would compete. I didn't want airborne at the time and, I still want to go fly and college, all that good stuff. Fort Campbell was close to home to Indiana still, and it was, it was a good, I signed on like, okay, that sounds good.

And I also thought about, man, I could get into maybe I also want to fly helicopters, so I could get it with the 160th. I was close to going more and doing that program before,, just going full air force,, other than that, yeah, that was really about the big three. But yeah, if you want to go to some of those schools, it was unfunded your own dime. I'm like, man, that's okay. We're still the bastard children of the air force. ETAC was still the thing that you probably didn't get until you were, a senior airman that had a staff line.

The training was just slower. Get your five level, do your CDCs and wait, I think we had one guy promote to staff that year. Clinton was cutting the military, what, by 50%, bringing all

the guys from Germany over, they were shutting down all the little German bases. So we were growing like crazy. We redid the old 19th ASOS before it got demolished.

Nathan Bachand

Where was it on Fort Campbell?

Andy Deacon

I was down by the pool on the main road from the Air Assault School and you go south and then right there by the tennis courts.

Nathan Bachand

Yep, by that outdoor pool.

Andy Deacon

Yep, that outdoor pool and then on the other side, like two streets over, it looked like an old church building converted. That was our commander's office and secretaries back when we had personalists and all that. Everything digital. So you had to go over there and get all your admin stuff. So they weren't co-located with us.

I think it was Sergeant Zangarly and Sergeant Dutra over there. Zangarly had just passed away. Gosh, not even a month or two ago from cancer. I saw Sergeant Tacy post that. So, small community, of course. I'd run into these people all over. The schoolhouse in particular, that's where I met Jason Faley. He had an ear problem. So he couldn't go to this next assignment was going to Fort Campbell. Many there became good friends. We end up being roommates neighbors at Campbell for a couple years.

And Sergeant Ramos was one of my instructors. I ran into him four or five times. Which was funny once obviously enlisted once as a cadet when I was a cadet instructor for ROTC at Tyndall Air Force Base. He was going through like some senior Academy upgrade and ran into him there again. And then I ran into him again at Hurlburt when I was a U28 pilot and he was doing some ISR stuff contract. Got to work with him through the years like that. It was good to see Sergeant DeLay. Dennis DeLay was one of the main instructors there also at the schoolhouse. Ramos was obviously the PT stud. Man, he worked us. If you could keep up with him, that was good on you.

Nathan Bachand

What was the PT culture like? Did you guys have any training regimen or was it just day to day?

Andy Deacon

It was all scripted, you had to memorize it the first first exercise of the day. Yeah, it was scripted and you did it together. Eight count body builders together, everything was together. You had the pits, each had your own pit. So almost like the Simon says.

Nathan Bachand

That was at the 19th?

Andy Deacon

Not at the 19th, that was the schoolhouse. The 19th, it was a little more relaxed, but you, you still did it together like that. You did all your calisthenics basically together and then for the run, you just go run. Hey, we're going down to this point or that point. And, so it was very much...

Nathan Bachand

Army-style PT.

Andy Deacon

Yeah, because we didn't have to do the Air Force PT test, but we did the Army PT test, obviously, every quarter. So we trained to that and of course you want to go train at lunch, train on after hours. We were training three times a day, which was great. It was work hard, play hard, do your Monday morning radio calls, Humvee tests, all that, hit the gym, lunch, ain't no thing, and some exercise in the afternoon.

And then of course SINCGARS came online, getting ready for JRTC, equipment stuff, equipment accountability, always keep an inventory, keep your Humvee clean, gassed up, just keep everything ready to go. And then we were on the same cycles as the Army, the one on combat dwell, the one in training, and the one on alert. Each one was attached to that.

Nathan Bachand

Were you going TDY much?

Andy Deacon

No, JRTC, NTC, those were obviously the big ones. You went with your brigade. So I did two, two JRTCs, one NTC, Eagle Challenge, Lightning Challenge stuff. It was hosted. We would work that stuff and then, prepare for our Eagle Challenge at the 19th every year. But the TDYs were rare. If it was, it was for CAS. Guys going up to Atterbury, or Indiana, or something like that. And a few guys, again, it was mostly the ETACs and the senior, maybe a few of the ROMADs that would go that were up there.

But yeah, there wasn't a lot of, again, the nineties things were getting slowed down, people were getting out, not promoted. So, we were kicking out 10 year senior airmen, which was like, you got to be kidding me. So I know a lot of guys came back after 9/11 and they're like, Oh, wait a minute. Y'all come back and all of a sudden guys are making chief.

Nathan Bachand

So so it really wasn't important for guys to go get ETAC quality. It was just if it happens, it happens if you happen to be blessed as a ROMAD to go on these CAS TDYs. You'd get some exposure to it but being at the 19th, you don't have a range in your backyard. So really going TDY was the only chance to go you talk to a fixed-wing aircraft. Were working with Apaches at Fort Campbell?\

Andy Deacon

They did have Apaches, but we didn't really work with helicopters. We worked with artillery. So we got to do mortars and 105s, stuff like that. And that was incorporated to our Eagle challenge, which was great to do. Shot over, shot out, boom, fire for effect. That was really cool. Work with the mils and the army stuff before they had all the simulators and all that cool stuff. We got to do it real world. I think maybe twice A-10s came to Fort Campbell. So when you want the range, at least watch and observe if that was probably the, if I remember right. Cause again, it's a smaller range. It's not really an air range, but the A-10s could do it. They came up from Indiana because it was the closest at the time. Other than that, it costs, I get it money.

Andy Deacon

But the 90s people don't realize, Hey man, the military shrunk by, it was at 55% in eight years in the 90s. So things were limited, we did a lot of self-help. We rebuilt the 19th with self-help. It was us labor. So, that was half the day train. The other half was throw on your construction and we're going to build a new 19th ASOS in this old building and retrofitted drywall mudding head. I learned a lot of carpentry.

Andy Deacon

And then the V3 mods, we did all that stuff ourselves. We got the GRC-206 palette, pushed into the back, put in the new radios, got rid of the old FM stuff, which was nice. And I could put four people in a Humvee with the radio palette. So, yeah, that's what we did.

Nathan Bachand

Two other things I want to get into during your time at the 19th, one, what was your relationship like with the Army? So were you as a young airman hanging out at your aligned battalion, did you have flights that were aligned to a brigade and then broken down into sections aligned to the battalion? And were you working with them much outside of going to an NTC, JRTC?

Andy Deacon

Not as much as what they'd be doing today that I've seen. I'd say post-9/11 pre-9/11. It was if you're getting ready for an exercise yeah you go talk to them. Oh there's new equipment, you go talk to them. Other than us airmen out and about talking to guys, hey man Air Force is here, some casual guys, yeah they might be in the their unit that does it that level. But as far as the command higher up it wasn't much.

Yeah there's the brigade headquarters that I'm assigned to but I walked in that building a handful of times, we just didn't really intermingle unless there was competitions and of course our leadership was like man gotta beat the Army. And of course we always we did. We really beat them at everything, and they were okay these guys are out here they're proving it. So I think physically they see us PT with Air Assault school, the Army 10 miler was there that we competed in. They had races on base and we'd we crush them. We were competing with their rangers and their 5th Group guys and beating them and we're just young airmen but we're studs.

Nathan Bachand

That's pretty consistent across all the decades, TACPs being better at Army things than the Army.

Andy Deacon

Yeah, and they question, look, everybody has those, like, the Army guy always says, I was going to join the Air Force and like, well, why didn't you couldn't pass the ASVAB? You can't get one out of two right? And you get talking to him like, okay, man, you are where you need to be.

Nathan Bachand

And the other thing I want to get into relationship-wise, what were the ALOs like in your experience?

Andy Deacon

They were really great. I think the majority of them, a lot of them came there to retire, to get their 20 years. They had to do the ALO tour. So they stopped flying. A lot of majors, few of the Lieutenant Colonel's, but that might've been the command where they would go on after this possibly to get a command tour out of the deal, a lot of B-52 guys, somewhere like the, the EWOs and the navs, not necessarily pilots. One of them, and I can't remember his name, it was a captain. And he did the, I guess they, they call him banked back in the day. So he had a pilot slot, but they were full. So you had to go somewhere for a couple of years before you go to pilot training. So later on, so it could be like a maintenance officer or something close to some of those guys are fighters like, man, let me go be an ALO now and knock this out, which was cool. And then they would go to pilot training. I see. I saw it.

Nathan Bachand

I thought the Air Force sent them to go back into training as an instructor when they did that.

Andy Deacon

The officers? Yeah.

Nathan Bachand

Like I thought they would go make them an instructor once they made it through flight school.

Andy Deacon

Sometimes if they were really good they'd keep them as a FAIP, yeah. First Assignment Instructor Pilot. Yeah, really good. And some of those guys, if they got those, it's cuz they're gonna go get a fighter later on as well. They just a different course on how they did that stuff.

But yeah, some of those guys just came to us first and learned a lot. And so they were humble. Man, like, this is fun. This is cool to go in the field, drive a Humvee. A lot of times like, I want to drive. Okay, drive. I'll navigate there. I think they were into it. When it came to obviously the ego challenge and stuff, it was obviously for the enlisted side for us to do, but they ran it as the teams and basically let us run it the way we wanted to run it. We needed a top cover. I think they were great for that. Because the Army is rank conscious. But a lot of times you got the major or the Colonel going, man, you need to talk to my airman. Okay, I'm just a dumb pilot. I don't get all this.

They get a three week class and then they show up at Fort Campbell, basically. They know how to use a PRC-113 because it's UHF, VHF, but the other stuff, they're like, okay, I got no clue. That was our expertise. So, but they were good for the top cover. I was like, hey, man, go get me this or training, training with the Army. Hey, man, it was funny because we can take Pepsis and Cokes, cans of dip into the field. The Army couldn't, that was worse than 5590 batteries and some other stuff we needed, for trading.

Nathan Bachand

So I don't know if you guys did this but so as a JTAC instructor, we go through this mock staff coordination, as best as we can do. But it's essentially a checklist like hey I'm gonna go talk to this person talk to this person talk to this person to mission planning... One thing I always made them check their box for was to bring dip or cigarettes to the S6 so that they can fill SINCGARS for them.

Andy Deacon

Yeah, batteries and anything else we needed, yeah, it was pretty wild how that worked. I'm like man, you're right. It was just that sergeant major like, dude you're giving me crap, and it

was like hey Air Force, I'm like hey Army. I don't know what three stripes means, we do both roles, like all right dude. Sergeant Major Fitzpatrick, I remember that guy. He'd say, I served three tours in Vietnam! Dude that's your own fault. 33 years as an 11B holy crap. That's rough living. But it was cool the trading, and we could get things done and TACP tactically acquired a lot of our things.

Nathan Bachand

All right, so you did four years at the 19th?

Andy Deacon

Did almost five, and got out early. While I was there I was like, okay. Well, I've been in triathlons at the time, started before I enlisted. Got real good, got sponsors, got a bike sponsor sponsored by Metrics and Power Bar. I got to do permissive TDYs. So I started racing across the country. It's like I'm gonna go to the Ironman, the Hawaiian Ironman I want to qualify.

That required me doing half Ironman's all over from Florida back up into Michigan. I was driving on weekends on my own dime just racing training. Got to do the inaugural Armed Forces Triathlon at Camp Lejeune in 1997. So I got a picture of that which was really cool as the first first ever Armed Forces Triathlon. And that's because it was going to be an Olympic sport. I think in 2000 or 2002. So now the athlete program that the DOD has. So I made that team which was really cool. I wasn't wasn't as fast unfortunately on the run. Being TACP you're more jacked and thicker. The run is the run, but swimming and biking man? I can crush them the run. I'm just a medium build guy. I'm not six foot two with long legs

The same year got to do the inaugural Air Force Marathon with three other TACPs. We got a picture of that, and it was right when we're having the 50th anniversary of the Air Force, so it was the first Air Force Marathon and 19th was having a like a dining in for it, and we're like we're going to do this marathon. We got in trouble. Think well you're going to get blah blah blah, then we went to leadership and said well, we're the only TACPs representing at the Air Force Marathon, and that flipped the script for them. Okay that's really cool, okay good on you. We're still out there representing, still friends with all those guys that we did it with.

Andy Deacon

So we did the original, we got the biggest medal. I still got the t-shirt, the original medal. They said no other medal was gonna be bigger than the very first one of that year. So I've got all those. And in the 90s, that's back when you did races, you got medals for first, second,

third, and fourth. After that, you didn't get a participation ribbon. So the stuff I got was earned. It wasn't given. So the mentality of getting the black berets earned, not given, that stuck with me forever. Two of my highlights there was doing those, two races. And you're representatives, like, that's pretty cool. And then meeting some of those people at those races. You're a what? TACP, which is what? Some people, yeah, or the black berets, not the blue berets, or not the cops, back in the day.

Nathan Bachand

Yeah, I get that all the time. I just got it yesterday. I went shooting yesterday. I went to the indoor range and asked for the military discount. So you're in the Air Force? Yeah. He's like, oh, so what'd you do? Told him I'm a TACP, I'm in the guard now. What's that?

Andy Deacon

They still don't know. I'm glad Jared Taylor made that Controlled video. That really gave a highlight that JTAC isn't new career field, no that's a cert. And then you gotta tell me it used to be ETAC and JTAC came around in 2006.

I didn't get to U-28s until 2007, but flying combat, I want to say maybe late 2005, early 2006 is when I finally heard the term JTAC was like, wait, what? And then through some of my buddies, I'm like, okay, okay, I can see that. That makes sense, cause there were so few of us. There were really just a couple hundred after 9/11. So it was joint. Now I get it. You're trying to certify these Army guys, it's Navy guys and throw us back out there in the field.,

Nathan Bachand

And just to clarify, what years were you at the 19th?

Andy Deacon

95 to 2000.

Nathan Bachand

Okay, did they have at the time the flight that was there hanging out with fifth group?

Andy Deacon

Yes. There was a master sergeant, I can't remember his name, that's gonna kill me. Tommy Ray was there though. He was there before he became an officer. I remember him there briefly. Ray Carvalho was there. Chris Spann was there. Obviously his cousin in Afghanistan was the first to go. Who else? It was small. But the triple nickel was there so they attached to those and that's when Faley was going through to get assigned to them as well. He was just crushing the stuff. I think somebody else got it because of seniority.

Nathan Bachand

Did guys try out for it? How did that work? How did guys get over there?

Andy Deacon

I just remember Faley specifically saying that he tried out. It was a couple days of competitions. It was pretty intense. Rucking, land nav, testing a bunch of knowledge and skills. Just like you did your CDC stuff. Probably I imagine there would be an interview as well, right? They want the personality over there. The face time I think is huge, and as a TACP that definitely played my role for the rest of my pilot years too, especially in U-28s and Drones going back and working with the TACPs through various parts of the military.

And we knew he crushed it but he didn't get it. Like man, that's bad. We know he should, he deserves it, but like a staff sergeant got it instead. I can't remember who or why but Faley crushed it all in a day and it took the other guy like two or three days. I just remember that. So it's like wait a minute. Come on, man. Faley was a good dude. And then a year later got killed in Udari. I went back to that funeral. Unfortunately, when I was in college as a cadet, he was the first of mine to go that I've ever seen, and that was... that was brutal.

Nathan Bachand

I don't know if you knew that the big the group meeting room at the 19th is named the Faley.

Andy Deacon

The one at the new building, yeah. I got to go to that on an exercise in the U-28 and got to go toward that building like man, I told the guys, I was roommates with this guy, actually borrowed his shoes for a PT test. Because mine got soaked from some run. I wasn't gonna run in wet shoes and get blister. So we were the same size feet. He's like, I brought shoes, because he was there on the medical anyways. So yeah, just little stories like that.

Nathan Bachand

What were people saying about what happened at Udari around the time that it happened?

Andy Deacon

At the time we didn't know much about it. Brian Cruising was another one at the 19th with us. So I knew Cruising and Faley were out there. There was a lot of anger. I'm going to say that when I went to the funeral, saw Sergeant Werts, couple other guys that I remember at the 19th. We were angry, very, very angry.

And I get it, an F-14 pilot with all the chem lights with a planned range... You mess up the IP and the CP, how I can actually get it from a pilot's perspective now, with that equipment. I'll say that with that equipment back then. Yes. With the stuff we have today, there's no excuse. Zero. There's zero excuse for that. And that was also traditional CAS. Really when 9 11 started, everything was keyhole CAS in the wheel. It was abbreviated just because it was an asymmetrical warfare style gorilla from then on and we adapted as needed.

Nathan Bachand

How did you find out about Jason passing? The news?

Andy Deacon

A couple of my buddies and we went down, we also went down for the funeral, two of my other roommates were there, Troy Hammond and Chris Gray, we're all already out and so we all went back together for the funeral. Went down to Nashville, all that good stuff. I already got married, baby was already on the way, so I remember the picture he had in February of this baby, it's like, oh my gosh. And I only talked to him like a couple weeks prior. I still talked to a few of them. That blew my mind, that hit tough, that was the first one. For the next 20 years, I had plenty more after that, but he was the first.

Nathan Bachand

Yeah, this is helpful. So I'm working on making one of these books for Failey as well. So we got a couple guys who were close to him and I'm going to be compiling this story along with some of those. It's just nice to have, like you using his shoes, right, for PT tests. The little things like that are nice to include.

Andy Deacon

Yeah, you can already tell he was a really a good dude. he was already like a senior airman. I remember I said, he got, he got some ear problem from Hurlburt and had to stay there. And that was, I was still a student, but I was fast. We were, we became friends right there. He was going to Campbell. I was going to Campbell and we ended up being neighbors of all things. And we were right across the hall from each other at the apartments for a long time. He knew I was doing the races and all that stuff. I even did a, did a race at Hurlburt and got first place in the Destin triathlon. Ramos still smoked me the next time. Like, well, you get on a bike and swim. Let's see, then let's see how you do, but, yeah, it was just, give me the opportunity to do that, which was awesome. Being physically fit was great., yeah, I can't think of anything else after that.

Nathan Bachand

So anything else you want to touch on on the 19th on being a TACP before we move on?

Andy Deacon

I said everything was the old ALICE gear, the old equipment, old BDUs, still had the jungle boots. We got the Lowas with the Vibram soles, all that good comfort stuff. It's probably why we all have bad feet, we're in for status now, shin splits. Again, 9/11 changed everything, gee, the money changed everything and technology. I think that just got out of hand. It got so far so fast after that, it was hard to upgrade. I got stories on that, it'll still blend over from U-28 coming back working with TACPs, JTACs, Tier 1.

We would advance too far, too fast with radios and realize that our ground pounders didn't even have the radios to talk to us and none of that's going from the analog to digital. Having that TACP knowledge was huge, I could take back to that story, I'm like, guys, we can't do this. What? I know what radios they are using. That's not compatible. They got Thales MBITRs. You got PRC 152s now with Harris, I say. You're trying to go from digital to analog and we were working with tiered units. It's hard to, I guess, make that analog go back to digital.

We actually had to put equipment in there to do that to some of our users. If it was the Rangers, if it was the SEAL teams, the 17th a lot, they also got the money first, but we worked with the tiered assets first. We did not chop to conventional because it wasn't enough of us, but we would upgrade so fast that our ground supporting us, they didn't have the technology to talk to us almost or it was extremely hard. That's great, hey, we're updating the airplane, but did you guys forget that our mission set is them? We have to get compatible with them, oh crap, yeah, let's bring it into the fold.

Everything I learned from the schoolhouse, which was funny, I ended up going back to the schoolhouse, with the JTACs and the schoolhouse guys on a lot of projects to close the gap on knowledge and then help those guys when they get out to the field. As far as the 19th, it, it was a start. I didn't know it. I didn't know it laid the groundwork for the rest of my Air Force career, it really did. The people I met there, I saw throughout my entire career. One of my first roommates, Kevin Carpenter, now he's my neighbor, still to this day. He retired me, I retired him. We retired each other and I ran into him all over the world and then he finished his tour out at the schoolhouse and got to close it down as a JTAC instructor and I was already helping out the JTAC class with Jeremiah Hare before that, working with those guys.

Every time I was home, I worked with the new JTAC class as far as getting them a capes brief on the U-28 because again, David Gray. There's another one. It was the class behind me in TACP and then I think he's with Dave Bickle, a couple other guys and then Del Toro was behind me to get all these guys I knew of and then see him at Raptor 1 at the schoolhouse. I brought him into the brief, you're an officer, you ought to get this brief because I know you're going to go out, you're good and gave him the U-28, AC-130 brief, gunship, all that stuff. Three weeks later, he's down range and gone. It's like, you got to be kidding me.

Nathan Bachand

Didn't they make him go through the schoolhouse twice?

Andy Deacon

Yes. Yes, they did. Because they said it was too long. Let's see. Jared Taylor was there at the school. I had my pilot slot. I got him going back for that and I'm like, I probably made the right decision because my joints in my back, obviously my back, when they went but, I've heard stories like Jarred Taylor was going through the classes and said, hey man, you've already heard the beret, so you do what you need to do.

I'm sure Dave's like, oh god, I'm back in the Eglin range again, well, nothing's changed. It's like, you lead the class, I'm sure it was, yeah, the digital now, it's really about it, just the radio stuff, but yeah, I'm sure he smoked that, probably not a problem for him. Again, is what it is. Yeah, friends like that, I've seen them again, crossing paths years later, being that small community. But man, it's amazing how globally, we're still in touch with each other. Crossing paths left and right, it's wild.

Nathan Bachand

So what led you to getting out of TACP, going to school, was that with the objective of becoming a pilot? Because you did ROTC, right?

Andy Deacon

Yep. The ROTC at Notre Dame. Did not go to Notre Dame, just did the ROTC there. I can't afford Notre Dame. But I learned from the ALOs. So there was the mentorship of like, you got to have a college degree. You got to go through like a ROTC program. I was enlisted, it was before the internet. Hey, I can fly a plane and join the Air Force, be a pilot, right? Recruiters were like, hell yeah, you can come in and enlist, whatever. So I learned all that... Hey, I need to go get that education, go through a ROTC or an OTS program and then get accepted to flight school. So my mentorship came from those ALOs as well, to guide me to do really good in ROTC and get that pilot slot.

Nathan Bachand

And that was that pretty straightforward for you?

Andy Deacon

Yeah, very straightforward. I made it easier. I went back to college and got straight A's and a couple B's and even my parents thought, who are you, and where did that come from? Again, TACP, the academics, of course, it just changed my whole perspective. And coming with the 60 college credits you get as a TACP, that ate up all the core classes at a community college so I could just concentrate on the degree itself. Now, that made it even easier. And then I excelled at ROTC. That was cake walk, I have to say.

Nathan Bachand

I've seen that with a lot of TACPs, even myself. When I was in college, I went to college before I joined the Air Force, played soccer, and I did very okay in school, really didn't care about school. The only reason I went to college was to play soccer. And then, I got my master's and my PhD while I was in the Air Force as a TACP, and I don't know what it was, but anything other than straight A's was unacceptable to me. And I don't know, where that came from, if it's just the attention to detail that TACP drives into you, makes you a perfectionist, where it's just like, okay, missing a detail is unacceptable. But it seems like something clicks, for TACPs and similar career fields that it just doesn't in the broader Air Force

Andy Deacon

Yeah. I got smarter. TACP made me smarter all of a sudden or helped me get smarter. I was like, man, if you guys could teach me in high school back then, maybe as a scholar or something, but yeah, it definitely set the precedence.

Nathan Bachand

So you crushed it in school, crushed it in ROTC, and then straight to flight school once you graduated.

Andy Deacon

Yeah, I was going into my last semester after field camp, got the pilot slot. Ironically, at my at my ROTC camp the summer camp you do for like 28 days like the original basic training... That's where I actually met my future wife. So she was also a cadet there, from Nebraska. We were the frenemies competition in the flight. She was the top female athletic performance and I was the top male. It was a frenemy situation. So I met her there of course She went on a pilot slot. I got distinguished graduate. She got superior performer, which was number two. But whatever, but I also didn't know so I had to do good I'll get a pilot slot but the DG gives you more points for pilot training. Yeah, but SP was too. So that was fine.

Andy Deacon

There was a lot of friendly banter. There was the taller tap. We have a little joke about that because technically she is taller. But when you're in the line, you go, I think I might've, I think I shrank, definitely with the flying, I shrank. Spine and all that.

But when you're doing taller tap, you don't know, so you move, you're like, ah... So we had that game every time you have a formation of, if she was in front of me, I'd taller tap anyway and move up. But it was close. It was close. It was before we had the Hoka shoes that are the one inch the soles and whatnot.

But I had to graduate, it was my last semester, so December of 2002, and my commander, 9/11 had already happened. Me and Troy, my buddy Troy from 19th, he was also in ROTC with me. So here's another tap. I actually got him to join by the year after me. I don't know what he said, you gotta do this, dude, college, be an officer. It's like, yeah. And then 9/11, my crap, when that happened that morning, him and I were driving to school together because we're also roommates still. And 9/11 happened, I'm like, I think we're gonna get recalled to active duty. And that was a very, very real possibility at the time.

But I had completed the ROTC camp, so it was, all right, you're more officer now. And my commander there said the same thing, he's like, if you go, you are not coming back to be a pilot. He's like, this is not gonna be a short war. He already knew. He was a full bird. I gave him this good guy, I said, man, just go be a pilot, take that skill, move on. I'm like, that makes sense. That, and I was fighting the age thing, so I was much later in life, so I graduated at 29. And back then the Air Force said, you had to start pilot training before 30. My birthday was in March, so I had to graduate that December and be commissioned. And then after that is when they came up with the age waivers. Okay, it could be 30, 31, 32, 33 now to be a pilot in the Air Force. So I made it by 58, 55 days. So that last semester I took everything and says, what can I get for a bachelor's degree? I threw it in the pot, cool, let's get going. And get out of there and go to pilot training.

Nathan Bachand

Was it like going through pilot training with 9/11 having just happened? Was it like oh we're training literally to go to war whereas before it's like, The Soviet threats gone throughout the 90s. It's like we're just here, and then now you're going through training with 9/11 having happened knowing that you're you're gonna go to Iraq or Afghanistan.

Andy Deacon

Yeah, you're you're when you're done training to your weapon system, you're going to be deployed. Yeah, we're hearing some of the deployment stuff like holy wow and in pilot training, it's 12 hour days bottle to throttle tight work hard play hard, but it's a haze. Anybody can fly. A monkey can fly, we sent one into space, but that is a haze. Can you do the 12 hours every day? The rigorous work, all the bantering and still fly. Which is perfect because it does really prepare me for combat plus the TACP stuff. But that prepared me.

I got KC-135s out of there towards the end and then proposed to my wife. She was a year behind me in school. I should say so she was graduating ROTC when I proposed and that was in December, and I was going to graduate that next April. I got KC-135s. She had lost her pilot slot just a few days before commissioning because of PRK, but this is back when it was experimental. And it was really a paperwork issue that set her back a few years. So like what do you want for a job missile or maintenance? Well, if she's maintenance, I got a pilot slot. Obviously we can try and get together. So she took the maintenance thing. I graduated got assigned to McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita Kansas for KC-135s.

(Technical Issues)

Nathan Bachand

Yeah, a little blurry, but I can hear you better. So I lost you at... See, you were in Kansas and she was at Luke, you said?

Andy Deacon

Yeah and so when she graduated college before she went to Luke we eloped and got married in Oklahoma pilot training which says you're now married so the joint spouse. They couldn't keep her as long so we were only apart for maybe a year and a half before she got reassigned to Wichita as a 135 maintenance officer.

And I'd already deployed two, three times by then. I showed up 45 days of finishing my qualifications. 60 on, 60 off. And that didn't stop for the next 10 years. It was, holy crap, fast and furious.

Nathan Bachand

Your aircraft, it is just my ignorance, were your aircraft staying in country or were you flying them back and forth?

Andy Deacon

We would fly one aircraft with three or four crews and a bunch of maintainers. And so that was our rotator. So we were bringing one in country because you'd have to bring one home for the heavy maintenance. We'd bring those home and then they would go up to like Boeing or something or Oklahoma City to get the heavy maintenance. But, we kept all the aircraft in country. We did our own rotators with one or two aircraft, and we set a whole bunch of crews maintainers personnel on that aircraft. All the equipment. So it was nice. We're our own rotator.

Nathan Bachand

How long were those deployments?

Andy Deacon

60 days. That's the most I think for all aviation just because we are capped by the FAA of 330 hours in 90 days so you'd get to 60 you could get 300 and then have a few hours but you'd have to come home and not fly to let those hours reset.

Nathan Bachand

Gotcha.

Andy Deacon

I was, I was maxing my hours out every single year. It was ridiculous. Three deployments later in a year. And my commander was like okay, you're going to aircraft commander upgrade. I'm still a lieutenant. That was unheard of back in the day. So it's now the opposite of what TACPs are. Same thing took forever to upgrade. Now you've got senior airman TACP, JTAC called 18 months after they graduate schoolhouse. Pilot training was the same way. Okay, man. You got just enough experience. Now for the next level, because we need people, we needed them.

So, there was that whole surge of growth of the Air Force. AFSOC was growing, and that's, again, that's when more, more and more stuff is happening. Got my crew there, didn't really see any TACP stuff as a tanker guy, unfortunately. But I knew how to look up an ATO and read an ATO, very helpful to all those guys because they're like, wait, how do you know where to go? I'm like, dude, here's the fighters. I've done this before actually. So again, that was TACP skills really paid off as a pilot.

Nathan Bachand

Do you have any fun stories from those deployments? What was the day-to-day like on those deployments?

Andy Deacon

Eat, sleep, fly, repeat, work out. Crushed, we crushed with Fallujah when they had the surge, the 2006, seven with the Marines. We were authorized 10 hours minimum crew rest for combat. And that was really, when you hit the ground, you 10 hours, you're back in the air.

Andy Deacon

That was two weeks of a blur of like did I just take off land fly sleep take off again? It's still daylight. Holy crap, but provide CAP. We had to provide CAP for the fighters. Nobody nobody kicks ass without tanker gas and the fighters needed gas and we're flying out of Al-Dafhra. We could fly Afghanistan missions or Iraq missions from there. And then all you need was mostly Iraq missions at the time.

Then I think about McConnell. It ties back into the special ops and Hurlburt again. We had the SOAR program. So we're the only ones that did the air refueling to gunships or the Talons. So I get to go on those deployments and still work with that area. That was nice. Yeah, it was about a special ops you could get with a tanker. Other than that the stories... I got to deploy with my wife on that one.

The one bad story that sets up precedents and everything else in how I went to U-28s. My last deployment I was wasn't supposed to go on. It was probably my sixth deployment. I just needed a break, and I was maybe two weeks in the country and flying CAP overhead Kirkuk. IED goes off, CAP mission, cool. I land, and decent landing crosswinds, sporty, cool. And then the commander the DO are in the car in front of me when we parked the aircraft engines all running. And they told us not to shut down, throw the ladder down, and the DO comes up the ladder and says hey, man, you need to go with the commander. I got this.

That's... I shut down my aircraft. I'm the aircraft commander. Yeah, I shut that down. What the crap? I look at my co-pilot. Did we have a pod scrape? Because you got four inches on the tanker. You really got to keep it level because sometimes you can get pod scrapes. So that was always the tanker thing, don't scrape a pod, don't scrape a pod. And on the drive with the commander I'm like, so it was a good landing, right? Cuz the figure of the tower would have said something because they can see sparks. He said goes, no landing was fine there's nothing wrong with the flying. Now I'm confused. It's like what the hell...

She... I can see this was new to her. It was new to everybody regardless of rank or age. 2007 is still new to the war for a lot of people. She just handed me a note, and the note said I needed to call my cousin's wife...

And boom... I knew he got killed. He was OSI. Before that he was law enforcement when he first joined, he enlisted with me, and then he was a C5 loadmaster. Then he got OSI, and that was his dream job. And he was supposed to go home in a week. He wasn't supposed to go out on a mission. I was like, you got to be kidding me... I punched the dash and and she knew I knew like yes. She's like, yeah, I'm sorry. So she already knew I at that point, like crap. And that's another tough job I know some TACPs know that escort duty. Yeah, I got tagged for that obviously. So I figured divine intervention. I was there to bring him home.

And there's my faith, I keep my faith always. That's absolutely, if I'm gonna do it, it's gonna be me. He's the one that got me to join the Air Force. He gave me my first salute when I got commissioned. I flew him in for my commission. It was the last time he saw most of his family in person. And I had run into him again in parts of the world, which was funny. St.

Louis on TDYs and whatnot. Even came to Fort Campbell once when I was a TACP as a C5 load master. So, the guy that got me to join the Air Force and now I'm bringing him home. So he did come home in seven days and I brought him home. Unfortunately, him and another buddy, Matt Kuglitz, I had to help bring them home. So I got one family I know and one family I don't know. And I'm two bodies and it's just, wow.

Nathan Bachand

He was married. Did he have any kids?

Andy Deacon

Married, couple kids. His oldest kid is now in the Air Force. I helped get him in. He's doing cyber transport up in Robbins, talked to him weekly. He's doing great, loving it. I'm like, dude, you need to do better at life than I did. He's like, why? Well, your age, where I was at at your age, you're doing better. So you're gonna exceed. Super well. And of course, telling him stories about his dad. Because I grew up and we did everything, graduated high school together, we cycled together, he got me into the triathlons with the biking. I still have his bicycle, Greg LeMond, that I actually have given his son.

It's like, hey, man, this is, this is your dad's. Okay. Don't ever get rid of that. You get rid of that coming back to me because I still rode it. And a lot of guys at the 19th ASOS actually rode that bike in their first triathlon because I had extra bikes. And it's an old seven speed, but it's a 1989 Greg LeMond, Tour de France winning bike. So I was like, just the history of that. That was my last tanker story. And I would already interviewed for U-28s at that time.

Nathan Bachand

How did that come about? Where'd that interest come from?

Andy Deacon

We get things for new squadrons starting up through the Air Force emails. And this one's like a special ops. I do, and I kept it to myself because I didn't want anybody else to go down this road.

Nathan Bachand

You didn't want to introduce any competition.

Andy Deacon

Yes. And regardless I knew I was going to do it. And then after my cousin, it was like anger. I... with the deployments and the speed, I never really had time to process his death. That, that was years later. Years later to really, it hits on you. I was definitely thinking, to take the fight to the terrorists. I know how this, I know how this is going on. And I knew a lot about the U-28 background already previously from other people, tactically here and there, but it was a resume interview, a phone interview, sometimes a personal interview before you get accepted. And then I was really pushing my command.

They're like, well, you can go to weapons school as a tanker guy here. I'm like, I don't care about any of that. I don't care if it's a career. I don't want to go to this U-28 and, and go AFSOC, go back to Hurlburt. And I know how this was going to go down. It was going to be FAC(A) stuff, with what was on with the original radios. It was a, it started out as a program as a two year band aid fix between the Predator and the Reaper. There wasn't enough eyes in the sky. They weren't making drones. We were losing the Predator. We lost what, 50% of that fleet just in crashes because it was unstable. Reapers were bigger, but coming online. So what we can do?

Hey, you can throw a ball on a PC-12, which they've already been doing in the nineties or other stuff. So we now we can add radios to it. So we ripped it out and gutted it. Sierra Nevada corporation, amazing maintenance facility. Went through many, many modifications for the U-28. It seemed like every six months we were upgrading something. That's how fast we were moving into digital airspace. Went from six radios, one ball to nine radios and two balls. We were a flying JOC. Grab a feed and push it out to the gunship that was 20 miles away or to the F-15s. Hey when you come in here's your stuff already. This was game changing stuff. We were the synergistic part of the JTAC, I think. There's no way he could do everything on the ground without us. I was like we weren't trying to take away your authority but I can help you.

Andy Deacon

And a lot of that is where, okay, I need to go introduce myself back to the schoolhouse after flying the U28, a couple of missions. Cause some of these guys would come out and they would turn us away. They didn't know what we were. Even though we went a chop to tiered units, but that JTAC didn't know where the ground command like, you're new, we get it. How do we use you? It's time for capes brief. So I walked over there, the schoolhouse, I think after my second deployment and Allen Ivey was like this Ops Sup there and Cunningham, Jared Taylor was there. Jeremiah Hare was there. He was the JTAC instructor, Jesse Brown. I forget a bunch of their names.

If I throw it out, y'all know I know your names, but people that were there at that timeframe. And I worked with them and said, here's the JTAC class. You guys are blanket waved to get our capes brief. Because as soon as you get in theater, you could be chopped to a team, like that, that fast. And the one seven, they were up at Georgia. So if they wouldn't come down, I worked with Schleich. And Schleich, he was a big one to come down.

And then I helped develop the, we call it our mission readiness training for U-28s where we would practice doing the ISR stuff here on the ground, we would write scenarios. Well, that was great going down Highway 98 here, looking at cars, looking for this, or our own guys with radios and stuff. And we were playing dual role, trying to do best training. But well, what about the student movements? Now you're talking convoy, you're actually talking to new tech. What are you talking to the instructors? Cause they were JTACs. So we get to talk to them and they get to talk to us. That was probably good training. Had a Rover. So I put the Rover down there and they could look at video and it got to be some real world, good training.

Nathan Bachand

Were they using Rover 4 probably at the time?

Andy Deacon

Yeah, three, four, I want to say four, maybe I started out with a three and then went to the four before Rover five was coming out. Yeah, which was small, but it was the Panasonic and I would throw that in my truck. I'd check it out from my unit and taking this over and then I'd go brief with Jesse Brown, some of the instructors and then we'd do some student movements of how we're going to do stuff and did a couple of those.

When a JTAC class would come through and do a full U28 capes brief on the classified side and then the gunship as well, since I knew a lot of stuff from my wife, sometimes she would come over and brief. And that was great, too, Jeremiah Herrick got to be really good friends with that. Hey, man, I'm one of you Hawk 39. Yeah, I'm old. But here's what we got. And here's what I believe in. So there's that trust factor. So when you guys go out to the field and you're with whatever Army unit or you get tasked, man, use us. One, we want to be used. We want to show that we can, this is what we can bring to the fight. I think that played a role.

Sometimes some instructors would tell me, hey, man, these guys overseas and they used you, we got like, wow, that was game changing. It was very dynamic because we were still writing TTPs on how to use us because it was so doing so fast. Radio is changing, PRC-117s, then you get Harris SA. That was one at Fort Campbell on a fight lead upgrade from the 160th because they don't, knock on wood, operate without us overhead anymore because we save lives. That was a good thing. We saved the lives like the hand of God, whatever you

want to call us with our eyes and the two balls, but we can have one on the JTAC, one on them, here is your gun to target line.

I got a breathing living nine line that's ready to go anytime you need it. I've got radios. I've got the air stack. I've got reach back. I've got MERC. I got ANW2. You name it. I've got it. If you need something, I'll get it for you as well. And here's what's coming to the stack. Here's the play times and I'll monitor that for you. And every half hour. Hey, some sales got to leave in an hour to get gas. Oh, okay. And I'm talking to the tanker to this many ways. It's just to really take it off his shoulders. It's almost too much for a JTAC to be on the ground walking, running and guys like, oh, he, my CSO's like, he's not answering me. Dude, he's got 100 pounds of gear and he's hoofing through terrain. Give him a chance. Or if he does the click, he's responding with clicks. Which which drops bread crumbs, which we can follow.

So now we got an infill/exfil route. We're planning a lot of stuff to the X and the Y with those guys. It was so much radio stuff. It's hard. I don't want to blur stories or timelines. But we're going to schoolhouse. I guess, just go back on to that real quick. Kevin Carpenter came in to replace Hare. And of course, he was my first roommate, saw him in the schoolhouse and walk right up by him and did the typical TACP meet and greet from a guy he didn't see from a long time ago. And he's like, holy cow.

And then it turned out he was just living maybe two miles from my house down the road. And same thing, got him briefed in on it. And he was like, dude, this is amazing stuff because he'd already deployed. And seeing this stuff is like this game changing. So he helped incorporate that with the schoolhouse stuff. Which I thought was awesome. He got it, understood it. We understood each other, understood everybody at the schoolhouse as much as we could do over there.

And that would take his seven level students out. Sometimes we do movements. And one time I got him to fly. So I actually got to fly. Nice. I put him on the back and he got to run the ball. So I put him as a CSO seat. And he actually, I didn't even do the CSO that I was flying with for some point. He met him. So he got to go fly with me on one of my last station homes here, training with the JTACs here.

Nathan Bachand

That's something very valuable. I think every TACP that has the opportunity to should fly in some platform just to see that perspective. And it's now same with pilots like you said, they don't always understand that we have a ruck on our back and we're running trying to coordinate with the ground commander trying to coordinate with fires and then dealing with the stack on top of it. That perspective helps everybody if they're able to see the other side of it.

Andy Deacon

We're not gonna write that in a TTPs. That's where the face-to-face comes in. I told JTACs hey, by the way, when you get into theater, whether you go Iraq, Afghanistan, and we're there man, knock on the door, I'm a JTAC. Guess what? You're getting a ride. Day one you are getting a ride to see this, because we can't do it home station to get everybody in. We still got our guys to train but, we put the power on the airplane. They'd see everything see how it works like oh, okay, and we're just gonna explain it. Okay, then when you get to fly and see it, they're like man, dude, the stack is yours. Take that off me.

But knowing that I got fire power. You name it. We got it. I can throw the ball anywhere Your GFC is gonna love you like crazy. It's like dude... It's gonna be game changing. So we would do that. We would give up an extra half-hour fuel just to take a JTAC flying with us on that initial to just see how we work. I'll break the radios and coordinate and then I don't know if that sealed the deal, but I also noticed after we showed up more and more after 2007 that there was less and less American deaths. Especially on the operator side.

So again, I don't know how many we saved or could have saved. But if it was something we had earlier like with my cousin... Could have saved him too. Bradley Smith. There's a lot of guys that I think we would have, had this platform been around earlier. And because of our success in the U-28, that's when the MC 12 came about. So hey we're going to mass produce. Well one rule of AFSOC is we don't mass produce pilots and in our guts we can't do that. We can't train your MC-12 to do what we do. We go through a different platform, we got to hire our own people basically.

It was tough to get, then after I showed up then they opened the floodgates because like yeah we do need as many U-28 pilots and get that mentality. But for the first hundred we were all volunteered, interviewed, and got in the program. So that set the tone of Draco from henceforth, and here we are 20 years later hopefully still going and what we bring to the fight is we even closed down Afghanistan. In the last days Draco was there overhead as well so every tiered asset had us.

Nathan Bachand

Do you have any specific combat mission stories about when things got hairy and you saved some lives?

Andy Deacon

Oh, yeah. One, we went up to Mazar-i-Sharif to get the shadow governor out of there. Worked with the SEAL teams and we did about four hours of station time before we had to go, or switch out with another airplane. It wasn't far from the base. The teams like we want to op. I'm like, let me coordinate., I can go back and grab gas and get back in the air before

you guys op. And then I got you another four hour station time. And it was like, how fast? And I was like, I could be back like in an hour tops. But because of the radios, the equipment we had, I coordinated our ground support guys, the Sierra Nevada team. Hey, man, bring the fuel truck to the end of the runway that I'm going to land on. And it was like, what?

And really coordinated all. He was there. I turned off the runway, shut her down, fueled her up, turned everything back on. And I had the cowlings on the airplane. I had to lift up the cool down because the attempt has to be below 200 ITT to restart. Made sure I parked it into the wind to cool it out while they're refueling. Got the gas, closed everything up, buttoned it up and fired the airplane back up and then took off the opposite way because the crosswinds were going to support that. Nineteen minutes. On the ground.

I got back to the station early and they're like, what? I'm like, yeah dude. Because I coordinated. I had the support. I'm doing this for you guys. I ended up flushing out the shower governor of Mazar-i-Sharif up there, got him, got some Iranian freedom fighters. We were able to call out the squirters as well as, and this happened on multiple missions, having that second ball, one on our team and one in, whatever, building 10, building 12, building 13. Hey, man, you got three guys, Northwest corner. We weren't exactly allowed to PID even though we had HD balls. So we could see the clear HD in our aircraft, but, when that's pumped back out into the JOC, it's still a little blurry. Like how does some intel tweed get to do that? I'm looking at the guy, dude, he's clearly holding a Dragunov. It's a big rifle. That guy's got an AK because of TACP, weapons recognition, using that stuff. It's like, okay, well, I'm 99% sure that's a weapon. Good enough for them.

Nathan Bachand

Even though you weren't allowed to PID, in practice It's still a PID, and you probably have a 9-line ready to go for those guys even though that might not be doctrinally correct.

Andy Deacon

So it was, if somebody else had a PID and then we took custody, cool, we get to keep the PID. As long as we keep custody. So that was another good one right there. That happened on multiple occasions. Dogs, we'd find the dogs. Hey man, they take out the dogs. Cause dogs gonna give you away. I think the term four legged quadruped was used quite extensively. Cause it was Afghan hounds. You're like, is that a small cow or a horse? It's pretty darn big. Yeah, the teams. And then it's just like three, four shots, you see it. And then it goes cold.

Cause we're in either white hot or black hot. Cool, dogs down, continue. So taking out dogs or sentries... How many lives did we save right there by keeping the op quiet? I guess the best way was to, we're gonna breach three, two, one. Boom. Not a shot fired, everyone's captured. Cause the guys are really standing over everybody on rooftops. Well, that's really the best op. Nobody dies, nobody gets hurt. You get all the SSE, all the intel, all the information. Obviously, what we were, a lot of guys know what we were tracking and how we tracked it and stuff. So having that down to the meter, it's amazing.

The equipment, the JTACS had Harris SSA, again, working with Stan House at Fort Campbell and that the batteries would die. Well, you don't need that on. Once we got you, turn it off. Once I got you like and I could find you just turn it on key your mic and it would actually slew our ball to your point. It's that fast. Talk-ons were a thing of the past and it's saving so much time and then to incorporate that and then to take that back to my command and go hey if we do this they can do this we can do it faster. Okay let's write that into the TTP and then the next deployment, there it is. That was that was continuous every cycle. Constant upgrading, and I think you guys now got the ATAKs with the Samsungs the fold out.

Nathan Bachand

Having Link-16 on the ground too is a game changer when it works. We've had our our stumbles with that, but once that is fully ironed out, what a tool.

Andy Deacon

Wow yeah, we had it in the air and again this is another compatibility issue. Like wait a minute, what do you mean the A-10s can't talk to the F-15s, blah blah blah. And in one stack we had both radios. Cool, I can convert this from analog to this digital but my airplane had to be there to have all that in the stack before everybody got to upgrade. So not just the ground pounder side where they don't get all the money. Somebody's just not figuring out that dude, everybody needs to be talking on the same radio. An ARC-231 would be a game changer if everybody had one of those, but fighters aren't gonna have PRC-117s. So they gotta trick the ARC-231 into FSK to act like FM to talk to fighters. Which a lot of my guys did not know how to do like you you can't blow them out with the amp. Again, radio theory TACP stuff. It's come in handy several times to make it work because even we had to trick it out before we got some of the Gucci PRC-117 stuff in our radio pallet. And that pallet was always changing, it's like man you just kept adding and adding and adding to what we had.

Nathan Bachand

We see that on the TACP side still. The MCS system for the Humvee showed up in 2019 and we are already on version 3 or 4. As soon as the contractor finishes up modding all the

vehicles, they are ready to start over on vehicle number one for the next upgrade. And it will start over from scratch once we get all the JLTVs.

Andy Deacon

Yep, the JLTVs because Humvees are gone, which is awesome. Everybody's upgrading. We were probably definitely the most lethally upgraded force. I want to say we're the most compatible forces between the joint forces now than ever before, with equipment, how it talks, communicates, regardless who the user is. We've been out there, you guys have been out there, the team's now, I think that bridge has been closed.

You can almost in public say JTAC and they know what you are. TACP, we're no longer the bastard children. I think Jared made a big thing about, that was what he did with Black Rifle, what also helped everybody in the community. So, and this side of the community too, it was cool. It was like, hey, I walk into some place. What did I, I was a TACP, I was, these are my boys down there. So one, don't F it up. Same thing for my wife, you're going to be working out with some of my team guys out there like that, don't F it up.

Nathan Bachand

Yeah. So I wanted to talk about that too. Because most of us, we come home to our wives and if we talk about work, it's gibberish, right? They're like, you get the boys together. Like they don't want to hear us talking about work, right? So one, how did your wife go from maintenance on the 135 to the gunship? And what's that? Like, how was that relationship? Are you guys talking shop at home?

Andy Deacon

They just gave her the pilot slot back. Cool so back in the day of pilot training then in order to go AFSOC or C-130s, which I was already gonna go with U-28, you need to go to the the C-12 twin engine King Air as a Corpus Christi with the Navy to get in. That's where AFSOC sent them. She got that, cool. Told her commander, like I'm married, joint spouse, have that little bit of a pull, but academically she had it. And I already got to Hurlburt first before her, bought the house... She had actually gotten H models instead of U models. Of course, they were going away, but they're also going to go to Cannon.

But she shows up at Hurlburt where the schoolhouse is, and oh, we have a U model class starting next week. Of course she can start right away we got the house she's moved in boom boom boom. Colonel Zook was I think the ops guy up there for ATC. I said, sir you like Cuban cigars? And I was doing a lot of Cuban cigars coming from overseas a lot and kinda

made some deals to get my wife over here... Ahe earned it and she got all the awards going through the schoolhouse and the U model.

She definitely met Kevin, met all my friends, like she knows most of my friends are TACPs, enlisted TACPs. She gets it now. And downrange couple ops, it's like, I already met you years ago, now you're gonna see the goat show and all the other video stuff you maybe hear about. You're gonna see, and of course she did but we would joke about some nights in bed, especially when I was in drones, about who got more more kills in one strike. Well I went faster and got 90 in one op! Okay yeah, but I got the 500 pounder and got 22 in one truck how are we judging that?

Yeah there's conversations yeah night which was really cool. She's got some great TACP stories too. Brand-new JTAC, I think senior , and that's when you guys would rotate out, the new guy who came in would go out with the team, and they got under fire, had a wounded had to do a CASEVAC back, had to change a tire, and here's a senior airman JTAC by himself on basically his first op. And he's just screaming on the radio of course, all right calm him down. You got a woman's voice, that's helpful, and you have a gunship! I think there's like a ZSU in the area so they had to get away let the A-10 come and get rid of the ZSU and her come back on. She could tell it better, but she's like, hey they're in the village they're starting to do the whole load up point the guns in the air and fire and come after you guys. So she kept them at bay so they could get the tire fixed, get the CASEVAC, and get them out of there. Brand new senior airman. She doesn't know. It was one of us, one of our bros, down there so that was one of her ops and I'm sure she had multiple after that flying Afghanistan, Iraq stuff.

Nathan Bachand

How many years did she do in the AC-130?

Andy Deacon

She got nine, I did 17, or she got eight. We did 25 total together. 10 years of that and then you're like, kids, they said we got kids now, but that's the way, to get out and go to reserves. Had to get off active duty. Because we had already seen what it did to join spouse couples with kids.

Nathan Bachand

Yeah I don't see how that's feasible unless you have grandparents move in with you.

Andy Deacon

Absolutely, you'd have to yeah, there's just no way you could do it. We have families now, and that is just no way to live.

Nathan Bachand

Is it how old are you guys when you start thinking about that and thinking about having kids?

Andy Deacon

40s. I was 44 when I had my first baby girl, she was pushing late 30s. And then we had my boy at 48, she just pushed 40, so they're five and seven now. It's also been awesome. Part of that was my last five years, I did the 2 SOS. Drones, working with a JTAC. So again, that helps too. When I left that active duty to go to reserves I got my airline job, and then go back on active duty again so you get your 20 and all that. And then I keep my seniority my airline job that was nice to have that in the background.

Training for drones at 2 SOS out there at Alamogordo, I already knew where I was going to go and what I was going to be doing. Working with gunships, U-28s, and JTACS. Now they're not on the ground, they're sitting the JOC, so now you're going from type one controls to type two or type three. Some pilots, they're just not understanding that we did type ones back in the day. I was on the ground that was great so to see it... it was a good thing and a bad thing. And still talking to the TACP guys, I know the worst thing they could have done is put a lawyer in the JOC. I think everyone agrees that. Well, I gotta wait. Why you gotta wait, you're the JTAC?! Well, gotta wait for the lawyer. This is garbage, but if it was type one that ain't gonna happen man. It's game on. Yeah, of course the lawyer involved after that

Nathan Bachand

It's interesting, we had a, let's use him as an example, we had a sim operator at the 19th who retired pre-9/11. We had to constantly stop him from instructing because of some antiquated aversion to type twos and threes. He'd always say, an A-10 is not going to drop standoff. They're gonna fly and nap the earth, they're gonna pop up, you're gonna give them an ETD and you're gonna type one of them. We'd have to inject mid-scenario and say, hey, this, there's this bomb that exists called the GBU-39 and they will carry them. And they will stand them off stop trying to tell this young kid that he's only gonna nap the earth A-10s.

Andy Deacon

Yes, GBU 39, the newer weapons that have come out, the newer Hellfires, the new gunship, the Whiskey, now the J model. And I got a really cool video in my Dropbox, I will send you, it's unclassified. I used to give that to the JTAC class, hey, this is the Whiskey Spear, but this was tested on multiple platforms, it's not going to be the J model. And then some of that stuff's now on the OA-1 Skyrator, the SkyTractor, it's replacing the the U-28 stuff. Again, you went from a crew of four to a crew of two, it's the same equipment, just got smaller, better, more powerful, and a crap ton of coordinates.

Nathan Bachand

Can two people carry the same workload as four?

Andy Deacon

Yep. AI is now incorporated with a lot of our stuff. Again, software has been written. Autopilot helps. So in the orbit that the Pilatus we flew to single pilot, the co pilot ran the second ball. So not only your pilot, you got ball time. So I got a good 1500 hours of MTSA and MX. Gosh, I forgot the name of the other smaller ball we have. But we could buddy lase, dual lase, dual target... But, we could get one on the target with a gunship rolling in second balls on the second target. He shoots that one, slews to the next ball we just leapfrog.

Nathan Bachand

Man, a four-hour mission must be flying by. It must feel like 10 minutes.

Andy Deacon

Yeah, it's, you get up and then, and then every four hours you got another U-28 coming in to rip out the other one. But with all of our electronics, as we're coming in and leaving, one can take over the stack like that digitally, like a digital handoff, knows where everything's at, we're separated by 500 feet, one's in, one's out, and just rotate and keep it going over and over and over. Yeah. So some days, two in the stack, now you got four balls.

Four balls, two airplanes, all HD, no reapers, no drones, no need to worry about any of that delay stuff and it's point of contact, sparkle, you name it. Light up the targets however you want. It was great. We could tell the teams to turn their stuff off because later in the war, they were starting to get night vision stuff too. Once I had you, you guys could go totally overt, or covert, however we needed to work it.

Worked with 10th Mountain one time. They skied down the mountains in J-Bad. That was pretty cool. That's what I realized, there was actually ski lifts in Afghanistan. Like what are these old things? It was a ski lift from way back like the 70s. So 10th Mountain, they snow skied down into a town to do an op and then exfiltrated. I was like, this is some of the coolest stuff. Working with a couple of the Ranger teams, doing Overwatch and those mountains as well, just providing sentry at night so they could sleep. But we could take the rover, this is old school, our block 10 before we had block 20. We had movies, so we could push that on the rover to them down later and then sync up the voice with VLC. Remember the old VLC, so you're like, okay, three, two, one. You both hit play and it synced up. So now we're streaming like Christmas vacation on Christmas Eve to them. Just those little morale things we could do. Yeah, we're using electronics, but we're still doing our job, fighting, doing over watch.

Nathan Bachand

It speaks volumes for a Ranger company to trust an Air Force asset like, hey, we're going to go to sleep. That is massive. That is a huge level of trust.

Andy Deacon

PC-12 with a good orbit. We had a great electronics to know about. Can you hear us? Can you not hear us? Some TACPs love this one. Another good story. You'll get a kick out of it guys. I can hear you. You're too loud. You're too loud. And I'm like, okay, dude, take off your peltors. Take your peltors off. Can you hear me now? Okay, now put your peltors back on. That's why you can hear me. They don't have them. I might be at a three mile orbit, maybe a four mile orbit. Haven't even collapsed the stack to like a one and a half or two. Gunship's out at 20. Fighters are out at 20. I'm just a little prop airplane. I'm flying AOA like L over D max. Nice and quiet. If I need to speed up, it's just a small throttle movement. Just let it creep because you don't want to create the noise.

So just little tactical things like that. And then training airplanes. Man, don't just burst the throttle because it'll, the prop could give us away. So we're hanging out there just like a drone. Can't hear us. Can't see us. We have the IR lights too. If you need to see us, that's cool. If you want, we can shut those off too. And go from there, but you have to provide, to provide all that for the ground pounder. I think it was a big attitude change that the Air Force had, but it was a need and a long time coming. Wish we would have had it sooner, but, we're a reactive military than a proactive military to a certain point.

Nathan Bachand

That doesn't learn its lessons

Andy Deacon

Yeah. It was taking seven years to test, field, and employ a new weapon. The U-28 was six months. Six months. And, we had to stop upgrading. We were upgrading so fast. Like, okay, you can't put that on there yet. They don't even have this. I come home from a deployment and, okay, here's a Block 20. Here's a Block 20E. Here's a Block 20EQ. Here's a Block EQ plus. We're like, man, where's the Block EZ? They just kept upgrading. Yeah. So it's like, hey, let's just upgrade twice a year with the equipment, keep a standard and let the ground teams catch up to make sure we're all the same page.

We can't surpass the user or the operator. If we do that, then we're useless as well. If you can't talk, comms wins war, goes back to the Civil War. The telegraph, comms wins wars, man. If we got that, we provide that... And in all formats too. MERC, ANW2, Link now, and the full spectrum of radios. So I think it bridged the gap. Of course, technology helps. And guys smarter than me, that would help create some of this stuff. I'm just an operator, man. I'm a user. Tell me how to, I'll figure out how to use it and make it work or trick it. Cool. But I don't know how to build it, employ it, wire it as such.

Nathan Bachand

So, what do you think the future of the U28 looks like?

Andy Deacon

So we just finished up the 20 year reunion last week., had some of the original plank holders there in the top 100. I was number 95, got in some of the new kids and stuff they got now. They stopped putting co-pilots through the training program. So it's just pilots. So maybe two years, that'll be the GO level and future of what do we want, how do we want manned C4ISR to go forward from here? The Pilatus is great. So they look an airplane versus a sky tractor, MC-12 is up and going away now too. Being shut down again, two engines, double your cost. It's the same engines, Pilatus, we did the same thing. So more Pilatus since it is a better single engine platform.

What's it going to be? Is it going to be off the shelf, non-standard aviation and it's not going to be a fighter, but I think it's like the wingman program to the F-35 and F-22. That drone AI, you still need this with everything we have in back, I think to help push it forward as far as the electronics suite, and then how we can take that forward again, guys out there smarter than me, who have been in it and see how things are leaping forward. And, we went from calling cards at the beginning of the war to a little iPhone now. It's like, holy crap. People walking around Wi-Fi from the war.

It's just this is wild to see like, man, you get 15 minutes once a week with a calling card to, I'm walking around with my iPhone and streaming Netflix. It's just, it's hard to wrap that around a little bit, but in keeping up with the technology too, it's like, man, I just, just had that, just had that. And I think a lot of it was the, the input. JTACs had a huge input of the J model. And when I was doing that, it was like, what do you guys want to see?

Like what we're, what I'm taking, like, no kidding to when they're developing a Whiskey Spear, that's why the 105 went back on the gunship. That's an Army requirement. And like, and it's, it went from the gunship having to tweak their guns because they were non-precision. And as long as it was tweaked, yeah, it can be good, but now it's a precision strike platform, that 30 millimeter. You can shoot in urban environments now and not have that collateral damage. That that's a game changer with the gunship. So, when you hear the four fans of freedom...

And then we didn't have a lot back then. We only had like 13 of the U's and 11 of the H's. Half were always somewhere in training. One was in maintenance. I've heard stories of my wife where somebody told me that at nighttime, you'd get a Talon to just come fly a couple of orbits. Cause you hear those four fans at night. Hey man, they know what's up. What's up there. So again, things like that. Now I think a total of 36 of the new J models is what was on the production line last I heard.

Nathan Bachand

Yeah as far as I know they recently finished those down in Crestview.

Andy Deacon

So which is really cool kept covered it keeps everything in house. Which is nice and close by. I don't know what's next. I don't know if there's gonna be another Talon because the Opreys are going away. Army's got that new Helo thing coming which is really cool. It's like a Black Hawk and an Osprey got together and a little joint stuff. Yeah, the future warfare, I have no idea what's gonna come out of that. I'm out of it now.

But it's cool to see where we come from how we built it into something and, I just took my whole TACP career to that. Okay, man It's gonna be using to have my teams meet them. Stuff like that. Oh, we do ops, and if there was a couple casualties, we land, well do we're not going to the chow hall. Where's the C 17? They're loading the bodies right now. We're gonna go get in line and do our respects, I don't care. We'll go get an MRE. That's how much I thought about it. Some of my guys I get it, they just needed to understand like I get it. You got a job too, but look what just happened. Yeah, and we were just on that op, and someone didn't come back. It's not like it was our fault but,

Nathan Bachand

You're part of that team still, even if you're disconnected by airspace.

Andy Deacon

And it means something when guys see, oh, Draco guys just showed up here. They showed up for our stuff. And we had, we had the crash in Djibouti. Years ago, it was our first combat loss. SEAL team had just done the rescue mission down there. They sent *their* people, like their psychologists and people come out. The teams knew who we were, what we were about to go through right there. So that was really cool. And then God... so hours broken, I think it's over 750,000 hours of the U-28. Flying. The A-10s got what 150, 200,000 and it's been around for a hundred years. And how many airplanes do they have compared to the 40 plus we had? We were flying 24/7, 365 for years. I don't know how many records we hold here. It's a lot like, like, how many thousand to it? It's like every day just kept flying, flying record after record.

Nathan Bachand

Do off the top of your head how many hours you finished your Air Force career?

Andy Deacon

Oh yeah. 5,500, almost 6,000 with drone time, but like 3,500 combat hours, like 80% of my hours were combat. It was a lot. So, a lot of ops on the drone side, at U-28 side, and I loved it, I wouldn't change a thing, dude. I command all that stuff, dude. I don't care. I love being an operator my whole career. Not many people get to do that. And AFSOC was like that, we had a lot of majors who got retired as majors at AFSOC with the war because they wouldn't upgrade to Lieutenant Colonel, but it's like, that's your chief pilot. That's your experience. That's who you want. He wants to be there. Not everybody wants to be the chief of staff of the Air Force and four star, which I think the Air Force needs to realize.

Nathan Bachand

I've always admired the warrant structure that the Army has, right? My father-in-law, he's W-5 now, and his whole career is doing the mission. He doesn't have to deal with any of the command stuff, it's just doing the mission. It makes a ton of sense to me.

Andy Deacon

Yeah, look at the hours those guys fly. Doing that flight lead upgrade was a whole week at Fort Campbell with a gunship crew, me, that's where I met Stan House. He was the JTAC there. And I heard his stories. I got to see him at the seven two when he was here at Hurlburt with Kevin as a contractor. So I know Stan, didn't know about all his story until I listened to podcasts. Like, Oh, wow. But to, to work with the flight lead upgrade and how much the Army for a flight lead upgrade puts in the Air Force, all this training to make one flight lead upgrade is huge. To plan the whole mission, go down to Gulfport, put the helicopters together, then fly over to Hurlburt, do this whole mission in the field, which shut it down and it was all of us. And I got to fly it too, which was great. It was in there, the field, put it all together. It's like, this is awesome.

All that to train one dude to be fighting over at the 160th, and he was a CW4. I'm like, we're running the show. The captain's like, he's got it. He's got, I'll do the paperwork. Oh, he does the flying. You're right. That culture, I wish we had that in the Air Force to a certain extent. I think it would give us way more experience.

Nathan Bachand

Yeah and they introduced it on the cyber side recently that's their test bed, but I've always seen a role potentially for weapons school graduates in TACP. If you're ever going bring this in TACP, I think weapons school makes sense. Because i've seen these guys who are patches and they want to do the patch thing. But then you make master sergeant, so you're forced to go be a flight chief at some point. So it's pulling you out of that weapons and tactics side back into the flight time instead of doing the networking, teaching, and tactics building that a patch is meant for.

Andy Deacon

Right. And I'll say, hey, you go to a weapons school and then you graduate and you become a warrant. That would be, because now you, now you've got facetime with the Army. Oh, okay this guy is a warrant. Okay. Because they're conscious, but, but he's a TACP weapons patch, and he's a warrant. That would hold a lot of weight. And again, I think that would your best bang for the buck. And we're keeping them in that environment. Like, okay, well you're getting promotion, you're getting movement upward. It's just a different path. It's not the traditional Air Force path. So it is what it is.

Nathan Bachand

All right, anything else you want to cover before I cut the recording?

Andy Deacon

And there's always stores, but it's so much not TACP related. My wife's retiring in January. She also went to the reserves, did the caravan and then the Dornier for Seventh Group. So I got those TACPs there as well. When I retired, a cool part was I had my cousin's son, the one that got killed, and he was in the Air Force in Gulfport, Mississippi. And I had him come to my retirement. He was just going to like, escort my parents and my wife and do all that.

Well, I wrote this, we wrote the script and Kevin Carpenter, of course, we wrote it all together, how to do it, and the MC was like, I can't read this. I can't, I can't do this. This is, does he even know? Like, oh no, he doesn't even know. What? Well, my cousin made me a problem. It was to give me my first salute when I became an officer and to give me my last salute when I retired. He wasn't there.

So she explained that whole story, but in his place was going to be his son. And he literally got to read it like the day before, like finally, he was like, let me, I can take it. Are you sure? It was a, because I had it all set up. And on the stage, he looked at me and they read what was going to happen. And then the background picture was his dad giving me my first salute while I'm up there and he's giving me my last salute. And then I gave him the silver coin.

I said, by the way, this is the same coin I gave your dad when gave my first salute. And he just, he's like, you dick. Yep. He gets it. Like, there you go. We'll set it up. But just to have those moments to me, that's, that's what sealed the deal. That was my career. I love those stories.

Had a lot of TACPs in the house. Some of the opfor guys, cause you're here working with did a lot with opfor here. Got those guys from a contractor to GS's. Matt Como back in the day. Cause hey utilize us a lot, and they got good to use us as TACPs. So they had that experience just on our daily training, to teach these Air Force pilot kids. Hey man, this is the ground family. This is the end user. And the JTAC is going to be some senior airman who is going to control all this time. And it's got all these lives on his hands, man. We got to be on your A game. So, and then, they're like, Hey man, we're going to do an op and here's the WARNO man. Get your little RipIt, crack it, get the caffeine stuck on some oxygen. And then it's game time. And you start building the stack, planes are coming in, we're building a stack and you got to pass that off to the JTAC. He's telling the GFC...

Another cool one. Douglas, Dougie Fresh, 17th guy, got them their mustard stain in Afghanistan. So got to plan it out for that to, then just jump out of one airplane. We're in the other, collapse one ball on them, one ball on the LZ at night. And you put everybody within a hundred meters because that Harris SA. So yeah. And that was three days, three days of planning in theater done the stuff we could do. Hey, let's take that back to home and do that with a SEAL team. Yeah, that's a great thing. Cause at nighttime, man, how is he going to see the target? If it's not being sparkled by somebody else or sanitized.

A lot of things that to the X and the Y, when the 160th commander had come down, I think in 2008 or 9, big auditorium with us and says they won't op without us overhead, they'll cancel. If we cancel, they cancel. Because we save lives. I think that was the key. Yeah. The precedence of them also going we'll go another day because we're still doing pattern of life. Man, we'll just go the next day or the next day. But to save lives. I think that was the huge where we we put that emphasis on everybody. Every life matters. Even even the bad guys. Hey, man, if we save them to take it, not take as many out. It's winning the hearts and minds as they say.

Nathan Bachand

Were you able to pass that mindset on that you had, having been the guy on the ground, was it tough to pass that on to young dudes at times or were they able to get it pretty quick?

Andy Deacon

Some, some picked up fast. Like, I get it, you're young, but I already had stories. I had already lost friends, family in combat at this time. Jason being first and that wasn't even combat, but it was still 2001. But, hearing all the other TACPs at the beginning, holy crap, go down. Like, dude, you don't understand. It's just like Vietnam, the guy with the radio, that's who they're trying to kill. The guy at the radio, that's the guy that they tried to kill man.

And hearing all of our stories of life expectancy and combat with the guy with the radio in Vietnam, it's not very long, so if we can change that, and these are my bros down there and some guys, I knew some of the strikers. Again, it's a small community. So to pass it along and to keep it, and I think it finally took root and really made a hole because like, okay, we had a reputation of saving lives, keeping it clean as, as much as possible. I rarely remember losing any guys on anything, which was awesome.

Taking it to the bad guys is the best ever too. Having that background, them knowing they do it. I didn't care. And if they're with me, it was like, had the confidence to go walk up to the Army and the JOC and are like, hey here we are. Where's GFC. Where's the team lead? Let's go meet, meet sergeant major, meet their first shirt, which is opposite of ours, see how it works, what we're going to do, and get these kids introduced. And like, dude, they're expecting a lot out of you. Yeah, you're young, but they're expecting a lot. And we need to provide that top tiered service because that's who we are, we're top tier. So, be professional.

Nathan Bachand

I know your kids are young, but when the time comes for them to graduate high school, would you encourage them to join the Air Force?

Andy Deacon

Or any of the branches, if they're happy. The nice thing is, for me and my wife, we got a lot of experience, good and bad, enlisted and officer, guard and reserve and active. I did it all, I touched every last branch, so I was like, I did officer, enlisted, guard, reserve, active, active, reserve, so I was like, man, if I did all again, reserves.

Reserves because you always go active, your airframe. If you're going to go that route versus active duty, if you need to take a break or get a good civilian job, depending on what you want to do, fly or not. There's still a pilot shortage, and there will still be a pilot shortage. If they want to go down that road, but hey, he wants to go ground pound too. Be the best. Train smarter, not harder. Don't get broke like that. Invest in good shoes, rehab and massage therapy.

Nathan Bachand

Right on. I think we'll wrap it up there unless you have any parting shots. I'll stop the recording.

Andy Deacon

Yeah, that'll work. There's other stuff you want to send later.





The
United
States
Air Force

CERTIFIES THAT

CAPT ANDREW H. DEACON

HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE
FORWARD AIR CONTROLLER (AIRBORNE) JOINT FIREPOWER COURSE (FACJFC)
PDS CODE XG4 (39 HOURS)

AND IS HEREWITH AWARDED THIS

Certificate of Training

This certificate does not qualify the holder to control air strikes.


KIRK E. EMIG
Lt Col, USAF
Commander, 6 CTS

25 January 2008

DATE



Joint Personnel Recovery Agency Personnel Recovery Academy

certifies that

ANDREW H. DEACON

303-82-9191



has successfully completed

SERF 225

Special Survival Training

(44.7 Hrs)

and is herewith awarded this

Certificate of Training



Eric S. Johnston
Commandant, JPRA/PPRA

7 December 2007



The United States Air Force



CERTIFIES THAT

Maj Andrew H. Deacon

HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE
MQ-9 BASIC AND REQUALIFICATION/TRANSITION COURSE I
Holloman AFB, New Mexico

AND IS HEREWITH AWARDED THIS

Certificate of Training


JASON P. WILLEY, Lt Col, USAF
Commander, 16th Training Squadron

14 February 2018

Date

United States Air Force

Certificate of Enlistment



This is to certify that

ANDREW H. DEACON

Has been accepted for service in the United States Air Force

This new member of America's defense team has shown both foresight and dedication by volunteering to serve a great nation and by agreeing to accept the trust and challenge which the American people have bestowed upon the men and women of the United States Air Force.

The first step to your future

28 MARCH 95
DATE

Col. S. M. M. M.
FOR THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE



The United States Air Force

CERTIFIES THAT

AB ANDREW H. DEACON, FR303-82-9191

HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE

Basic Military Training, LMAH9T000, 6 wks

AND IS HEREWITH AWARDED THIS

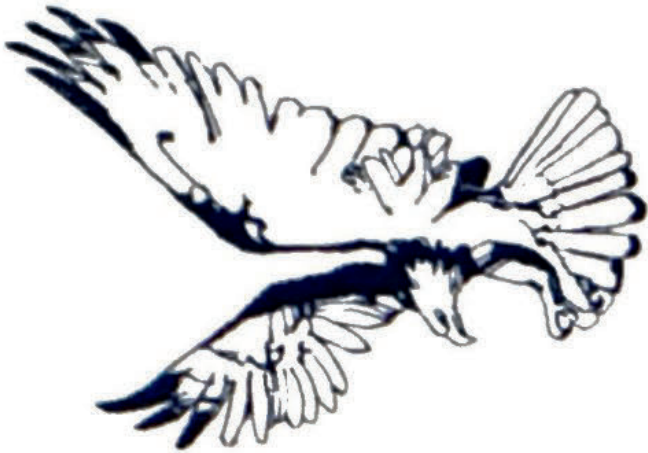
Certificate of Training

CJ Ingram

C. J. INGRAM, Major, USAF
Commander, 323 TRS

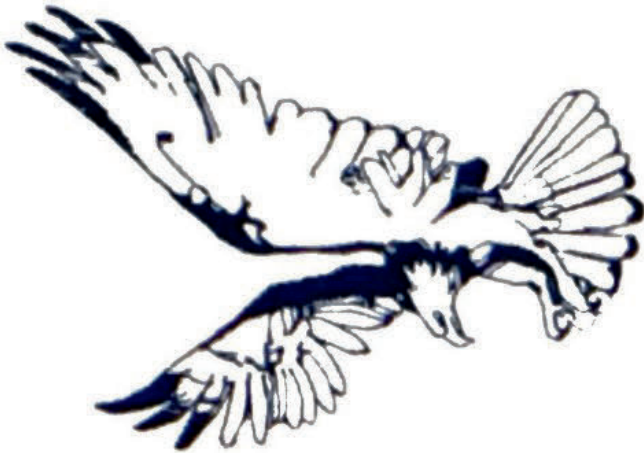
9 JUNE 95

DATE





The United States Air Force



CERTIFIES THAT

AIC ANDREW H. DEACON
(303-82-9191)

HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE
E3ABP1C431 000, TACTICAL AIR COMMAND AND CONTROL APPRENTICE COURSE
PDS CODE ONU - 558 HOURS
CONDUCTED BY THE 81st TRAINING GROUP, KEESLER AFB, MISSISSIPPI
AND IS HEREWITH AWARDED THIS

Certificate of Training

Steven J. Redman
STEVEN J. REDMAN, COLONEL, USAF
COMMANDER
81ST TRAINING GROUP

12 December 1995

DATE



2Lt Andrew Deacon

Class 04-09



KC-135 McConnell AFB, KS





The United States Air Force



CERTIFIES THAT

2LT ANDREW H. DEACON

303-82-9191

HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE

WATER SURVIVAL TRAINING COURSE S-V86-A, CLASS 04-35, PDS CODE -V-8D, COURSE LENGTH FOUR DAYS
DET 2, 66TH TRAINING SQUADRON, NAVAL AIR STATION, PENSACOLA, FLORIDA

AND IS HEREWITH AWARDED THIS

Certificate of Training


JOSEPH G. HENRIE, Maj, USAF
Commander

17 Jun 04

DATE



The United States Air Force



CERTIFIES THAT

2Lt Andrew H. Deacon

303-82-9191

HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE

KC-135 COPILOT INITIAL QUALIFICATION

97TH AIR MOBILITY WING, ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE, OKLAHOMA

AND IS HEREWITH AWARDED THIS

Certificate of Training

COURSE ID: KC135CIQ

PDS CODE: VDG

DAVID M. LENDERMAN, Maj, USAF
Commander, Tanker Student Support Flight

OCT 26 2004

DATE



The United States Air Force

CERTIFIES THAT

LIEUTENANT ANDREW H. DEACON

HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE
S-V80-A COMBAT SURVIVAL TRAINING COURSE (ERR)
COURSE LENGTH-17 DAYS

22ND TRAINING SQUADRON, FAIRCHILD AIR FORCE BASE, WASHINGTON
AND IS HEREBY AWARDED THIS

Certificate of Training

Steven G. Olive, LtCol, USAF
Commander

14 Jul 2004

DATE



2ND SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON

MAJOR ANDY DEACON

RETIREMENT CEREMONY



18 JUNE 2022
HURLBURT FIELD, FL

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

ENTRANCE OF OFFICIAL PARTY

PRESENTATION OF THE COLORS

NATIONAL ANTHEM

INVOCATION

REMARKS BY (RET) CARPENTAR

RETIREMENT ORDER

REMARKS BY MAJ DEACON

THE AIR FORCE SONG

DEPARTURE OF OFFICIAL PARTY



BIOGRAPHY



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE



MSgt (ret) Kevin "Chongo" Carpenter, is a former USAF TACP and retired as the Chief of the, "Advanced JTAC Course". While on active duty, he spent over 5 years deployed to combat zones. Since his retirement in 2016, his passion to assist warfighters is still a top priority. Presently, he is a Weapons Engineer at the Air Force Research Lab, Eglin, AFB. He is graced today by his wife of 22 years, Doreen, and 2 daughters, Emma & Lilly.



BIOGRAPHY

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE



Major Andrew H. Deacon

Major Andrew H. Deacon is currently an MQ-9 Reaper pilot in the 2nd SOS at Hurlburt fld FL and a United Airlines First Officer in the Boeing 737. Born March 8, 1974 he grew up near Granger, IN and graduated from Penn High school in 1992. He enlisted in the Air Force in April of 1995 and graduated from Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) in December of 1995. He was then assigned to the 19th ASOS at Ft. Campbell, KY. Major Deacon later attended the University of Indiana at South Bend where he graduated in December 2002. He received his commission from Notre Dame's ROTC Detachment 225 and attended Undergraduate Pilot Training at Vance AFB, OK. Major Deacon went on to fly the KC-135R/T Stratotanker with the 344th ARS McConnell AFB, KS and the U-28A/PC-12 at Hurlburt Field, FL and the KC-135 with the 153rd ARS Meridian MS. Major Deacon is an instructor pilot with over 5,000 flight hours, including over 3,000 combat hours garnered in his 16 deployments and current MQ-9 missions in the ongoing GWOT. He is married to Major Kerry Sheridan an AC-130U gunship evaluator pilot, 4th SOS, 5th SOS and currently the 492nd at Hurlburt Field, FL.

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY:

June 2017 - Present: 2nd SOS, Hurlburt fld FL, MQ-9 Reaper pilot.
June 2016 - Present: United Airlines B-737 First Officer.
October 2014 - Jun 2017: 153rd Air Refueling Squadron, Meridian MS Air National Guard, KC-135 Aircraft Commander.
April 2013 - September 2014: 5th Special Operations Squadron, Hurlburt Field, FL Instructor Pilot PC-12/U-28A.
October 2007 - 30 September 2012: 319th Special Operations Squadron, Hurlburt Field, FL Instructor Pilot PC-12/U-28A.
November 2004 - October 2007: 344th Air Refueling Squadron,



McConnell AFB, KS Aircraft Commander KC-135 R/T.

January 2003 - May 2004: Joint Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training, Vance AFB, OK.

Student pilot T-37 & T-1.

December 1995 - March 2000: 19th Air Support Operations Squadron, Ft. Campbell, KY, TACP (Tactical Air Control Party)

DEPLOYMENTS:

9 Deployments from June 2008 to March 2012: Operation Enduring Freedom, Horn of Africa for JSOC and SOCOMM, 319th SOS.
7 deployments from January 2005 - February 2016: Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn and Operation Inherent Resolve with the 344th Air Refueling Squadron, McConnell AFB, KS and 153rd Air Refueling Squadron, Meridian MS

EDUCATION:

2010 Squadron Officer School.
2002 Bachelor of Art in general studies, University of Indiana at South Bend.
2002 Associates of general studies and criminal justice.

FLIGHT EXPERIENCE:

4300 Total Flight Hours, 2360 Combat Hours
Aircraft flown: U-28/A, PC-12, KC-135R/T, T-1, T-37, B-737, MQ-9

AWARDS:

Air Medal (16 OLC)
Air Force Achievement Medal
AF Outstanding Unit Award (1 OLC)
AF Good Conduct Medal (1 OLC)
Afghanistan Campaign Medal (4 Devices)
Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal
Global War on Terrorism Service Medal
Nuclear Deterrence Operations Service Medal
AF Expeditionary Service Ribbon Gold Border (9 OLC)
Armed Forces Reserve Medal with 1 'M' Device
AF Longevity Service (3 OLC)
Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon (1 Device)
AF Training Ribbon (1 OLC)
NATO Medal (1 Device)
Air Force Commendation Medal (1 OLC)
Mentorship Unit Award (3 OLC)
Combat Readiness Medal (7 OLC)
National Defense Service Medal (1 Device)
Iraq Campaign Medal (6 Devices)
AF Overseas Ribbon Short

Achievements:

Inaugural Air Force Triathlon Team 1997-1998
McConnell Athlete of the Year 2006
Air Mobility Command Athlete of the Year 2006



AIR FORCE SONG

Off we go into the wild blue yonder,

Climbing high into the sun;

Here they come zooming to meet our thunder,

At 'em boys, Give 'er the gun!

Down we dive, spouting our flame from under,

Off with one helluva roar!

We live in fame or go down in flame. Hey!

Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!

**THE MEMBERS OF THE 2ND SPECIAL OPERATIONS
SQUADRON THANK YOU FOR JOINING US FOR**



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CERTIFICATE OF TRAINING

This is to certify that

AIC ANDY DEACON
303-82-9191

19 ASOS

has successfully completed

DIVISION COMBAT LIFESAVER COURSE
12 MAY-16 MAY 1997
40 HOURS

Given at _____ FORT CAMPBELL, KY _____

JAMES G. JOLISSAINT
LTC, MC
DIVISION SURGEON

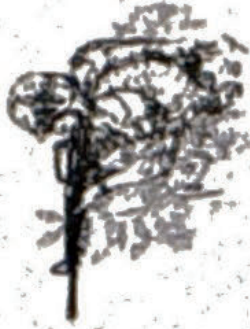
EAGLE CHALLENGE 1996



THE CLOSE AIR SUPPORT TEST

3rd PLACE TEAM

1ST BDE TEAM



TSGT GLOECKNER

SSGT BROCKMAN

AIC DEACON

EAGLE CHALLENGE 1996



THE NAVIGATION EVENT

3rd PLACE TEAM

1ST BDE TEAM

TSGT GLOECKNER
SSGT BROCKMAN
AIC DEACON

Congratulations to

ANDY H DEACON

For successfully completing the Inaugural

**UNITED STATES
AIR FORCE
MARATHON**

September 20, 1997

Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio



placing
976th
in overall competition
with a time of
4:39:28

Kenneth E. Eickmann
KENNETH E. EICKMANN
Lieutenant General, USAF
Marathon Director



from the Armed Forces of the United States of America

This is to certify that

ANDREW HARVEY DEACON, 303-82-9191, SENIOR AIRMAN, REGULAR AIR FORCE

was Honorably Discharged from the

United States Air Force

on the 17TH day of MARCH 2000 This certificate is awarded

as a testimonial of Honest and Faithful Service

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric R. Bass".

ERIC R. BASS, CAPT, USAF

MILITARY PERSONNEL FLIGHT COMMANDER



The United States Air Force

CERTIFIES THAT

ANDREW H DEACON

HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE

AIR FORCE RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS FIELD TRAINING COURSE (4-WEEK)
LACKLAND II

AND IS HEREWITH AWARDED THIS

Certificate of Training

David A. Reinholz
DAVID A. REINHOLZ, Colonel, USAF
Commander

19 July 2001

DATE



OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT



Be it known that Air Force ROTC Cadet

ANDREW H DEACON

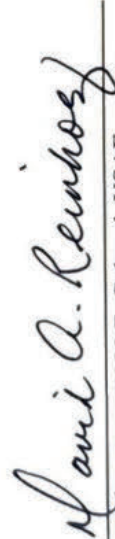
having demonstrated outstanding performance in all aspects of

Air Force ROTC Field Training

and having been selected one of the most outstanding individuals
is hereby awarded the

DISTINGUISHED GRADUATE AWARD

Given under my hand at Field Training Lackland II, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas
This nineteenth day of July 2001


DAVID A. REINHOLZ, Colonel, USAF
Commander

Congratulations to
Andy Deacon of 344th ARS

For successfully completing the annual

**UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
MARATHON**

September 17, 2005

WPAFB
SERVICES
Combat Support & Community Service



BearingPoint.

WITH A TIME OF 4:17:57 in the Four Person Relay Marathon

Molly P. Louden

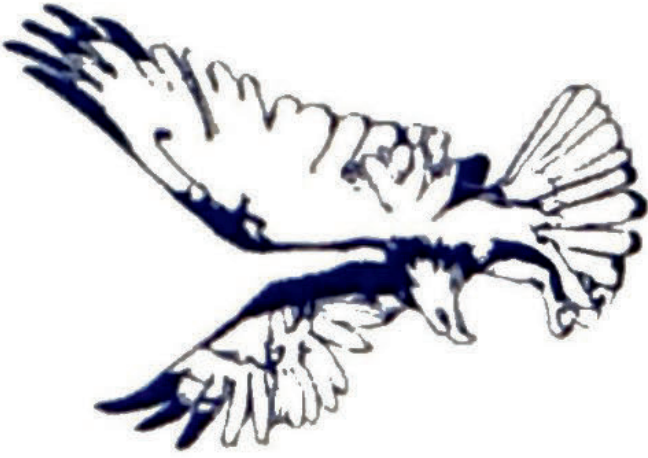
MOLLY P. LOUDEN
Marathon Director

Steven C. Carlyon

STEVEN C. CARLYON
Services Director



The United States Air Force



CERTIFIES THAT

1Lt Andrew H. Deacon
303-82-9191

HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE

KC-135 AIRCRAFT COMMANDER UPGRADE
97TH AIR MOBILITY WING, ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE, OKLAHOMA

AND IS HEREWITH AWARDED THIS

Certificate of Training

COURSE ID: KC135AC

PDS CODE: ZK7

14 14 2005

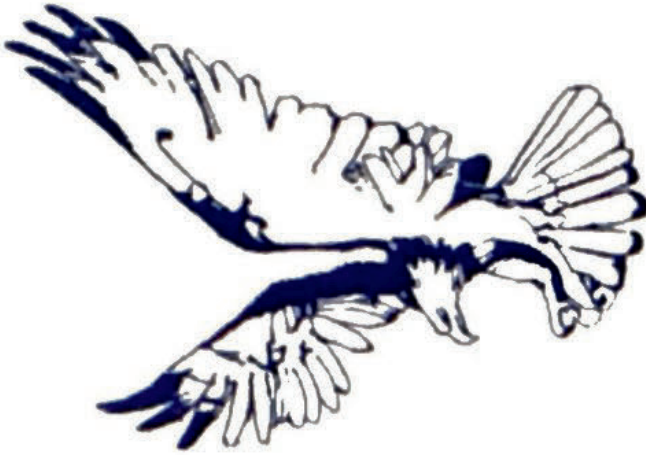
DATE

[Signature]

DAMON C DYNIS, Capt, USAF
Commander, Airlift Student Support Flight



The United States Air Force



CERTIFIES THAT

1Lt Andrew H. Deacon
303-82-9191

HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE

KC-135 AIRCRAFT COMMANDER UPGRADE
97TH AIR MOBILITY WING, ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE, OKLAHOMA

AND IS HEREWITH AWARDED THIS

Certificate of Training

COURSE ID: KC135AC

PDS CODE: ZK7

JUL 14 2006

DATE

DAMON C. DYKIES, Capt, USAF
Commander, Airlift Student Support Flight

Air Mobility Command

INDIVIDUAL FLYING-HOUR MILESTONE AWARD

Is Presented To

Maj Andrew H Deacon

For Attaining

3,500

Mishap-Free Flying Hours

This award recognizes your sustained professional airmanship and superior safety consciousness while performing aerial duties. Your dedication to the protection of precious national resources has contributed directly to the defense capability of the United States of America.

REPLACES MAC FORM 500, SEP 80

AMC FORM 500 JUN 92

DET 1, 335 TRAINING SQUADRON

GRADUATION CEREMONY



HAWK FLIGHT XXXIX

DECEMBER 12, 1995





Certificate of Aeronautical Rating

FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETINGS,
THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

Andrew Deacon

HAS SATISFACTORILY COMPLETED THE
PRESCRIBED COURSES OF INSTRUCTION OF
THE AIR EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMAND.

SPECIALIZING IN

Joint Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF AND BY VIRTUE OF
VESTED AUTHORITY I DO HEREBY CONFER THIS
DIPLOMA AND THE AERONAUTICAL RATING OF:

Pilot

GIVEN AT Vance Air Force Base ON THIS 21st
DAY OF May IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD TWO THOUSAND
AND Four



Michael W. Callan
MICHAEL W. CALLAN, Colonel, USAF
Commander, 71st Flying Training Wing



CERTIFICATE OF RETIREMENT
FROM THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To all who shall see these presents, greeting:
This is to certify that

Major Andrew H. Deacon

having served faithfully and honorably,
was retired from the

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

on the ***Fourth*** day of ***July***

Of The Year Two Thousand And Twenty Two

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rich Scobee".

DIRECTOR, AIR FORCE RESERVE
RICHARD W. SCOBEE, LT GEN, USAF

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles Q. Brown, Jr.".

CHIEF OF STAFF
CHARLES Q. BROWN, JR. GENERAL, USAF



DD FORM 363AF, MAY 2007



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING:

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
HAS AWARDED

THE AERIAL ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL (SEVENTH OAK LEAF CLUSTER)

TO

MAJOR ANDREW H. DEACON

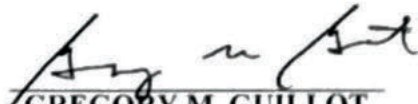
FOR

SUSTAINED MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT
WHILE PARTICIPATING IN AERIAL FLIGHT

Major Andrew H. Deacon distinguished himself by meritorious achievement while participating in sustained aerial flight as an MQ-9A Pilot, 2d Special Operations Squadron, 919th Special Operations Wing, Hurlburt Field, Florida, from 29 July 2019 to 15 November 2019. During this period, Major Deacon's airmanship, leadership and dedication to duty ensured the successful accomplishment of vital armed combat intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions in support of Operation FREEDOM'S SENTINEL. He successfully completed twenty combat sorties over the skies of Afghanistan providing continuous surveillance and reconnaissance in support of coalition ground and air forces engaged in direct combat with anti-coalition forces. Major Deacon supplied real time, full motion video providing combatant commanders vital visual reconnaissance and intelligence necessary to plan and execute combat missions quickly and efficiently while preventing coalition casualties. The professional ability and outstanding aerial accomplishments of Major Deacon reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND

9 DECEMBER 2020


GREGORY M. GUILLOT
Lieutenant General, USAF
Commander, 9 AF (AFCENT)





THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING:

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AUTHORIZED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER, MAY 11, 1942

HAS AWARDED

THE AIR MEDAL
(SIXTEENTH OAK LEAF CLUSTER)

TO

CAPTAIN ANDREW H. DEACON

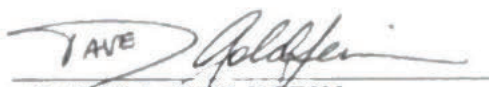
FOR

**MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT
WHILE PARTICIPATING IN AERIAL FLIGHT**

Captain Andrew H. Deacon distinguished himself by meritorious achievement while participating in sustained aerial flight as U-28A Mission Pilot, 34th Expeditionary Special Operations Squadron, for a Joint Special Operations Air Component from 8 February 2012 to 10 March 2012. During this period, in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM Captain Deacon's superb airmanship and perseverance ensured the flawless execution of 20 combat sorties totaling 99 combat hours. His devotion to duty under extremely hazardous and demanding conditions proved essential to sustaining the momentum of decisive combat operations for the Joint Task Force and was a significant catalyst to the success of our nation's effort with Overseas Contingency Operations. The professional ability and outstanding aerial accomplishments of Captain Deacon reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND

29 MAY 2013


DAVID L. GOLDFEIN
Lieutenant General, USAF
Commander, USAFCENT



AF FORM 2232, 20020401

Special Order: G-27440

Condition: 4

PAS: YYYYYYYY RDP: 18 DEC 2012



USAF Special Operations School



Certifies



CAPT ANDY DEACON

has completed the



**JOINT SPECIAL OPERATIONS AIR
COMPONENT COURSE**

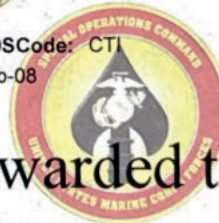


Course# SOED-JSAOC

PDSCode: CTI

25-Feb-08 - 29-Feb-08

and is hereby awarded this



Diploma

Paul R. Harmon

PAUL R. HARMON, Col, USAF
USAFSOS Commandant



ORGANISATION DU TRAITE DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD
NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION



*This is to Certify that
Le présent document atteste que*

**OF-2
Andrew Deacon**

*Has been awarded the Non-Article 5 NATO Medal
for service with NATO
in relation to
the ISAF Operation
during the period*

*A reçu la médaille Non-Article 5 de l'OTAN
en récompense des services rendus à l'OTAN
au titre de l'opération de
l'ISAF
au cours de la période*

25 June 2011 – 16 September 2011

Anders Fogh Rasmussen
*The Secretary General
Le Secrétaire Général*



1151-10 NATO GRAPHICS & PRINTING



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

THE AIR FORCE COMMENDATION MEDAL

(FIRST OAK LEAF CLUSTER)
HAS BEEN AWARDED TO

CAPTAIN ANDREW H. DEACON
FOR

MERITORIOUS SERVICE
6 NOVEMBER 2007 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2012

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Captain Andrew H. Deacon distinguished himself by meritorious achievement as U-28A Instructor Pilot, 319th Special Operations Squadron, 1st Special Operations Wing, Hurlburt Field, Florida. During this period, Captain Deacon deployed for 433 days, commanding global special operations missions in Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa, in support of Overseas Contingency Operations as a member of the Air Force component of United States Special Operations Command. Captain Deacon accumulated over 1700 combat hours supporting SEALs, Green Berets, and Rangers during complex, dynamic mission sets vital to the success of Joint Task Force objectives. As U-28A liaison to British Special Forces, Captain Deacon forged coalition tactics, techniques, and procedures by expertly training 16 joint terminal attack controllers during multiple bi-lateral and joint exercises. As a squadron communications officer, Captain Deacon displayed expert attention to detail, successfully maintaining inventory of over \$4.9 million in mission critical computer equipment. Captain Deacon managed key communication components for 1,350 U-28A combat missions, providing immediate enhancement to command and control for Joint Special Operations leadership. As squadron supply and armory officer, Captain Deacon was instrumental in securing a \$180,000 squadron armory as well as overseeing weapons familiarization training for 140 squadron personnel. Serving tirelessly as a deployed Fallen Hero's team member, Captain Deacon enabled four fallen U-28A aircrew members to return with honor from their final mission. The distinctive accomplishments of Captain Deacon while serving his country reflect credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND

20 JUNE 2012

DAVID B. MOBLEY
Colonel, USAF
Commander, 1st Special Operations Group

AF FORM 2224, JUL 99

SPECIAL ORDER: G-895 CONDITION: 2 PAS: EE0VFB14 RDP: 2 MAY 12





THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING:
THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA AUTHORIZED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER, 16 JANUARY 1969 HAS
AWARDED
THE MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL

TO
MAJOR ANDREW H. DEACON
FOR
MERITORIOUS SERVICE
1 OCTOBER 2016 TO 20 MARCH 2019
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Major Andrew H. Deacon distinguished himself in the performance of outstanding service to the United States as MQ-9 and KC-135 Pilot, 2nd Special Operations Squadron, 919th Special Operations Group, 919th Special Operations Wing from 1 October 2016 to 20 March 2019. During this period, Major Deacon displayed exceptional leadership as a KC-135 R/T aircraft commander and MQ-9 Reaper Pilot, when he commanded over fifty combat sorties and 377 hours in four different Areas of Responsibility for Operations JUPITER GARRETT, FREEDOM SENTINEL, ENDURING FREEDOM, and INHERENT RESOLVE. Operationally, he expertly employed five air to ground missiles and two bombs resulting in ten enemy killed, including two high value targets. Additionally, he flew in support of a special operations force raid ensuring the capture of another high value target. He also assisted with squadron formal training, funding requests resulting in fifteen training courses with zero delays in training. Furthermore, as an expert aviator, he executed nine missions of high value targets conducting fifty-four hours of armed overwatch for joint operations. Finally, his leadership was exemplified while acting as a KC-135 tanker liaison to Air Force Special Operations Command's proof of concept, transitioning AC-130 gunships into theater and coordinated with the Combined Air Operations Center for maintenance issues, drastically decreasing the transit timeline to ensure mission completion. The singularly distinctive accomplishments of Major Deacon reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND
10 April 2021

JASON M. GRANDY
Colonel, USAF
Commander, 919th Special Operations Group

GRANDY JASON M 1233315113
Special Order G-059802 Condition 8
PAS W60MF167 RDP 5 March 2021

AF FORM 2228B 20150310



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

THE AIR FORCE ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

HAS BEEN AWARDED TO

SENIOR AIRMAN ANDREW H. DEACON

FOR

MERITORIOUS SERVICE

5 JANUARY 1996 TO 17 MARCH 2000

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Senior Airman Andrew H. Deacon distinguished himself by meritorious service as Tactical Air Command and Control Journeyman, 19th Air Support Operations Squadron, Fort Campbell, Kentucky. During this period he played an integral role and had a significant impact on the success of Joint Readiness Training Center Rotation 97-03, when he effectively maintained continuous radio communications between the brigade and forward deployed echelons. His tenacious efforts were directly responsible for the tactical air control party receiving recognition from local observer controllers as one of the few units to accomplish this task. Additionally, Airman Deacon effectively led his element through several difficult scenarios during the squadron's annual combat skills competition, Eagle Challenge '98. His strong motivation and top physical conditioning for this event were instrumental in his team receiving the Ironman Trophy Award.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND

14 APRIL 2000

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Charles M. Dodd III".

CHARLES M. DODD III, Colonel, USAF
Commander, 18th Air Support Operations Group



AF FORM 2274, 20000101



































