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512th Airlift Wing, Dover Air Force Base, Del.

Commander shares goals with Airmen

Chief Master Sgt. Matt Proietti
512th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

DOVER AIR FORCE BASE, Del. -- In his first mass meetings with reservists, 512th Airlift Wing Commander Col. Raymond A. Kozak stressed his main objective for the unit is "readiness, readiness, readiness."

"It's all about that," said Kozak. "Nothing in our recent experience shows that we won't be busy in the near or long term for some big event. They are happening all of the time."

The colonel, who took command of the unit in May, met with about 400 Airmen at the base theater July 14 and with a capacity crowd the next day.

He said he saw the importance of readiness as director of air, space and information operations at Fourth Air Force headquarters and while directing a Europe-based refueling operation during the tumult in Libya following the overthrow of Moammar Gadhafi.

"Readiness is what we're all about," he said. "It continues, basically, forever."

Even as he acknowledged that the active-duty Air Force is declining in size, he said that Team Dover – the 512th and its counterpart, the 436th Airlift Wing – is stable.

"We're right in the midst of it. We're a bigger stakeholder in the important work that the Air Force does."

Air Force leaders implemented a plan in 2010 to reduce the number of active-duty Airmen to operate at the service's authorized end strength level of 332,800 by Sept. 30, 2012.

"We've never been more central to the posture of the Air Force, (which) has never been more important to the whole defense enterprise. The Air Force is going to be leaned on even more heavily than we have in the past, if that's possible."

Kozak congratulated the reservists for passing an operational readiness inspection earlier in December but cautioned them not to rest on their laurels as the wing's next major assessment – a consolidated unit inspection, formerly known as a unit compliance inspection – is scheduled for November 2013.

The commander encouraged reservists to make a link between the tasks required on drill weekends to their continued preparedness for the inspection and, ultimately, de-



Col. Raymond A. Kozak talks about the importance of readiness July 14 during his first commander's call since becoming commander of the 512th Airlift Wing. (U.S. Air Force photo by Chief Master Sgt. Matt Proietti)

ployment in support of the country.

"It's not just paperwork. It's not just nagging. It's readiness. You proved to the inspector general (in the ORI) that you can do your wartime job. Now we're going to do it again in terms of administrative processes and compliance with law and policy."

Kozak said safety and communication are key aspects of readiness. Regarding the former, he simply asked Airmen to be careful in their summer activities as, "we don't want to do the enemy's job for him." With communicating, he urged the attendees to ask questions of their supervisors and leaders when they don't understand something.

"We waste a lot of time then with false starts and going in the wrong direction. If there's something I'm saying and you don't get it, please ask. If there's something your supervisor is saying and you don't get it, please ask," he said. "Get clarity in your mind. So often we get bogged down in acronyms and talking past one another that we're not really communicating."

See for yourself

Watch the commander's call video on the S drive in the 512 AW folder. Go to PA and then CC Call. The file is "July 2012 Commander's Call."

Kozak started each commander's call with medal presentations. He presented the Joint Service Achievement Medal July 14 to Master Sgt. Kwame Tawiah for recognition of his recent deployment as a joint strategic logistics planner in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The next morning, he presented the Bronze Star to Chief Master Sgt. Joseph E. Haney for his performance as a maintenance superintendent at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. Both men were deployed from July 2011 to January 2012.

The colonel said it's an exhilarating time to be a member of Team Dover.

"We're in the thick of it, and I think that's a great place to be. I'm proud and excited to be a part of it and I hope you are, too."