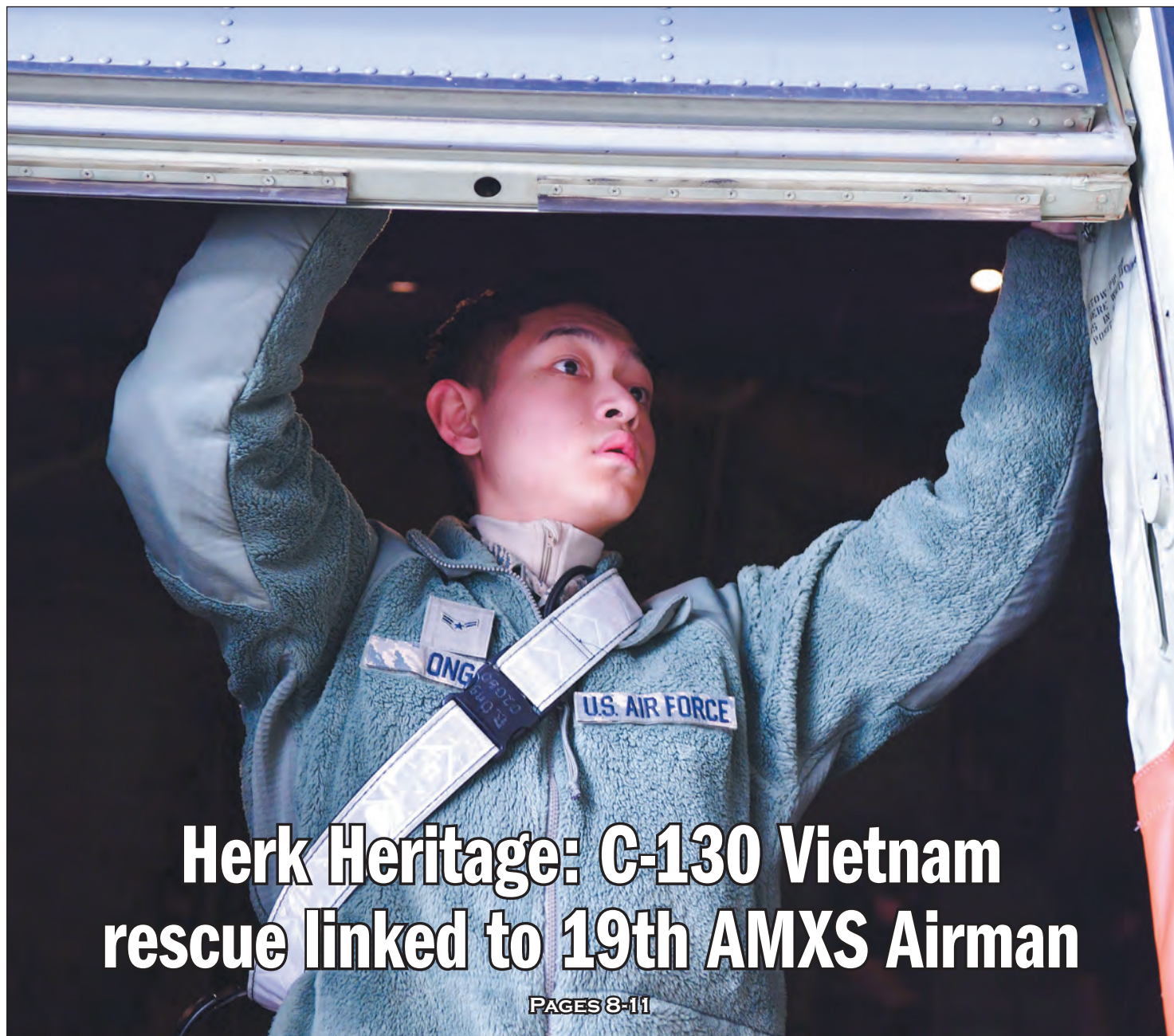




# Combat Airlifter

VOLUME 68 • NUMBER 1 • FRIDAY, JAN. 10, 2020



## Herk Heritage: C-130 Vietnam rescue linked to 19th AMXS Airman

PAGES 8-11

U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS AARON IRVIN

U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Brandon Ong, 19th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron guidance and control apprentice, closes the paratroop door on a C-130J Super Hercules at Little Rock Air Force Base on Dec. 2. After Ong learned how his mother and six of her siblings escaped the Vietnam War on a C-130A Hercules, he knew he wanted to join the Air Force and work on C-130s.



### LAKE DRAWDOWN

In recent years, the base lakes have seen increased infestations of harmful aquatic vegetation, particularly the extremely invasive alligator weed. As a control measure, the lakes are being drawn down this winter.

PAGE 5



### 19TH CONS PARTICIPATES IN REGIONAL INDUSTRY DAY

The 19th Contracting and Civil Engineer Squadrons participated in the Arkansas Regional Industry Day Forum at Philander Smith College, Little Rock on Dec. 10 and Dec. 11.

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### EXPANDED ACCESS TO LRAFB FOR SOME VETERANS

Purple Heart recipients, former prisoners of war, veterans with service-connected disabilities, and individuals approved and designated as the primary family caregivers of eligible veterans under the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers are now eligible for access to the Little Rock Air Force Base commissary, exchange, and morale, welfare and recreation services.

PAGE 13



# Air Force to solicit 75th birthday theme ideas

By Tech. Sgt. Anthony Nelson Jr.  
Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

ARLINGTON, Va. — In preparation for its 75th anniversary Sept. 18, 2022, the Air Force is soliciting birthday theme ideas from Total Force Airmen and civilians. Every year in September, the Department of the Air Force dedicates a theme to celebrate the Air Force's birthday.

Some of the past themes include, "Frontiers of Blue...This is 72!," "Focusing on heritage, warfighting capability and innovation," "American Airman... Wingman, Leader, Warrior," and "Breaking Barriers!"

Concepts for the 75th birthday theme should consider inclusiveness of multi-domain operations, capture Airmen's innovation and reflect the Air Force's heritage over the last 75 years. Considered themes should be short, concise, catchy and memorable (e.g. the 70th anniversary theme was "Breaking Barriers"). Submissions must also be in good taste.

All submissions and voting will take place through the IdeaScale website.

The submission and voting timeline is as follows:

■ The competition submission period will be from Jan. 6-31, 2020.



U.S. AIR FORCE GRAPHIC BY TECH. SGT. ANTHONY NELSON JR.

In preparation for the Air Force's 75th anniversary on Sept. 18, 2022, the Air Force is soliciting birthday theme ideas from Total Force Airmen and civilians. Every year in September, the Department of the Air Force dedicates a theme to celebrate the Air Force's birthday.

■ The voting window will be from Feb. 24 – March 6, 2020.

The best qualified submissions will be considered and sent to the chief of staff of the Air Force, the vice chief of staff of the Air Force, the Air Force director of staff and the chief master sergeant of the Air

Force for the final decision.

The winner will be announced around April 1, 2020.

The winner will receive an all-expense paid trip to the Air Force Association's Air, Space & Cyber Conference in September 2020, to attend the 75th Air

Force birthday celebration and meet the CSAF and CMSAF.

Airmen and civilians with ideas should submit them online at <https://usaf.ideascalegov.com/a/ideas/recent/campaigns/101> when the submission window opens.

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# COMBAT AIRLIFTER OF THE WEEK



**NAME AND RANK**

Airman 1st Class

Millie Temple

**UNIT**

19th Force Support Squadron

**DUTY TITLE**

Career development

technician

**HOMETOWN**

Saltlick, Kentucky

**TIME IN SERVICE**

11 months

**TIME AT LITTLE ROCK**

7 months

**GOALS**

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**HOBBIES**

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Temple was selected due her standard of excellence in her work. She is key to the career development section's success by training new personnel. Due to her efforts, the 19th Airlift Wing Military Personnel Flight has been ranked third in the Air Force.

U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS JAYDEN FORD



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# LRAFB lake drawdown

By Airman 1st Class Mariam K. Springs  
19th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

In recent years, the base lakes have seen increased infestations of harmful aquatic vegetation, particularly the extremely invasive alligator weed.

As a control measure, the lakes were drawn down this winter.

“The goal of the drawdown is to stress the plant [alligator weed] by exposing the sediments and roots to freeze and dry-out, in order to reduce reemergence over the next growing season,” said Dana Hardage, 19th Civil Engineer Squadron natural resource program manager. “Lowered lake levels allow easy access to chemically treat the weeds when the growing season begins. It also allows for additional shoreline maintenance that is normally not possible due to high water levels.”

See Drawdown, 6



U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS MARIAM K. SPRINGS

Pipes were placed to drawdown base lakes at Little Rock Air Force Base on Dec. 16. The base lakes were drawn down in order to control the infestations of harmful aquatic vegetation, particularly the extremely invasive alligator weed.



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# Drawdown

Continued from page 5

Alligator weed forms thick mats along the shorelines of the lakes and the dense growth suppresses native plant species. In addition, the gamefish population has been stunted within the base lakes as a result of alligator weed providing too much cover for the forage fish.

“Weeds give baitfish a place to hide out,” said Seth Fisher, 19th CES hunting and fishing program manager. “Currently, there’s too much cover for gamefish to properly feed. You’re going to have aquatic vegetation in any lake, however, the alligator weed has taken over. The weed creates a floating mat that allows other plant growth that usually wouldn’t be able to grow, creating additional problems.”

According to Hardage, through a cooperative agreement with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the weeds were aggressively treated with aquatic herbicide during the spring and summer of 2019 with plans to continue the same treatment next year.

“The goal is to keep the alligator weed down so that native vegetation can continue to grow, while also keeping the shorelines manageable to comfortably fish,” Fisher said. “When Airmen and their families come out, we want them to be able to fish without needing a boat.”

The lake is scheduled to be returned to normal levels between April and May.



COURTESY PHOTO

Little Rock Air Force Base lakes were drawn down in order to control alligator weed. Alligator weed is a harmful aquatic vegetation that has increased infestation in the lakes.



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## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

By Jeffrey Pryor, 19th Airlift Wing Historian

■ 1776 – Thomas Paine publishes his pamphlet “Common Sense,” setting forth the arguments for American independence.

■ 1942 – Japanese forces begin the assault on the Bataan Peninsula.

■ 1944 – The GI Bill of Rights, first proposed by the American Legion, was passed by Congress.

■ 2010 – As a result of the severe earthquake that struck Haiti on 12 January, C-130 crews from the 19th Operations Group flew humanitarian missions from 13 January through 6 March. Due to the devastation caused by the earthquake on the Haitian infrastructure, crews participating in Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE were unable to get advance information on operations into Port-au-Prince’s Toussaint Louverture International Airport. Communication issues

also affected the controller’s ability to direct planes, resorting to directing planes by sight and color. The slowness on the crowded useable runways caused the early air crews to circle in the air for hours, some reaching emergency status on limited fuel. Once on the ground, crews found cots and tents all over the taxi ramp, aircraft parking with overlapping wings, parking off-concrete, and people and pets roaming the ramp. During Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE, crews flew 238 missions in 15 aircraft, moving 1,542 passengers and 479 short tons of cargo. Crews airlifted basic life necessities, lifesaving equipment, and support personnel to Haiti, while also transporting the severely injured and orphaned out of the country in order to avert a much larger catastrophe.

Units from the 19th AW: 41st, 50th, 53rd and 61st Airlift Squadrons were involved.



Then Master Sgt. Patrick Drozd of Cabot signals a forklift operator to raise the forks to unload the next pallet at the Port-au-Prince Airport in Haiti in 2010. (Photo courtesy of The Leader)



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# Herk Heritage

## C-130 Vietnam rescue linked to 19th AMXS Airman

By Senior Airman Kristine M. Gruwell  
*19th Airlift Wing Public Affairs*

The Vietnam War neared its end when North Vietnam forces destroyed numerous aircraft on the flight line at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Vietnam, on April 29, 1975. Only one flyable aircraft remained: A C-130A Hercules with the tail number 56-0518.

Refusing to let the last aircraft be destroyed, Maj. Phuong, a South Vietnamese instructor pilot, directed his crew to ready the aircraft and evacuate as many people as possible. Over 450 panicked refugees hurried through a sea of flame and smoke ridden planes clinging to their last chance at freedom as they boarded the plane.

This was the last C-130 to fly out of Vietnam, which is now proudly displayed in front of the main gate at Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas.

Among those 450 passengers on-board was seven-year-old Tammy Ha, the mother of U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Brandon Ong, 19th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron guidance and control apprentice. Ha managed to escape the Vietnam War with six of her siblings and mother.

Despite the fact that this happened 44 years ago, Ha still remembers the night her family was rescued by the C-130 Hercules.

"I will never forget how my dad carried me on the bus and ran after the bus once it left," said Ha. "The plane was very crowded and all our belongings had to be offloaded due to weight. I remember the precious dolls my dad gave me being thrown out the ramp."

Along with losing their belongings, her 13-person family had to be separated. Ong's grandmother had to make a difficult decision on who to take with her. She would end up taking seven of her children on the C-130, and her husband stayed with the remaining four children in Vietnam.

"The loadmasters said only a certain number of people could come on the plane and the rest would go the next day, but little did they know the next day was the Fall of Saigon," Ong said. "Since the aircraft was filled to the max, they had to take out the seats and sit on the floor."

Ong's grandmother, mother, aunts and uncles sat on the metal

**See Linked, 11**







U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Brandon Ong, 19th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron guidance and control apprentice, stands in front of the C-130A Hercules outside of Little Rock Air Force Base on Nov. 21. Aircraft 56-0518 was the last C-130 out of Vietnam before the Fall of Saigon, which rescued over 450 refugees including Ong's mother. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Kristine M. Gruwell)





COURTESY PHOTO

Tammy Ha, top right, with her family in Vietnam in 1970. During the Vietnam War, Ha was rescued alongside her mother and six of her siblings on a C-130A Hercules. This was the last C-130 to fly out of Vietnam during the fall of Saigon, which is now proudly displayed in front of the main gate at Little Rock Air Force Base.





U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS AARON IRVIN

U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Brandon Ong, 19th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron guidance and control apprentice, reviews a technical order at Little Rock Air Force Base on Dec. 2. Ong decided to enlist in the U.S. Air Force after learning how his mother escaped the Vietnam War with six of her siblings on a C-130A Hercules. This was the last C-130 to fly out of Vietnam, which is now proudly displayed in front of the base's main gate.

## Linked

Continued from page 8

floor listening to the loud rumble of the C-130 as it took off, not knowing when they would see the rest of their family.

Ong's family eventually settled in Houston, Texas, where in 1985 the whole family was finally reunited.

After learning about how his mother came to the United States, Ong became very interested in the Air Force and airplanes.

"When my mom told me she flew out of Vietnam in an Air Force plane and the history and story behind it — I got really interested in planes," Ong said. "I've always loved history, so familiarizing myself with my family background really meant a lot. When my mom said a C-130 was the aircraft she flew out of Vietnam on, I knew that was the plane I wanted to work on."

Ong enlisted in the Air Force as a Mobility Air Forces integrated instrument and flight control systems specialist and says he was lucky enough to get an assignment to Little Rock AFB and work on C-130J Super Hercules aircraft.

"Finding out that the plane in front of



U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS AARON IRVIN

U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Brandon Ong, 19th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron guidance and control apprentice, removes a head-down display in the cockpit of a C-130J Super Hercules at Little Rock Air Force Base on Dec. 2. Guidance and control Airmen specialize in electronics and avionics on aircraft allowing them to diagnose and correct any malfunctions.

the base was the one that saved my mom means a lot," Ong said. "It's fate that it's here and I am working on the same aircraft. This was an opportunity for me to give back to the United States. Without them and the C-130, I probably wouldn't be here."

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COURTESY PHOTO

The 19th Contracting and Civil Engineer Squadrons participate in the Arkansas Regional Industry Day Forum at Philander Smith College in Little Rock on Dec. 10 and Dec. 11. More than 175 representatives from 134 companies attended to learn about future business opportunities, how to conduct business with government sources, and to pitch their services to the Little Rock Air Force Base team and nine other government agencies.

# 19th CONS participates in Arkansas' Regional Industry Day

**By Airman First Class Trenton Sikute**  
19th Contracting Squadron

The 19th Contracting and Civil Engineer Squadrons participated in the Arkansas Regional Industry Day Forum at Philander Smith College, Little Rock on Dec. 10 and Dec. 11.

More than 175 representatives from 134 companies attended to learn about future business opportunities, how to conduct business with government sources, and to pitch their services to the Little Rock Air Force Base team and nine other government agencies. From 19th CES, Michael Boyle and Wallace Wilkins represented the techni-

cal team with insight into many of the base's physical requirements. From 19th CONS, with the acquisition perspective, A.J. Brown, Mandy Ashmore, Ricky Rudd, 2nd Lt. David Logue, Senior Airman Derek Sticklin, Airman 1st Class Trenton Sikute, and Maj. Steven Grow all participated.

"There are a plethora of businesses who would like to work with government agencies," said Logue, 19th CONS contract manager. "The process can be intimidating, especially to contractors who are new to contracting with the federal government. We were able to help these businesses take the first step

to becoming government contractors, from aiding in the registration process to informing them of upcoming opportunities."

The event gave 19th CONS and 19th CES representatives the unique opportunity to network with industry partners, discuss upcoming business opportunities, and provide training on important contracting topics.

Grow, the 19th CONS commander, delivered remarks to the group, sharing the unique mission sets and large impact LRAFB has on the Arkansas region. He also recounted

See CONS, 13



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COURTESY PHOTO

U.S. Air Force Maj. Steven Grow, 19th Contracting Squadron commander, delivers remarks during the Arkansas Regional Industry Day Forum at Philander Smith College in Little Rock on Dec. 10. More than 175 representatives from 134 companies attended to learn about future business opportunities, how to conduct business with government sources, and to pitch their services to the Little Rock Air Force Base team and nine other government agencies.

## CONS

Continued from page 12

the story of the Wright Brothers.

“They had a \$25,000 incentive contract with the Army Signal Corps in 1908 for a heavier than air flying machine,” Grow said. “They were bicycle shop tinkerers from Dayton, Ohio, who, as a small business enterprise, went on to change the world. The innovative, game-changing ideas that the Air Force still needs will often come from our industry partners.”

Grow closed by saying that he looks forward to writing an Air Force contract with the next Orville and Wilbur Wright.

In addition to educating potential contractors, industry partners were able

to pitch their capabilities to government agencies as market research to LRAFB.

“A crucial element of Team Little Rock’s acquisition success are our partnerships with industry – without them, the symbiotic relationship LRAFB has with commercial businesses could not exist,” Senior Airmen Derek Sticklen explained. “Any chance to learn about what our partners can provide should be seen as a valuable opportunity to enrich our vendor base.”

19th CONS manages an approximately \$40 million annual contracting program and a wide range of contracts including opportunities in services, commodities, and construction. Contractors seeking business opportunities may contact A.J. Brown at 501-987-3836.

## Expanded access to LRAFB for some veterans

Purple Heart recipients, former prisoners of war, veterans with service-connected disabilities, and individuals approved and designated as the primary family caregivers of eligible veterans under the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers will be eligible for access to the Little Rock Air Force Base commissary, exchange, and morale, welfare and recreation services began Jan. 1.

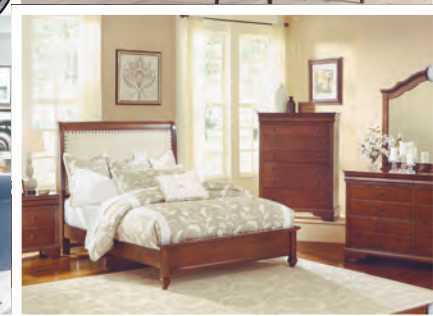
On the first visit to the installation, newly eligible veterans will need to bring their Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC) to the Visitor Center. Newly eligible caregivers will be required to bring their letter from the VA to the visitor center. At the visitor center, the VHIC for veterans or REAL ID-compliant driver’s license for caregivers will be registered with the base for access. After the first visit and successful registration, members will be able to access the base as needed. In the rare case there is a caregiver who does not have a REAL ID-compliant driver’s license or an eligible veteran who does not have a VHIC,

they will be directed to Pass and Registration at building 481 to be issued a local credential for base access. Those whose only eligibility for these privileges is zero percent VA-documented service connected condition and are not eligible for a VHIC can bring their VA Health Eligibility Center Form H623A, indicating placement in category 8E, paired with an acceptable credential such as a REAL ID-compliant driver’s license or a U.S. passport, until the Department of Defense and VA identify a long-term credential for this small group of veterans.

Base access for these groups will be restricted to the hours of the Express (Shoppette) and up to a Force Protection Condition of Bravo. Little Rock AFB is proud to expand these services to those who have sacrificed for our country.

For more information, including an extensive list of questions and answers, veterans and their caregivers are encouraged to visit <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/>

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