

Ep. 62: Recruiting

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Welcome to another episode of the Sword and Shield. I am your host, Chief Master Sergeant Christopher Howard, 960th COG Superintendent. And with me today I have Chief Master Sergeant Pruitt Air Force Reserve Recruiting Service. Hey chief thanks for spending some time with us today right? Um quite often when we're talking about the reserves and uh leadership roles, recruiting comes up. So I was hoping that you can kind of help me understand and our listeners understand um you know your role as the recruiting service and then how that all interacts with the with our units. So what do you leverage to get the numbers or to find um the positions that we recruit too. So that's a that's a really good question and it becomes challenging in different areas. So we go out and we try to locate viable prospects, just a prospect at first uh where we're trying to get in front of a qualified person when they're ready to make a decision, not when we need to make a sale or fill a vacancy. Um those two kinds of a line hand in hand but we go out and we try to generate the interest at first and sometimes it's met with adversities. Sometimes it's met with open arms. Um once we find that person and we're going to go ahead and take them through the recruiting steps. So we're going to need to get them qualified via the ASVAB qualified with a medical physical and that's probably at MEPS where they're going to get both of those and then we're gonna bounce those off of the current vacancies that's out there. So we're going to try to discover what units and what positions need to be filled. How are we going to get to our in strength? And then we're going to couple that with the Air Force Enlisted Classification Directory so that we can find out what jobs they qualify for. Okay, And then we're going to go ahead and apply and try to get them sold on a on a position. Uh every position comes with different benefits, right? So nobody joins the Air Force Reserve saying I only want to do this job, right? They do that they want. But a lot of times the needs are going to be, you know, I need some medical insurance. I need some money for school or whatever that might be. Well, that's what we utilize to help us when we're selling a job to someone. So we look at the vacancies, we look at the qualifications, we look at what they're really trying to do if someone says, you know, I need to fit in. Maybe some of my training schedule in the middle in the summertime between high school and college or on my summer breaks then we're not gonna be looking at a job Maybe four I know or a long extended text school. We're going to be looking at something that's going to fit within their desires but also really what their needs are. So it's a little bit different than regular recruiting right? In the sense that we are tailoring or you know kind of adjusting our sites based on that individual need a little bit more than regular. Is that would that be safe to say? That's absolutely accurate. Yeah that

is safe to say you know Greg they're going to recruit on a on an umbrella basis. They're gonna they're going to recruit to the Air Force is big picture needs and that's why a lot of folks can join rig off as an open career field. Open general open medical, open whatever it is. We recruit to a very specific position. Okay regards not recruiting for a three D. One position at Grand Forks, North Dakota. They're recruiting for three D. Ones for the Air Force. Okay so you said we recruit to very specific positions where would we find those positions if we were interested? Rvs Rvs? Okay awesome. That's online. Right so if I'm a civilian and I've never served before, how would I know what positions to look for. So civilians don't have the access. Right. When I say R. And B. S. I mean those military members have access to AFPC. Secured website and can go out and see Rmbs and there's actually two, there's reserve vacancies that everybody has access to and it's more of a generic, here's the jobs and the locations Rmbs. The true R. And B. S. Is what recruiters have access to and that's how we actually block a position it's advertised and we block it specific for our applicant as we proceed on and get ready to enlist. Okay. And uh so that that really goes to taking individuals that are probably qualified on Ray Gas or currently in the reserves looking for another position. Right, correct. Okay. Um but if going back to a non prior, how would a non prior kind of assess or be going from a prospect to recruit and getting through training? So if you're if you're are you asking about, can they find positions and then come in with already desires of what those vacancies are they? How would they find those vacancies where they just have to come talk to you? So they need to come talk to us a lot of times when we're starting to process because we have it's called a stairway success where we're gonna we're gonna make contact initial contact and we're gonna bring them in for an initial appointment and during that initial appointments where we're really going to be sitting down and diving deep into what we call impact or probing. So we're going to be asking them why is it you're looking to join? What are you looking to get out of this? What your one-year plan with your five-year plan? You know what where do you work now? What do you wish your benefits you had? So we want to uncover those needs and wants and then we want to apply with the Air Force Reserve is going to be able to fulfill within those. Um a lot of times we find that applicants want to come in and they start, they want to talk about jobs immediately. There are so many unknown variables. Jobs are open and close in every single day, recruiters are going to block them, Units are going to lose somebody, which is going to open up a new vacancy. And then the other unknown variables are we don't know what they're going to qualify for until they get the maps. So we always kinda put a thumbtack in. Let's talk about jobs until we get you qualified and we get them sold on the Air Force Reserve. Because reality is they can retrain as many times as they want. Do we want longevity? Absolutely. No. I think that's a great selling point for the reserves to right. So when we talk about the rig half pathway you recruited, you go through BMT, go through tech school, you go to your first duty station, you get trained, you're in your first tour and then it comes up time to either re enlist. That's the opportunity that most people get to uh you know kind of change their job or potentially retrain. Um and that's not even guaranteed um within the Reserve. It's much different in the fact that if you are non prior coming off the street similar once you're trained um Let's see life changes. Then you can look at another opportunity,

another base which then can open up for cross training or even if you've been in the in the reserves for a while and you just want to change then you can look at RBS and work through that process, correct? That is correct. You know and the benefit of doing something like that is your foot's in the door, you know? So there's so many different opportunities and pass that can that you can go down. And I used to, I used to talk with my applicants when I was a young recruiter. Um and let them know hey you can window shop all day long but you gotta step foot through that door before you're really going to experience with those paths and opportunities are gonna be, you know the Air Force reserves slogan used to be for a while, we're a part time force with full time opportunities. This full time opportunities can be more than just a G. R. And R. positions. It can be mandates it can be deployments, it can be retraining into different affects. Um One of the one of the biggest success stories that I ever had um that that I fell was that I had the opportunity to really be a part of, was a young man named Sterling Broadhead and Sterling Broadhead was extremely sharp, you know he showed up with his master's degree and off the cuff, a lot of people are gonna have a master's degree, you're an officer, you're officer material. Well that's not always the case, you know officers one the positions are going to be a lot more limited to uh it's also really kind of contingent on meeting those requirements a lot of times it's technical type degrees or that alignment has to be a little more close bit. So Sterling Broadhead comes in and Master's degree and I end up putting in to t to air transportation, right? Um he goes off to basic training, does great things, he calls us when uh when he's almost done with basic training said hey I just want to let you know I graduated basic training, good job, really appreciate the guidance and everything and it was exactly what I thought and then he bragged about himself a little bit and that's where recruiters really get that sense of satisfaction of what we're doing when we get to hear the accomplishments of now citizen airmen doing great things because when we saw him we saw him as a civilian now we get to hear about their leadership potential . So he called and he said I got the War hawk Award ran the mile and a half in 9:32. I'm sorry 7:32. That's a dead sprint I'm thinking jeez uh 31 years old I mean great things, I couldn't do that. No not even 32 that's maybe my mile is that you know? So you know I mean this guy just killed it. Then he goes to based or text school then he comes back and this was a hill Air Force base um goes to his unit. He ends up getting promoted to senior imminent in advance because you get rank progression based on your college credits. Right? So he came in at an advanced rank goes on to uh goes on to do great things in his unit. And I see the wing commander a couple of years later at our conference I say how senior matt Broadhead doing? He goes oh you mean staff sergeant Broadhead. Really, Yep. He just got promoted. He's working at the wing now he came in to T. two. Now he's a wing exec and just making a name for himself crushing it so fast forward another year. I see the wing commander again at the next recruiting conference. Hey sir good to see you again. How Staff sergeant Broadhead done? Oh you mean Lieutenant Broadhead? What? Yeah we just picked him up on D. A. C. P. He's going on to get his logistics readiness officer training, Sterling Broadhead who I knew and put into the Air Force Reserve is now Major Broadhead as a unit commander at Hill Air Force Base. That's awesome. So the opportunities are there. So a lot of times it's just it may not align exactly how they want but we get

their foot through the door and opportunities can open up right. And I think that brings up you know a good conversation when we talk about opportunities. Um is what is an opportunity? Right? I think that quite often when you're young or you have a preconceived notion of what things are going to be that sometimes you're blind to an opportunity. Um I guess so with your job how do you explain or how do you kind of get an individual to see what an opportunity is? So an opportunity is such a vague word, right opportunity to me may not be an opportunity to you uh and vice versa. So a lot of times when we're talking about opportunities it could be the opportunity of making sure you can provide medical insurance for your family and yourself. It could be the opportunity to go to college, which you might otherwise not have, it could be an opportunity to work in a job that you're never going to have the availability to do. Um it could be various things and that's where we really in the recruiting process really kind of break down. Why are you wanting to join? One of the questions I always started with is why are you looking into the military, why the Air Force reserve specific. Okay, right. That makes me think that you probably have um some of the harder cells or the harder conversations when we're talking about at the end service recruited position, right? We're talking about individuals that this is what I know the Air Force's I've been regatta for X number of years and set in my ways and the way I think that the Air Force works, I have my own opinion about what the reserves and the guards like. Um and I know what I like and hate about my job. No, that's that is definitely a challenge always has been. Right. So we have different areas of recruiting, we have officer sessions, health professions, line recruiting, you know, And then in service recruiters and service recruiters really kind of set themselves off on a different level because anybody that walks into the office of a recruiter for O HP or line, they have a general interest in joining or else they wouldn't be there in service recruiters have that challenge of there in your office talking to you because it's a requirement to separate active duty and either there they fulfilled their commitment , which now they're going to separate and we want to capitalize on their training and their abilities and then also give them benefits . That's, that's a term called Palace Front where they're going to finish their term. They're gonna join with concurrent service or you have the ones that say, you know what, I need to get back home, Mom and dad's sick or, or I've got a job opportunity, whatever it is, that's palace chased um Palace chases a means of, can you help me to get back home while I also continue serving? I'm asking to leave my active duty obligation early and serve that time back in the Air Force Reserve. But generally it's Palace Front and they come in with their arms crossed and their defiant and they know it all and we have to really break down those barriers, right? And there's nothing really wrong with objections, objections just means. Those are questions that aren't answered yet. No. I mean I was a Palace front myself. It was time for me to leave active duty for family reasons. And uh, it was just, I wanted to continue to serve and I'll be honest with where I was going. We just couldn't make the connection with my original AFSC at the time. Um and I, it was a struggle for me to, to kind of go down the pathway of accepting a different AFSC because um, I was support to an operations a AFSC, we always butted heads, you know, having to go back to the maintenance of the house and say, hey look, I'm gonna go be a one, you know, such and such like you're dead to me, never ever talked to me again, but it

was the only way I could get to that particular location. Um and uh you know, I had officers on regulate that really made a phone call. They helped me out and found that position for me and helped get me into a position. And by the time I got there, things had changed my original AFSC Was now available. Um and they were able to keep my line number and for me to promote when I got there. So I just really lucked out and how all that fell in, right? It's not always the case. So it definitely was appreciated and the in service recruiter was, it was pretty helpful in that in that moment. That's good. That's a success story and there are many, many more like that, right? So it does become challenging. You know, I've, I've had those people come in with their arms crossed and just sign my stuff off. I don't want to hear what you have to say. I already know about the Air Force Reserve and then we have to really step back and ask some of those real tough questions. Um you know, what, what are your plans in the future? You've got a family, what's your medical plans? What's your educational plans? You've got X amount of years invested. What are you doing with that? Are you getting a return on your investment? Probably not. So we really break down and try to say here's how you can get a return on that investment. And if we can capitalize on two Skill sets, if a c skill set, if we can right, that's what we want. If there is a huge benefit, cost savings and training dollars units love them when they're fully qualified for the most part, at least we hope that they do. But even if they're coming over as a retraining like yourself, we have to look at those leadership skill sets that they're coming over with. You know that mentality of already know how the air forces are operating. They're going to bring that active duty concept over into the reserve, that structure that day in day out that us citizen airman don't always have the opportunities to do. No, I agree. I know that's one of the a lot of those things we cover when we're trying to retain um here at the wing and the group and the unit level. Right? It's uh what are you going to do when you separate even from the reserves? Um and one of the pieces that I always try to hit on two is the networking piece, right? The fact that being a citizen airman is so beneficial from a network perspective. Just because you work in this job and working this FC in this unit, you have access to probably 15 different companies that are represented at the table from different levels. Um or a number of different type of job opportunities, job knowledge that you can find someone that knows a little bit about something that might help you in the right direction or have a lead for a job. I was talking to uh another chief the other day and I was one of the things that he loved about the reserve system. He was making really good money right here on the civilian side. And when that got laid off, the reserves were the only ones there to catch him, you know, Okay. They brought him in kind of mind his orders; they helped him find a new job. All of it. Right. Is that family aspect that the reserves have um, that I think sometimes, you know, we miss on reggae half or we don't necessarily see from that perspective or as a civilian understand that benefit is there? Well, you don't have that personal connection a lot of times, you know, since and there might have a personal connection. They live locally and they serve globally, right? No, I definitely, you definitely can see that. Right? So, um, I guess the other question I had 42, right? Because you guys have a very important job and it's very strenuous. Um, but it also seems pretty exciting. So what do you love about your job? So what I love about my job is this I believe, and I've said this for years,

you know the secretary of the air force in 2014, Deborah Lee James said a public statement about the Air Force Reserve. So in the next 10 years I see a Chief of Staff with Major Reserve Component experience and that's a very bold statement to make about the Air Force Reserve Look. Um we've seen that we've seen General Miller, the Kaffir of the Air Force Reserve, go on and be a four star general of FMC. We've seen even my chief that has come back to recruiting and as our R. S. M. Right now, Chief masters came from the sea act, she was the senior enlisted advisor to the Seaq. Um so we see that cross flow, that cross integration. Um but here's what it means to me. I brought up Deborah lee James in the comments she made about cheap staff of the Air Force and I believe that one day a Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force can come from the Air Force Reserve. Right. Yeah, definitely. So what drives me is the fact that I'm confident that we all every citizen there and whether you're a young troupe and it's just a coworker appear whether it's a supervisory to a troop role, whether it's a recruiter to a civilian role, I believe that we all have that unique opportunity to be in touch with what will be our future leaders of the Air Force Reserve. No I fully agree. No I've already seen changes since being in the reserves of where you're seeing um Chiefs getting the opportunity to be command chiefs and deployed locations. Um you have first sergeants that are supporting rig off units at times. Um I've seen through MPA as well uh individuals taking full on leads. Um you know there's a number of examples of where that's just that integration is happening on a regular basis. Absolutely. Um So I guess another question I had for you is if I wanted to be a recruiter how could I become a recruiter? So you just gotta give us a call right um you know your 9 60 so you guys are spread out all over the United States. So those Gs. Us that our andrews with flights over there with a flight chief um If they're in Travis same thing there so you just got to find out who your local recruiting flight chief is. And you're always going to start with them. Just talk with the flight chief. They're going to give you an application, you're going to fill that out, give it back, we'll sit down with an interview and we'll actually go ahead and do our selection and then we send that forward. Right we're going to give our recommendations or maybe our concerns. We're going to send that forward. It's going to go through the squadron onto headquarters. They're gonna they're going to then branch it out and they're going to make sure that there's no medical issues. By letting S. G. Check it out and make sure there's no legal issues. By letting Jack check it out. And then once all that's been checked and everything's good, then we're going to get them to E. S. C. Evaluation selection course. Kind of a temporary. Let's test out recruiting, see how it goes. Um then we get them down to recruiting school and then we fulfill the needs of the Air Force Reserve recruiting service. May not be a recruiting job Aguilar here at Lackland. It might be the Missoula Montana Blue Springs Missouri. We don't know but we're going to fulfill those needs. Doesn't mean you can't make it back to Lackland. Not it doesn't mean that you can but that that's the path that goes. And from my perspective as a flight chief, I'm always going to give an application and say I'm not going to follow up with you. I'm not going to chase you to turn in this application because you're going to tell me everything I need to know with your sense of urgency on getting this turned in. I have to chase you to put in an application to be a recruiter. Should you ever come work for me. Do I have to chase you every month to give me all those accessions. Right? No, I fully

agree. You know, I've worked special duties and that is a key indicator of how motivated are you to be part of this culture. Right. How motivated are you to be successful in this mission set? And it always comes down to how engaged are you. How enthused are you? And how fast are you get even done? And how correctly is it done? And do you take uh you take feedback? Well, you take adjustments well. Right. So it's those things are amazing. The indicators to at least having the right attitude and sometimes the aptitude you couldn't hit it on the head. More right attitude is contagious, right? So and it's a choice true. You know, but as far as recruiting, if you have the right attitude, it actually is extremely funny. We're not just out finding the future leaders of the Air Force Reserve; we're out there having fun doing it right. We're working. Air shows were working baseball games and events and we're target recruiting and we're, you know, we're speaking with tons of people were out there. The image of the Air Force Reserve, you know, as a young former security forces, right? When I was a young cop, everybody always said, you're the first image of the Air Force standing out there at the gate. Well, I disagree with that. Our recruiters and even our Citizen airman that are not at work but out in the environment. They were the first image of the Air force reserve, you definitely hear a lot more stories and comments about one's recruiter than you do about it and security forces, you know, at the gate, Right? Unless it's just a unique story. Yeah. But yes, I can say that everybody can remember the recruiter, everybody can remember what he or she was told roughly. And I couldn't argue. Yeah, that's definitely that first impression. Yeah, definitely. Well, you know, I think just to kind of summarize it, I think there's a lot of talent out there, I mean, and we're opening the gates up even more. We've increased the age to 39 for non-prior service. Right? So we're targeting, we're targeting professionals, right? Civilian professionals to come in. So, you know, there's a lot of talent out there that will make great citizen airman and there's a lot of cysts in their men out there, they have the talent to make great recruiters uh to make great t h i s to make great chiefs and officers in our program. No, I agree. There's definitely a lot of talent out there. Um and it's just a, you know, from a leadership perspective, making sure individuals believe in themselves enough to, you know, reach out and look at that opportunity. You know, kind of going back to that statement of opportunity, the understanding that there are a variety of opportunities. Um they're not just barriers, they're just not little things that tell, you know, but sometimes it helps directly to what might actually be an opportunity. Absolutely. So with that, you know, I think that we kind of cover a lot. Was there anything else do you want to tell our listeners today? No, I mean I just want to I guess I would just say thank you, right, thank you for what you guys do. I mean, we don't get to see that, you know, when we talk of operational Air Force from recruiting, we are hr that's trying to man the operational Air Force. Sometimes we can manage with fully qualified, sometimes we have to man it with potential uh that have identifiers to be successful, such as the as map in the maps and the F. U. C. D. But we are so far disconnected from the operational Air Force that sometimes we have to remind ourselves that our mission is to fly, fight and win to win on an air space and cyberspace platform. And so it takes each and every one of our 70,000 airmen, citizen airmen to make sure that that mission is being done. You know, and thank you for what you do continue to lead. The ones that need to be led that we're

going to bring in because we're selling a family, not an organization, you know, fully agree, right? Um you know what I'd like to challenge all of our leadership out there is uh take the time to sit down with a recruiter locally or make a friend right? And then also challenged them to bring you in the fold see what the operations are. Kind of seeing uh what we do so that you guys can better uh particularly how we do our business, why we do our business which only helps us all out and if nothing else it's just um you know including one more person into our smaller family from this big Air Force reserve family. Right. All right well chief thank you so much for enlightening us with all of that information. Thank you for what you do. Right? Um There's a lot of work that goes into keeping a unit going and sometimes we take for granted uh some of the other pieces that go on like making sure that we have viable candidates that we have individuals ready to go. Um and then making sure that they know that we have vacancies. Um we get lost in the sauce on that one sometimes. So really do. Thank you and your team for being uh so diligent especially with the 960th. Um and all the efforts that you make on our behalf. So thank you. Thank you for having me. All right thank you. And with that said, Gladiators, remember stab your enemy in the face through cyberspace.