



## AIR FORCE TECHNICAL APPLICATIONS CENTER

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### **AFTAC civilian, Army Reservist selected for promotion to brigadier general**

*By Susan A. Romano, AFTAC Public Affairs*

**PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE, Fla.** – A member of the Air Force Technical Applications Center here was recently promoted Nov. 1 to brigadier general in the U.S. Army.

Brig. Gen. Donald B. Absher, a civilian physical scientist for AFTAC's Materials Technology Directorate, was selected for promotion in the Army Reserve, where he has served for almost 30 years. Absher graduated from Officer Candidate School in 1988 after earning a bachelor's degree in cell biology from California State University, and over the course of his three decades in uniform, he divided his time between active duty, the Army National Guard and the U.S. Army Reserve.



As a civilian physical scientist for the Department of Defense's sole nuclear treaty monitoring center, Absher is responsible for leading an interdisciplinary scientific technical team that coordinates the materials collection, analysis and data reporting functions supporting the National Technical Nuclear Forensics program.

The newly-minted general officer has held a number of prestigious titles throughout his military career, including operations officer for the Defense Intelligence Agency's Chemical and Biological Intelligence Support Team, U.S. Transportation Command's chief of deployment and distribution operations center, and most recently as deputy commander of the 143rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command – the largest sustainment command in the U.S. Army.

A Bronze Star recipient, Absher has deployed numerous times to Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. During Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, he served as a platoon leader during for the 24th Infantry Division. From 2007 to 2008, he deployed to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait as the 595th Transportation Brigade's chief resource management officer. And in 2011, he was the commander of the 1182nd Deployment and Distribution Battalion in Southwest Asia.

With the promotion comes a change of title and increased responsibility. The 1-star is now the vice commander of the Joint Enabling Capabilities Command under U.S. Transportation Command located in Norfolk, Va. JECC is responsible for providing decisive joint communications, planning and public affairs support to joint forces to meet the emerging requirements of Combatant Commands and Joint Task Force-capable headquarters.

The Santa Rosa, Calif., native joined AFTAC in 1994 and has deftly balanced his busy civilian occupation with his demanding military career.

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## **2-2-2 ABSHER**

“With family being my first priority, I believe it’s a unique and continuous challenge for many Reserve personnel to appropriately balance civilian career responsibilities with their military obligations,” Absher said. “I’ve been extremely fortunate to have very supportive management here at AFTAC, and that has significantly lowered the associated stresses on my family and myself throughout multiple overseas deployments and extended exercises.”

While he’s humbled at the amount of faith his Army leadership has placed in him as evidenced by his promotion selection, his pride comes tumbling to the forefront when he talks about the military success of his children.

“My son is an Air Force F-16 pilot, and my daughter is married to a Navy nuclear reactor operator,” said Absher. “Taylor is a first lieutenant in Japan and has already participated in several Pacific Air Force-led exercises, including Red Flag in Alaska this past summer. Elizabeth lives in San Diego, and her husband is assigned to the USS Pasadena, a nuclear submarine. She juggles her full time ‘mom’ responsibilities with two young children while she serves as the Family Readiness Coordinator for the USS Pasadena families. Understandably, these responsibilities are both compounded when her husband is out to sea.”

Lt. Col. Ty Miller, chief of AFTAC’s Verification Science Division, is Absher’s civilian supervisor and had nothing but praise for his leadership capabilities.

“It comes as no surprise to me that Don was selected to serve in the general officer ranks,” said Miller. “He is a supremely gifted leader and an extremely dedicated employee. His leadership skills come shining through with every project he works on, and I oftentimes look to him for mentorship on situations that arise in our division.”

Miller joked, “I don’t know many Air Force lieutenant colonels who have the privilege of having an Army brigadier general in their unit, so I’m going to milk that as much as I can!”