

321st reactivated for more trainees

by Meredith Canales
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8/29/2008 - **LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE, Texas** -- With two extra weeks being added to basic military training in November, more trainees will be coming through Lackland's gates.

A \$900 million effort has begun to house the trainees, but along with the housing need is the need for a place to train them. With that in mind, the 321st Training Squadron was officially re-activated Monday with a ceremony to mark the assumption of command by Lt. Col. Douglas McCobb.

"BMT is planning to undergo a very historic time as we transition from 6.5 weeks to 8.5 weeks," said Colonel McCobb. "I look forward to leading the men and women assigned to the 321st TRS as we conquer new challenges and overcome new obstacles while we make that transition."

According to Colonel McCobb, the skills that will enable them to meet the requirements of the different places they will deploy are essential and will be developed by the newly re-activated 321st TRS.

"My primary goal for the squadron is that we will remain focused on organizing, training and equipping our future Airmen," he said. "We will be fully engaged and dedicated to the development of warrior Airmen as we continue to train future generations in the same superb fashion as we have in the past."

Col. Edward Westermann, 737th Training Group commander, said the re-activation is primarily a BMT heritage event. "Individual squadron histories are closely intertwined with BMT group history. This is a big event for us because when a squadron's inactive, you have people who graduated from that squadron and come back to find it gone," he said. "At that point they might lose that connection. You also have the instructors who were assigned to the squadron, and they pushed flights from the squadron. They might also lose that connection. With the re-activation, we're reconnecting everyone to the 321st."

Colonel Westermann said the squadron was put on inactive status last year when lowered capacity became an issue. "When the number of trainees declines to a certain point, then you can accomplish your mission with fewer squadrons than you had at a given time with a higher capacity," he said. "Of course, with the expansion, we'll have more Airmen coming through. We'll increase our student load by approximately 1,300 over the course of the first two weeks."

Colonel McCobb said it is a great honor for him to be able to re-activate a squadron.

"Very few Airmen are ever given the opportunity to command a squadron, let alone re-activate one," he said. "I feel so privileged to be able to re-activate the 321st TRS. It has a very rich and dynamic history and it is a tremendous opportunity to be able to take the squadron from a nascent stage to one that will fully train and equip our future Airmen."



8/25/2008 - Lt. Col. Douglas McCobb accepts the 321st Training Squadron flag from Col. Edward Westermann, 737th Training Group commander, during a re-activation ceremony Aug. 25. (USAF photo by Alan Boedeker)