



# AIR FORCE

Civilian to AIRMAN



by Meish Goldish

**[Intentionally Left Blank]**



BECOMING A  
SOLDIER

# AIR FORCE

Civilian to AIRMAN



by Meish Goldish

Consultant: Fred Pushies  
U.S. SOF Adviser

BEARPORT  
PUBLISHING

New York, New York

## Credits

Cover and Title Page, © U.S. Air Force/Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol and U.S. Air Force/Senior Airman Steven R. Doty; 4, © U.S. Air Force photo/Benjamin Faske; 5L, © U.S. Air Force photo/Alan Boedeker; 5R, © U.S. Air Force photo/Consolidated News Photos/Newscom; 6T, Courtesy of Keetra Baker; 6B, © U.S. Air Force photo/Master Sgt. Cecilio Ricardo; 7, © U.S. Air Force photo/Master Sgt. Cecilio Ricardo; 8T, © U.S. Air Force photo/Robbin Cresswell; 8B, © U.S. Air Force photo/Robbin Cresswell; 9T, © U.S. Air Force photo/Alan Boedeker; 9B, © U.S. Air Force photo/Robbin Cresswell; 10, © U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Christopher Griffin; 11L, © U.S. Air Force photo/Alan Boedeker; 11R, © U.S. Air Force photo/Alan Boedeker; 12, © U.S. Air Force photo/Robbin Cresswell; 13T, © David Chappell Photography; 13B, © AP Images/Eric Gay; 14, © U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Cecilio Ricardo Jr.; 15L, © U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Beth Holliker; 15R, © U.S. Air Force photo/Nan Wylie; 16, © U.S. Air Force photo/Danny Meyer; 17, © U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Tim Bazar; 18, © U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Jason Lake; 19, © U.S. Air Force photo/Master Sgt. Scott Moorman; 20-21, © Purestock/StockTrek/SuperStock; 22A, © DOD photo by Cherie Cullen; 22B, © AP Images/David Zalubowski; 22C, © brt photo/Alamy; 22D, © U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Jason Lake; 22E, © Purestock/StockTrek/SuperStock.

Publisher: Kenn Goin

Senior Editor: Lisa Wiseman

Creative Director: Spencer Brinker

Design: Debrah Kaiser

Photo Researcher: James O'Connor

## *Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Goldish, Meish.

Air Force : civilian to airman / by Meish Goldish ; consultant, Fred Pushies.

p. cm. — (Becoming a soldier)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-1-936088-10-2 (library binding)

ISBN-10: 1-936088-10-X (library binding)

1. United States. Air Force—Juvenile literature. I. Title.

UG633.G614 2011

358.400973—dc22

2010004151

Copyright © 2011 Bearport Publishing Company, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in whole or in part, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission from the publisher.

For more information, write to Bearport Publishing Company, Inc., 101 Fifth Avenue, Suite 6R, New York, New York 10003.

Printed in the United States of America in North Mankato, Minnesota.

062010

042110CGB

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1




# Contents

Getting Tough.....	4
Welcome to Lackland .....	6
A Long, Hard Day.....	8
Surviving the BEAST .....	10
Ready to Graduate.....	12
Job Choices.....	14
Inside the Academy.....	16
Other Ways to Fly.....	18
Serving the Nation.....	20
 Preparing for the Air Force. ....	22
Glossary. ....	23
Index. ....	24
Bibliography. ....	24
Read More.....	24
Learn More Online .....	24
About the Author .....	24

# Getting Tough

A long line of **trainees** hung in midair from the monkey bars. They held tightly to the metal rungs above their heads. Slowly, they pulled themselves forward along the bars. Though they were exhausted and their hands burned, they didn't dare let go. One slip and they would fall into the muddy pit below—and have to start all over again.



Trainees in the air force take part in many military exercises that help prepare them mentally and physically for war.



This **military** exercise was just one of many demanding tests that trainees such as Christopher Platte had to go through to become **airmen** in the U.S. Air Force. Yet for Christopher, all the effort was worth it. By joining the air force, he had followed in the footsteps of both his grandfather and great-uncle. They had been U.S. pilots during World War II (1939–1945). They inspired him to work hard and to do his best.

Christopher's grandfather and great-uncle were part of the Tuskegee Airmen—the first African American pilots in the U.S. military.



The air force is the branch of the **armed forces** responsible for military operations in the air.

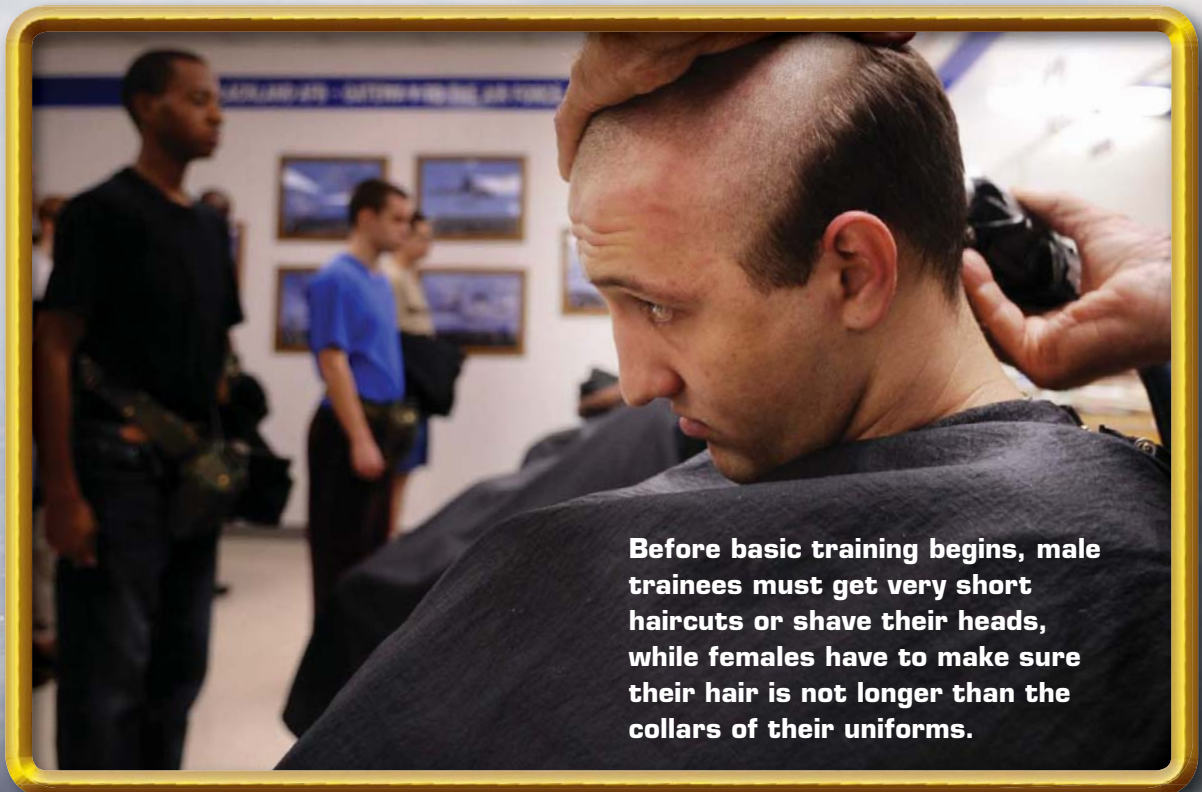
At his airman graduation ceremony in December 2009, Christopher (right) watched his great-uncle (left) sign a wall dedicated to the Tuskegee Airmen.



# Welcome to Lackland

It took a lot of hard work for Christopher to become an airman. Like all men and women who have **enlisted** in the air force, he spent a grueling eight and a half weeks going through basic military training, or BMT, at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas. Here, trainees spend long hours learning tough **combat** and survival skills as well as air force history and values.

**Lackland Air Force Base, located in San Antonio, Texas, is nicknamed “The Gateway to the Air Force” because all enlisted men and women get their basic training there.**



**Before basic training begins, male trainees must get very short haircuts or shave their heads, while females have to make sure their hair is not longer than the collars of their uniforms.**



New arrivals at the base are first divided into groups called **flights**. Each flight has about 45 members and is led by a military training **instructor**, or MTI. His or her job is to teach the former **civilians** all about military life. After trainees are put into flights, they are assigned **dormitories** and receive their uniforms. Now the hard work begins.

An MTI yells out orders to his flight.

During BMT, all enlisted men and women refer to themselves as "trainees." For example, Christopher Platte would address his MTI with "Sir, Trainee Platte reports as ordered."

## Index

- Air Force Academy 16–17, 18, 22
- airman 5, 6, 13, 14–15, 21
- Airman's Coin 13
- basic military training (BMT) 6–7, 8–9, 10–11, 12–13, 14, 16
- BEAST 10–11, 12
- cadets 16–17
- drills 9
- flights 7, 8–9, 11
- graduation 12–13, 17, 18–19
- jobs 14–15, 20
- Lackland Air Force Base 6–7, 13, 14, 16
- Maxwell Air Force Base 19
- Officer Training School 19, 22
- officers 16–17, 18–19, 21
- pilots 5, 15, 16–17, 18–19, 21
- Platte, Christopher 5, 6
- ROTC 18, 22
- trainees 4–5, 6–7, 8–9, 10–11, 12–13, 16, 19

## Bibliography

- Camelo, Wilson.** *The U.S. Air Force and Military Careers*. Berkeley Heights, NJ: Enslow (2006).
- Holden, Henry M.** *To Be a U.S. Air Force Pilot*. Osceola, WI: Zenith Press (2004).

## Read More

- Hopkins, Ellen.** *United States Air Force*. Chicago: Heinemann Library (2004).
- Zobel, Derek.** *United States Air Force*. Minneapolis, MN: Bellwether (2008).

## Learn More Online

To learn more about the U.S. Air Force, visit  
[www.bearportpublishing.com/BecomingASoldier](http://www.bearportpublishing.com/BecomingASoldier)

## About the Author

Meish Goldish has written more than 200 books for children.  
He lives in Brooklyn, New York.



**[Intentionally Left Blank]**



# AIR FORCE

Civilian to AIRMAN

A line of air force trainees hung from the monkey bars, high above a muddy pit. They held on tightly as they tried to pull themselves all the way across the bars to the other side of the pit. Though they were exhausted and their hands burned, they didn't dare let go. One slip and they would fall into the mud—and have to start all over again.

This exercise is just one of many demanding tests that air force trainees go through during basic military training. Look inside to learn more about what it takes for civilians to become airmen in the U.S. Air Force.

**AIR FORCE: Civilian to Airman**

**ARMY: Civilian to Soldier**

**COAST GUARD: Civilian to Guardian**

**MARINE CORPS: Civilian to Marine**

**NAVY: Civilian to Sailor**

**BEARPORT**  
PUBLISHING

[www.bearportpublishing.com](http://www.bearportpublishing.com)

ISBN-13: 978-1-936088-10-2



9 781936 088102