



## Tinker employee saves AF \$5 million

by Jeanne Grimes

Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center Public Affairs

8/25/2003 - **TINKER AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. (AFPN)** -- A logistics management specialist in the cruise missile product group came up with a suggestion to save the Air Force close to \$5.5 million.

In the process, Tracy Thompson earned \$10,000 for himself through the Innovative Development through Employee Awareness program.

Thompson came up with his winning idea while working with the B-1 Lancer program in early 2002.

He said the Air Force was on the brink of buying 44 conventional bomb modules as part of an upgrade for the bomber.

The proposed purchase, \$8.8 million for power control assemblies, \$2.17 million for power supplies and \$176,000 for transformers, totaled \$11.15 million.

Thompson said the purchase was redundant because another modification was already underway to change 129 of 202 multipurpose rotary launchers and eliminate the need for power control assemblies and transformers on those units.

Those parts, however, were exactly what the Air Force was prepared to purchase new for one modification, while mothballing them in a separate project.

Instead of sending all the units to the Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Center at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., Thompson proposed designating 44 as government-furnished equipment. Then they could be used in place of much of the proposed purchase.

Thompson said his suggestion was a matter of "putting two and two together and being aware of what other programs are doing."

He also suggested that the remaining 26 units be turned into supply to serve as spares "to support the fielded end items, thus creating even more of a savings."

The submission won a recommendation for approval from an evaluator here, then was forwarded to Air Combat Command headquarters officials for additional evaluation when it was determined the award was not within the Tinker IDEA office authority.

"This idea will benefit the Air Force and the B-1 weapons system; the overall cost savings may actually be higher than estimated," said an evaluator at Langley AFB, Va.

The suggestion was then sent to the Aeronautical Systems Center at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, for approval and implementation.

In approving Thompson's submission, the evaluator calculated the cost savings to the Air Force at \$5,458,001.12.

Thompson has had eight other IDEA submissions approved where the awards ranged from \$200 to \$800.

With \$10,000, he "paid off a few bills and bought a new truck, plus (helped with the) upkeep on my boy's truck."

His son, he explained, is currently deployed to Iraq.

Thompson said he had to "ramrod" the idea through the approval and coordination process.

"It got to ... ACC, and bounced (for) around nine months," he said. "(But) once it got to the right people at ACC, it was forwarded on immediately to Wright-Patt. They worked it very quickly."

Although he won the award, Thompson said he shares the credit with several people in the B-1 program office here and at ACC, who saw the worthiness of his suggestion.

"I knew it was going to save the government a lot of money," he said. "When I presented it to the (system program office), they said it was a good idea, but they didn't know if it would be accepted."

"I personally like to do what I call shop talk with various people to learn about their programs and try to look at the big picture ... This was just a basic opportunity to take (replaceable units) that were going to be disposed of. It made no sense. If you've got common items, why not use them?"