

Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado

SPACE OBSERVER

Thursday, December 11, 2008 Vol. 52 No. 49

Children happily tell Santa what they want for Christmas. Dozens of families came to Peterson Air Force Base's annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony Dec. 5 to visit with Santa and see the base's tree light up.



Right: Santa passes out candy canes to the children at Peterson Air Force Base's Christmas tree lighting ceremony Dec. 5. Dozens of families came to the ceremony to visit with Santa, watch the tree light up and enjoy the base's monthly Deployed Families Dinner.



Compassionate Heroes

Commentary by Master Sgt. John Baker
NCOIC, Peterson Air Force Base Chapel

Compassion in the Air Force? You bet. Though the idea seems a little foreign sometimes, there is a rich heritage of caring in our Air Force. One of my biggest heroes in military aviation is not a fighter pilot, bomber commander or a General. He is a cargo aircraft pilot named Gail Halverson. For those not familiar with that name, he was the "Candy Bomber" who became famous during the Berlin Airlift for crafting miniature parachutes with candy dangling below and dropping them to children caught in the blockade. News of his exploits spread and soon "supplies" for his endeavor — dubbed "Operation Little Vittles," a take-off on the original nomenclature for the Berlin Airlift, Operation Vittles — flooded in from the States. For his efforts, then Lieutenant Halverson received the 1948 Cheney Award for an act of valor, extreme fortitude, or self-sacrifice in a humanitarian interest.

Air Force Chaplain Russell L. Blaisdell is another compassionate hero from our past. Chaplain Blaisdell served during the Korean War. As the city of Seoul faced being overrun by communist forces, Chaplain Blaisdell worked tirelessly to arrange the evacuation of nearly 1,000 orphans to the island of Cheju. During a sermon honoring Chaplain Blaisdell last May, Chaplain Charles Cornelisse, wing chaplain of the 51st Fighter Wing at Osan Air Base, Korea, related the following story, which epitomizes the compassionate heart that drove his actions:

"Chaplain Blaisdell's assistant, Staff Sgt. Mike Strang, after years of anger at someone else's taking credit for what his chaplain did, wrote and asked Chaplain Blaisdell's advice on whether he should say something and "blow the whistle" on the deception that had been portrayed in the media and even in a movie.

But Blaisdell responded to Strang's letter: "The goal of our efforts, in regard to the orphans ... was the saving of lives, which would otherwise have been lost. That was accomplished. In a sense, Mike, well-doing has its own reward, which is not measured in dollars, prestige, or good will..."

Were these the only heroes of compassion ever to serve in the Air Force? No, as a matter of fact, compassion is among us today. Our medical personnel caring for and evacuating our wounded in theater are a fine example. Each and every one of us has the potential to be a compassionate hero. Something as seemingly insignificant as stopping to help change a flat tire on base makes one a hero in the eyes of the stranded motorist, if no one else. Compassion is key to our Wingman culture. We can be ordered to watch over our fellow Airmen, but it is far more effective when we do it out of an attitude of caring. Let's strive to be compassionate heroes today and every day.

New TSP contribution limits set for 2009

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board recently announced an increase in the 2009 elective deferral limit for regular Thrift Savings Plan contributions. The limit is now \$16,500, up from \$15,500 for 2008.

In addition, contributions for the TSP catch-up plan will increase to \$5,500, up from the \$5,000 limit set for the last three years.

"TSP is a long-term retirement savings plan, which everyone should consider," said Fran Campbell, a human resources specialist at the Air Force Personnel Center here. "It's a great supplement to military and civilian retirement plans."

The plan gives investors the opportunity to lower their taxes each year they contribute. The taxes are deferred until the employee withdraws from the account after retirement.

"Investment money is deposited directly from each paycheck, so you never have to think about it. That makes it easy to 'pay yourself first' while only investing what you deem appropriate," Ms. Campbell said.

She also said that investing in TSP is not limited to just stocks.

"People can choose safer government securities or invest in the lifecycle funds," added Ms. Campbell.

Catch-up contributions are additional tax-deferred contributions and are separate from regular TSP contribu-

tions. For those who are eligible, catch-up contributions provide a way for individuals to secure their retirement if they began investing later in their careers.

To be eligible for catch-up contributions, civilian and military employees must be age 50 or older in the year in which the first deduction from pay occurs. They must also be in a pay status and be able to certify they will make, or have made, the maximum "regular" employee contributions of \$16,500 to a TSP or other eligible account by the end of 2009. Other eligible accounts include uniformed services TSP accounts or other eligible employer plans, such as 401Ks. To be eligible, employees cannot be in the six-month, non-contribution period following a financial hardship in-service withdrawal.

Catch-up contributions automatically stop with the last pay date in the calendar year or when the maximum catch-up dollar limit for the year is reached, whichever comes first. Eligible employees must submit a new election for each year they wish to participate.

Regular TSP contributions stop when an employee's contributions reach the annual maximum limit and then automatically resume the next calendar year.

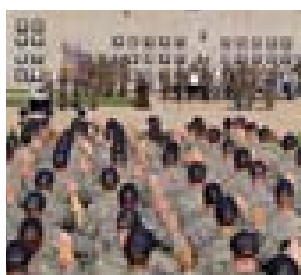
TSP for military members

- Military members can contribute any whole percentage of basic pay, as long as the annual total of the tax-deferred

See TSP page 6

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21ST SPACE WING
COMMANDER'S CORNER**21st Space Wing Knights exceeding the standard****Commentary by Col. Jay Raymond**
21st Space Wing commander

Looking back at this past week, the 21st Space Wing Knights once again displayed several examples of our ability to absolutely exceed the standard.

Scoring 40 of 88 submitted 2008 Air Force Space Command Medical Service Awards, the 21st Medical Group simply swept the competition. From multiple individual to team awards, every single nominee should be extremely proud because you truly represent the best the wing has to offer.

Being nominated for an award speaks volumes regarding commitment to excellence, hard work, and dedication to mission success; that being said, the sheer numbers involved demonstrates tenacity in leadership. I want to thank every commander, chief, first sergeant and, most importantly, every supervisor who took the time to submit an award nomination package. Best of luck to you all as you compete at the various Air Force-level competitions.

Another exceptional accomplishment from last week was that of Tech Sgt. Tina Timmerman, 21st Space Wing Plans and Programs; she was named the Air Force Space Command, Military Deception (MILDEC) Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year for 2008. Sergeant Timmerman's selection is a testament to her professionalism and dedication to AFSPC and the MILDEC mission.

Col.
Jay Raymond21st Space
Wing
commander

The 21st SW was also privileged to support the 2008 Joint Civic Leader Recognition Reception this past Saturday at the Peterson Club. With nearly 300 in attendance from Team Pete's Quad-Command and a wide-range of local civic leaders, this was no standard performance. The teamwork exhibited in support of this year's reception was truly a flawless illustration of that fact. The 21st Mission Support Group worked in perfect harmony with U.S. Northern Command, North American Aerospace Defense Command, and the protocol offices for AFSPC, Space and Missile Defense Command and U.S. Army Forces Strategic Command to execute an outstanding experience.

Your superb efforts were lauded by many attendees and did not go unnoticed. Many thanks to Curtis Clayton and the entire Club staff for putting on a five-star event. Special kudos also go to our Security Forces team for orchestrating a seamless flow of

traffic coming and leaving the base.

This week, Chief Master Sgt. Tim Omdal and I had the distinct privilege of attending the Joint Functional Component Command and 14th Air Force change of command ceremony at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. During the ceremony Lt. Gen. William L. Shelton relinquished command to Lt. Gen. Larry D. James.

I'd like to personally extend a welcome to General James and his wife Susan. Additionally, I bid a special send-off to General Shelton and his wife Linda; you have been an absolute proponent to our successes in space dominance. Best wishes to you both in your new assignment.

Looking to the future, with only 20 days until the New Year and roughly two months until our compliance is examined, the 21st SW conducted yet another Condor Crest exercise to continue to redouble our readiness and base capabilities.

To this end, I would like to reemphasize my fundamental expectation in the coming months: flawless operations are the standard of the 21st Space Wing, not our goal. We cannot and must not accept anything less.

Let's continue the aggressive focus on our mission and attention to detail, and together we'll ensure the 21st Space Wing remains the Air and Space Superiority Wing. Have a wonderful week.

**MANDATORY RESERVE BRIEFING
FOR SEPARATING MEMBERS**

All military members separating within 180 days must call Master Sgt. Jennifer Tucker at 556-0151 for a mandatory out-processing briefing. For a palace chase briefing, call Sergeant Tucker at 556-0151.

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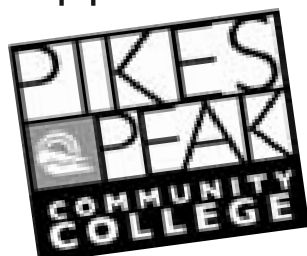
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First Knight

Photo by 1st Lt. Lisa Meiman



Tech. Sgt. Felix E. Rolon was selected for this week's First Knight award. This award is designed to recognize outstanding Airmen each week for the work they do every day.

Name:

Tech. Sgt. Felix E. Rolon

Duty Title:

Flight chief

Unit:

821st Security Forces Squadron

Hometown:

Vineland, N.J.

Time in service:

13 years

Time Assigned to Unit:

9 months

Hobbies:

Playing Xbox 360 sports games, Gym

Favorite Music:

Soft rock

Last good book:

"The Hardcore Diaries: Mick Foley"

Last good movie:

"The Bucket List"

How has joining the Air Force impacted your life?

"Most importantly, the Air Force family has taken care of my family while I have been on this remote assignment. That has made my tour so much easier. When your family is taken care of, life is great. In turn, I have grown in positive ways for the mission and for my Airmen. The Air Force is like family; when a family member needs assistance, help comes right away."

Why selected:

"Tech. Sgt. Felix Rolon is the night flight chief. He directly supervises 18 personnel and oversees security and law enforcement at the Department of Defense's northernmost installation. Sergeant Rolon is a true professional with a positive attitude and can always be counted on to get the job done." — Master Sgt. Charles Denton, 821st Security Forces Operations superintendent

Compassion: Food for thought, Part 1

By Chaplain, Lt. Col. Randall Kitchens

Peterson Air Force Base Chapel

There are many ways to describe compassion. One of the definitions states "Sympathy for others often with a desire to help."

This month offers the opportunity to show compassion as the holiday season tends to bring out the best in people. You may be showing compassion without realizing it. Think about some of the points listed and ask yourself if any are familiar:

Helping others in need

- If you see a lost child, compassion prompts you to help them find their home
- If you see a lost dog, compassion prompts you to help them find their owner
- If you see someone stranded on the side of a road with a flat tire, compassion prompts you to help them change the tire. It can be as simple as offering your cell phone so they may call a roadside service.

How can you demonstrate compassion this week?

- Help a friend
- Help a stranger
- Volunteer with a helping organization/group
- Give a gift to the Angel Tree
- Contribute to a charitable organization

The great thing about compassion is that it can be practiced anytime, anywhere and by anyone.

"If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion."

— Dalai Lama

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General Schwartz releases 2009 CSAF Reading List

WASHINGTON (AFNS) — The chief of staff of the Air Force announced the 2009 CSAF Reading List Dec. 8.

“Today’s Air Force is the product of the pioneers who preceded us, and our Airmen are proudly carrying the torch,” said Gen. Norton Schwartz, the service’s 19th chief of staff. “In our professional development, we must remain mindful of the lessons of the past, while we continue to prevail everywhere our enemies choose to engage.

“Continued education is a crucial part of being a professional warrior reinforcing our core values of integrity, service and excellence,” he said. “The books we have selected for our 2009 reading list capture a rich history, both intense and compelling, that offer a perspective to tackle the challenges of today and tomorrow.”

The reading list is divided into three areas: Military History; Mission, Doctrine and Profession; and Our Nation and World.

The books include:

Military History

American Patriot: The Life and Wars of Colonel Bud Day — by Robert Coram

Fast Tanks and Heavy Bombers: Innovation in the U.S. Army, 1917-1945 — by David E. Johnson

One Day Too Long: Top Secret Site 85 and the Bombing of North Vietnam — by Timothy Castle

The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power — by Max Boot

Mission, Doctrine, Profession

Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice — by David Galula

Making Twenty-First-Century Strategy: An Introduction to the Modern National Security Processes and Problems — by Dennis M. Drew and Donald M. Snow

Modern Strategy — by Colin S. Gray

Thinking about America's Defense: An Analytical Memoir — by Glenn A. Kent

Our Nation and World

Afghanistan: A Short History of its People and Politics — by Martin Ewans

Beating Goliath: Why Insurgencies Win — by Jeffrey Record

Contemporary Nuclear Debates: Missile Defense, Arms Control, and Arms Races in the Twenty-First Century — by Alexander Lennon

Not a Good Day to Die: The Untold Story of Operation Anaconda — by Sean Naylor

The CSAF Reading List can be accessed at www.af.mil/library/csafreading and is available at Air Force libraries.

Leaders encourage Airmen to apply for Academy

U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. (AFNS) — Young, hard-charging Airmen are sought for entry into the U.S. Air Force Academy and the Air Force Academy Preparatory School with the end goal of earning a commission, but must apply by Jan. 31, 2009.

The Academy sets aside up to 85 slots for active-duty Airmen and up to 85 more slots for Guard and Reserve members in each cadet class for young, hard-charging Airmen to join its cadet ranks.

Likewise, the Academy’s Preparatory School offers 60 slots for Airmen to join the one-year prep school. Completing the prep school earns graduates entry into the Academy’s next class of cadets.

“Our United States Air Force Academy and its Preparatory School offer opportunities for our best and brightest enlisted Airmen who meet the criteria to enter the commissioned ranks,” said Gen. Norton Schwartz, the Air Force chief of staff.

The general co-authored a letter with Chief Master Sgt of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley, which was sent out to all bases, advising Airmen of these opportunities via the Leaders Encouraging Airmen Development program.

“As commanders and supervisors we ask for your

support to encourage your sharpest Airmen to apply for the LEAD program,” the general and the chief said.

These commissioning opportunities are available to Airmen with high moral character, who demonstrate leadership ability, and have competitive scholastic scores.

“If you have young, hard chargers in your command who demonstrate outstanding character and values coupled with leadership potential, please urge them to consider a commissioning path through our Academy,” Chief McKinley said.

The basic application criteria for Airmen is they must be less than 23 years of age by July 1 for entry to the Academy or less than 22 years of age by July 1 for entry to the Preparatory School; be unmarried; be a U.S. citizen or be able to obtain citizenship prior to entry; and have no dependents.

An Airman wishing to apply for an Academy Preparatory School appointment must complete and return an Air Force Form 1786 by Jan. 31, 2009. Upon completion, the form and commander’s endorsement should be mailed to: HQ USAFA/RRS, 2304 Cadet Drive, Suite 2400, USAF Academy CO 80840.

When advising Airmen on Academy applications, commanders and supervisors should encourage all applicants to take the ACT or SAT exam as early and often as necessary to meet Academy application guidelines; take the Candidate Fitness Assessment and Department of Defense Medical Exam as soon as possible.

For more information on the LEAD program, contact Donna Najar at DSN 333-3089 or via e-mail at donna.najar@usafa.edu. Additional information is available on the Academy Admissions Web site at www.academy-admissions.com or at each base education office.

U.S. Air Force photo/Mike Kaplan



The 1,346 basic cadet trainees of the Class of 2012 are sworn in June 27 at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado. Out of the 1,300 slots in the next class of cadets, the Academy has set aside 85 slots for qualified active-duty personnel, and another 85 slots for qualified Guard and Reserve members. Deadline for application is Jan. 31, 2009 and details are available at www.academyadmissions.com or from the base education office.

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Air Force Smart Operations improves efficiency, reduces waste



U.S. Air Force graphic

Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century, or "AFSO21," is a program developed to identify waste and inefficiencies within the service, resulting in a more optimized, streamlined and efficient operations.

By Capt. Jody L. Ritchie

302nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

"Why do we do this? It's just a waste of time."

"There's a better way to do this."

How many times have you heard, or even spoken, those words? Too often, the response is something like "I don't know, but it's the way we've always done it."

The normal reaction is to just continue doing things the way we always have because we can feel powerless to do anything about it. After all, most of us are pretty low on the totem pole — someone with much more authority established that process, so it's easier to just be quiet and waste the resources, right?

Not so fast — the people who best understand the business are the people that do the job. Taking a page from the civilian business management playbook, the Air Force has a Continuous Process Improvement program to identify waste and optimize our business. The program is called Air Force

Smart Operations for the 21st Century, or AFSO21.

"AFSO21 is a means to see and eliminate waste in any mission area," said Lt. Col. Melinda Clearwater, 302nd Airlift Wing program manager. "Examples of waste are defects, overproduction, processing time, waiting, excess time in motion, redundancy, inaccurate or incomplete information, useless information, and barriers to communication."

So, what does that really mean? How does it affect those on the front line of the Air Force mission? And, really, isn't this just another program that will fade away over time?

"This is a mature process with training, testing and certification being much more rigorous," said Capt. Dawn Beyer, 302nd AW intelligence officer, when comparing AFSO21 to previous similar initiatives. Captain Beyer is the first 302nd AW member to receive AFSO21 certification.

AFSO21 gives Airmen of any rank a voice to make his or her process more efficient, more effective, or safer. "Ownership of the process incorporates the talent we have at all ranks in the organization," said Maj. Alan Flolo, 302nd AW executive officer. Giving control of the process to the Airmen also improves morale as they realize their input is valued.

No longer do Airmen have to say "this is wasteful and I have to keep doing it." Now, something can be done about that!

"The key to success for AFSO21 is to trust the process, be optimistic it will work, and work as a team to get there," said Major Flolo.

The fundamentals of the program are simple: someone identifies a broken process and it gets scored against other broken processes during an Enterprise Value Stream Analysis session. "Then we develop a roadmap of the broken processes and prioritize them for rapid improvement events to be conducted," stated Colonel Clearwater.

During the RIE, the process is analyzed, adjusted and

measured. If the change was positive, it's a win. If the change identifies more fixes are needed, then the continuous part of CPI is used and the cycle starts over.

Several processes have been identified, but there is always room for more. Examples of processes already identified for the 302nd AW's first EVSA are:

- Amount of time spent in short physicals
- E-mail inbox overload for traditional reservists
- Duty Status Code 14 process

If an Airman knows of a process that should be considered for AFSO21 review, e-mail Colonel Clearwater at melinda.clearwater@peterson.af.mil. Members are forewarned though; this isn't a program to complain — Airmen are expected to get involved and help fix the problem.

AFSO21 utilizes a process most people use every day. A commute to work is probably the most efficient because multiple routes have been attempted and a decision was made that the current route is the best. Or, if the fish aren't taking the fly where the fisherman is, he moves to another section of the river. It's the smart way to handle day to day life and now a program to use that same process is available for Air Force processes.

AFSO21 is not a new program; several organizations have used the program to fix processes. Videos are available on the Air Force Portal documenting successes at the Luke Air Force Base hydraulics and wheel and tire shops, in Arizona.

Two things are always happening: work that should be done and work that should not be done. Have you eliminated any waste in your work today?

For more information, visit <http://www.af.mil/library/smartops.asp> on the public Web site or search AFSO21 on the Air Force Portal for examples and videos.

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TSP

From page 1

investment doesn't exceed \$16,500 for 2009. As long as they contribute from basic pay, Airmen can also invest all or part of their bonuses, special pay or incentive pay. Members may enroll in December; however, requested actions will not update until Jan. 1.

- Military members who are currently enrolled and want to adjust their contribution for 2008 must contact their local finance office so adjustments can be completed by Dec. 20.

- Those serving in tax-free combat zones are allowed up to \$49,000 in annual contributions for 2009. The \$49,000 total includes tax-exempt combat zone contributions and regular deferred contributions.

- Military members can enroll or change their regular TSP contribution amount through the Defense Finance and Accounting Service Web site <<https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>> by filling out a TSP-U-1 Election Form at local military personnel flights and finance offices.

- Catch-up contributions can also be made at those offices by filling out a Form TSP-U-1-C, TSP Catch-Up Contribution Election.

- Contribution allocations (how an employee chooses to invest money among the investment funds) can be made by calling the TSP automated ThriftLine at 877-968-3778 for employees in the U.S., Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa and Canada. Others can call 404-233-4400 or log onto their TSP account at <http://www.tsp.gov> <<http://www.tsp.gov/>> .

- For general TSP questions, call the Air Force Contact Center at 800-616-3775 (press 1, press 1, press 1, and follow the prompts).

TSP for civilians

- Civilians can contribute any whole percentage of their basic pay or a whole dollar amount each pay period to a regular TSP account. This amount is subject to the \$16,500 annual maximum for 2009.

- Air Force-serviced civilians may submit regular TSP enrollment elections or changes at any time. Contributions will automatically continue into 2009 for those already in TSP, so it is not necessary for employees to submit an election unless they wish to change the amount of their bi-weekly contributions. The contribution on pay date Jan. 9, 2009, will apply toward the 2009 annual maximum.

- Employees who are covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System and who are eligible for agency matching contributions must contribute at least 5 percent of their

basic pay every pay period in order to receive maximum matching contributions throughout the entire year. Once the maximum contribution limit of \$16,500 is reached, employee contributions and agency matching contributions will be suspended for the remainder of the year.

- Regular TSP enrollments, changes or catch-up contribution enrollments submitted between Dec. 7-20 will be effective Dec. 21 and reflect on pay date Jan. 9, 2009. Elections submitted between Dec. 21 and Jan. 3 will be effective Jan. 4 and reflect on the Jan. 23 pay date.

- When submitting catch-up contribution elections, employees need to designate a whole-dollar amount to contribute each payday rather than the annual maximum of \$5,500. Do not designate an amount that exceeds net pay or payroll will not withhold any TSP contributions. To spread catch-up contributions evenly over the year, divide the total contribution (up to \$5,500) by the number of pay dates remaining in the year. There are 26 pay dates in 2009 for employees who submit their catch-up contribution election between Dec. 7-20.

- Air Force-serviced civilians enroll or submit regular TSP contribution elections, as well as catch-up contribution elections if eligible, by using the Employee Benefits Information System Web application or the Benefits and Entitlements Service Team's phone system. EBIS can be found on the Air Force Portal and on AFPC's "Ask" Web site by entering "Employee Benefits Information System" in the search function.

- Employees can reach the BEST phone system by dialing 800-616-3775. Overseas employees need to dial a toll-free AT&T direct access number for the country they are in, then 800-616-3775. When the phone system answers, press "2" for Air Force-serviced civilians, then "2" again for BEST benefits and entitlements, and follow the prompts. AT&T direct access numbers can be found at http://www.business.att.com/bt/dial_guide.jsp <http://www.business.att.com/bt/dial_guide.jsp> .

For details, visit AFPC's "Ask" Web site and enter "Thrift Savings Plan" in the search function.

Additional information about TSP, both regular and catch-up, is available on the TSP Web site at <http://www.tsp.gov> <<http://www.tsp.gov/>> . See "Summary of the Thrift Savings Plan" located under civilian or uniformed services TSP Forms and Publications.



U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Stephen Collier

Donating for life

Airman 1st Class Michael Gomez swabs the side of his cheek for DNA samples Dec. 6 while signing up to be a bone marrow donor at the 302nd Airlift Wing's military personnel flight building on Peterson Air Force Base, Colo. Airman Gomez and several other members of the wing volunteered to join the Department of Defense and National Marrow Donor Program's registry. Airman Gomez is an operations management technician with the 302nd Civil Engineer Squadron and is a native of El Paso, Texas. For more on the program, visit www.dodmarrow.org.



Civil engineers ready for emergencies

U.S. Air Force photo/Chief Master Sgt. Sally Arnold

Master Sgt. Melvin Joe trains with others from the 302nd Civil Engineer Squadron Sept. 6, 2008, for a weekend of training at Ft. Carson's Camp Red Devil outside of Colorado Springs, Colo. More than 50 members of the 302nd Airlift Wing participated in the annual field training.

By Tech. Sgt. Daniel Butterfield

302nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

FORT CARSON, Colo. — More than 50 members of the 302nd Airlift Wing Base Engineer Emergency Force recently participated in the "Red Devil" annual field training at Fort Carson.

The September exercise ensured civil engineers, known as "Prime BEEF," are ready to handle emergencies that occur on nearby Peterson Air Force Base and anywhere in the world. The 47 team members, eight services flight personnel and three medics spent two days at Ft. Carson's Red Devil camp where they participated in convoy training, air base defense training, land navigation training, field sanitation, hygiene training and bare-base layout training.

"What we hope to do is build an awareness for the unit before we deploy," says Staff Sgt. William Wells, 302nd Civil Engineer Squadron material control manager, and one of the exercise planners. "We concentrate on situational awareness, taking care of our wingman and the fundamentals of basic combat skill."

The training also included night operations utilizing night vision equipment.

Prime BEEF teams are trained and equipped to respond to emergencies around the world within hours. For more information, visit <http://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=1280>.

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Airmen procure mission success

By Senior Airman Clinton Atkins

379th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

SOUTHWEST ASIA (AFNS) — Members of the 379th Expeditionary Contracting Squadron here connect mission needs with the facilities, equipment and services that link military customers and the contractors who can meet those needs.

"Our mission is to make sure we provide each customer with what they need and get it to them as quickly as possible for the best value we can get for the taxpayer dollar," said Capt. Nicole Baert, the 379th ECONS Construction Flight chief.

"If we stopped working, the mission could fail," said the native of Cookeville, Tenn.

In the past year, the 379th ECONS staff processed more than 4,300 individual actions totaling more than \$73 million, "and that's not including the large contracts we oversee for stateside organizations," she said.

"We support just about every unit on base," said Captain Baert, deployed from Peterson Air Force Base, Colo. "You name it and contracting probably touches it somehow. A few of the big contracts we have that influence the entire wing are the food, laundry and vehicle lease contracts.

"Our support allows (the 379th Expeditionary Force Support Squadron) to provide quality food and services for everyone here," she said. "For (379th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron), our support allows them to provide vehicles and heavy equipment. In fact, almost every vehicle you see around base was leased by us."

When a request for materials or labor comes to the unit, contracting officers review the requirement, ensure proper funding is available and ensure it is not too restrictive. The contracting squadron will then open the bidding to multiple contractors.

"If we get competition, it is easier to justify we are paying a fair and reasonable price," Captain Baert said.

Their job does not simply end with the completion of the paperwork.

"After the contract is awarded, we ensure the items are delivered to the base and get to the customer," she said. "This often includes processing waivers for clearing port or airport customs and passes for contractors to make deliveries to base. We also ensure the contractors are providing a timely and quality level of service. We're basically the liaison between the customers and contractor for anything and everything until the service is completed."

With the wing's vision of changing from an expeditionary to an enduring mindset, the contracting squadron is currently in the midst of changing the way they do business.

"It's an ongoing challenge," Captain Baert said. "It's all part of changing processes and how people do things. With enduring comes a change in mindset. With the expeditionary mindset, you're focused on an end item and not how much money you're spending. With an enduring mindset, you take time to evaluate the quality and capability of contractors as it relates to how expensive the items are. It takes a little more effort, but you get a better product in the end and the contract will work for our customers for a longer period of time."

Officials of the 379th ECONS have a few projects in place that will further base's advancement to an enduring

presence.

"We are currently overseeing a contract for the renovation of the (379th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron) base defense operations center," she said.

Captain Baert also mentioned the beginning of a project named the Coalition Compound Refresh.

"We're partnering with (379th Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron) to come up with a good concept on how this can be implemented," Captain Baert said. "We want to increase the quality of life for U.S. and coalition forces living here and also for transient forces coming through this base. We plan to replace all of the CC trailers and latrines, because right now they're not of the quality we would prefer to provide for our Airmen. We're gathering information, analyzing what the local market can provide and developing the best way to move forward with the project."

There's never a shortage of work in the 379th ECONS, said Captain Baert.

This 22-member squadron is a hive of activity supporting the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing as well as most coalition and joint units on base, but it is evident their determination and dedication to excellence allows them to excel in the high ops tempo environment.

"The thing about our job is that we never get to a finishing point," said Staff Sgt. Scott Deloera, a contracting officer. "There are not enough hours in a day to do what we need to do. We make ourselves leave every day. We'll go to the gym most days after work, but we end up coming back afterward.

"Right now I'm juggling more than 20 requirements," said the native of Alexandria, Va. "It all has to get done because these are things someone needs to do their job."

Another reason the contracting officers work extended hours is because of the time difference of vendors around the world.

"If we have to talk to a company on the West Coast and they don't open until 11 a.m., then we have to be in our office at 8 p.m.," said Sergeant Deloera, deployed from Andersen AFB, Guam. "We buy from many different vendors around the world so we have to be very flexible with our schedules."

To help them organize their work, the contracting officers prioritize requirements as either mission critical, mission essential or mission enhancement.

"A higher-value contract isn't always more important than one of lesser value," he said.

Though their job involves a lot of work from inside an office, the members of 379th ECONS can directly see the impact of their hard work.

"I love the fact that I can actually drive to the (Combined Air and Space Operations Center) and see the end result of my hard work," Sergeant Deloera said. "I've already bought so much for the CAOC I can physically see the impact of my job."



U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Darnell T. Cannady

Staff Sgt. Ryan Burk verifies a specification of a contracting job while Staff Sgt. Doug Keeler reviews the specifications and drawings of a new bus stop Dec. 4 at an air base in Southwest Asia. Both are contracting officers assigned to the 379th Expeditionary Contracting Squadron. Sergeant Burk, a native of Fuquay-Varina, N.C., is deployed from Pope Air Force Base, N.C. Sergeant Keeler, a native of Albany, N.Y., is deployed from Little Rock AFB, Ark.

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CALENDAR / BASE BRIEFS

MONDAY, DEC 15
TUESDAY, DEC. 16

Cookies for Troops Program

The Peterson Spouses' Club is looking for cookie donations for its annual Cookies for the Troops program for Peterson's dorm residents. Homemade cookie donations will be accepted from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Dec. 15 and 16, at the base chapel. Other items, such as individually wrapped candies and hot cocoa packets, will also be accepted. The spouses club also needs volunteers to help bag the donated cookies on Dec. 16. For more information, contact Amy Wren at wifeofthemower@hotmail.com or 388-1404.

SUNDAY, DEC 21

Marion House Food Kitchen Service

Volunteers needed for this great opportunity to serve the community during the Holidays. Bring your dependents and make it a family affair.

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Time: 7 a.m.- 11 a.m.
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For additional information, call 719-475-7314

MONDAY, JAN 12, 2009
TUESDAY, JAN 13, 2009

AFPC commander visits Peterson

Major Gen. K.C. McClain, Air Force Personnel Center commander, will visit Peterson Air Force Base Jan. 12 and 13 as part of an Air Force-wide "Spread the Word" briefing tour. General McClain and the briefing team of experts will provide information on topics such as deployments, the Global Air and Space Expeditionary Force tempo-banding system, civilian hiring procedures and assignment changes. Two Air Force Space Command calls will be held at 8 a.m. and 10 a.m., Jan. 13 in Building 1. A base-wide call will be held at 3 p.m., Jan. 13 in the base auditorium. For more information, contact Capt. Nekitha Little at 556-7135.

Compassion: Food for thought, Part 2

By Chaplain, Lt. Col. Randall Kitchens

Peterson Air Force Base Chapel

As Air Force Space Command focuses on compassion during the month of December, here are a few key points to consider, both now and all year round.

- Compassion: Sympathy for the suffering of others with a desire to help.
- Do you know any wounded warriors or their families? There is sometimes a tendency to ignore or forget our wounded warriors and their families. Compassion is what stops us from ignoring or forgetting them.
- Do you know anyone sick, homeless, hungry, hurting or lonely? Often, we want to ignore or pretend there is nothing we can do. Compassion prompts us to acknowledge with respect and offer help or assistance where we can.
- Especially during this holiday season, take the time to engage that person we work with or around who is hurting or lonely. Compassion prompts us to care for our fellow Airmen and service members who are having a hard time. We may be the only person who engages and that can make a difference.

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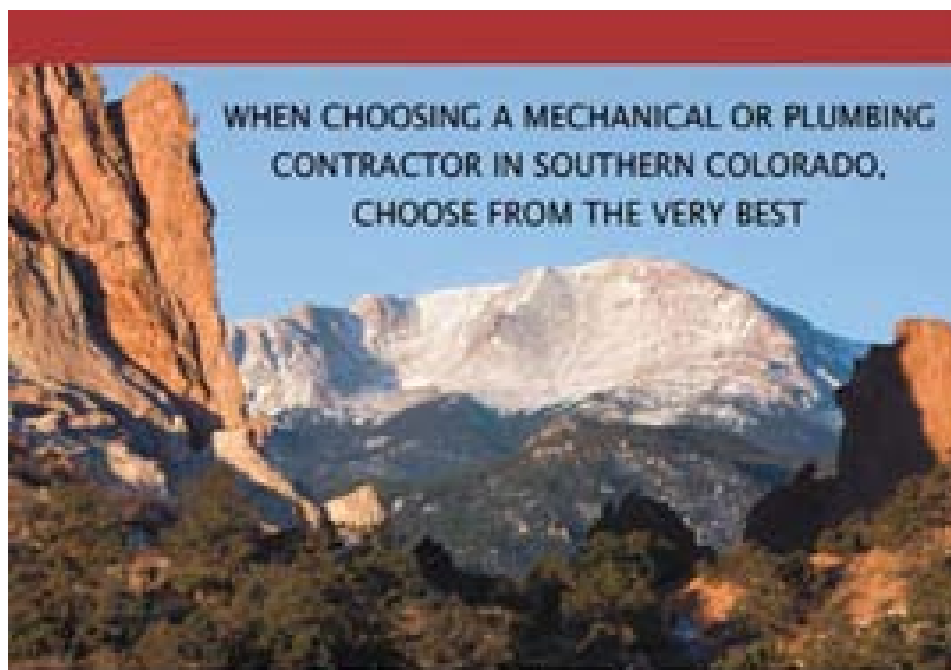
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Re-invigorating nuclear enterprise a top priority

By Staff Sgt. Matthew Bates
Defense Media Activity-San Antonio

LOS ANGELES (AFNS) — Maintaining accountability and improving stewardship of the Air Force's nuclear program is the top priority, said the service's 19th chief of staff recently.

Gen. Norton Schwartz said the Air Force has gone through some "rough" air in the realm of nuclear deterrence, but the service is already on the path to recovery.

"The nuclear enterprise is getting a lot of my own and Secretary of the Air Force Michael B. Donley's attention," he said.

As a result, Air Force officials have a rigorous accountability and "back to basics" approach for compliance, precision and reliability within the nuclear arena. The goal is to restore the Air Force's nuclear mission to the standard of excellence for which it was known throughout the entire Cold War.

"We will train, organize and inspect to that standard," General Schwartz said. "The bottom line is we lost focus, and we're bringing that focus back."

One way the service plans to accomplish this is by setting up a nuclear-only major command, called the Global Strike Command. This organization will include both the 8th and 20th Air Forces and will be responsible for the management of the Air Force's nuclear assets.

"We will have the nuclear missiles and the nuclear-capable bombers in the same organization and the focus will be on the nuclear mission," General Schwartz said. "We're going to make sure that we're focusing on doing our nuclear mission the right way, which is the Air Force way."

In addition to establishing this new command, Air Force leaders also created a new Air Staff directorate, or A10, for nuclear matters. Called the Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration Office, and led by Maj. Gen. C. Donald Alston, the office will be the focal point on the Air Staff for the Air Force nuclear enterprise.

"The new directorate provides policy oversight, increased institutional focus and staff integration for nuclear issues," General Schwartz said. "The A10 will be instrumental in managing the overall nuclear enterprise and will be directly



U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Alexandra Sandoval

A 2nd Maintenance Squadron weapons load team is evaluated during a portion of the Air Combat Command Nuclear Surety Inspection at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., Nov. 12. Base officials welcomed members of the ACC Inspector General team Nov. 9 to focus on three major graded areas throughout the inspection: Nuclear surety program management and administration, the personnel reliability program and logistics movement.

involved in implementing the Air Force nuclear roadmap as well as preparing to stand up Air Force Global Strike Command."

Other changes to the Air Force's nuclear enterprise are also under way. The Nuclear Weapons Center at Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M., has been revitalized and expanded, with clearly understood chains of command to prevent repeats of past problems, the general said.

"The Nuclear Weapons Center now has complete control over the whole sustainment supply chain," General Schwartz said. "That wasn't the case earlier, and so now we will have a single entity that is responsible for ops and employment and a single entity that is responsible for sustainment."

The chief of staff also pointed to efforts within the Air Force to develop a more centralized inspection process to ensure nuclear material is handled properly.

The general has been impressed with the progress made in

the past three to four months and looks forward to tackling the other large nuclear enterprise issues such as how the Air Force can systematically rebuild its nuclear expertise within its ranks of Airmen through training and career development.

According to the general, all these changes are a vital part of Air Force stewardship of the strategic nuclear deterrence capabilities, which serves as an important national security backdrop for America and its allies.

"While today's fight is vitally important to our Air Force, the capabilities that we provide in support of our nation's nuclear deterrent force is just as, if not more, important," he said.

"We have to return our focus to the fundamental capabilities of supporting deterrence," he said. "Air Force capabilities help dissuade and deter our adversaries and it is always best to win without fighting."

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Photo by Jeff Nash

CF-100 "Canuck"

The Peterson Air and Space Museum's CF-100 "Canuck" aircraft gleams from a new coat of paint after a recent restoration. The Canadian-built CF-100 served Canada as a two-seat, all-weather jet fighter from 1952 to 1981, providing air defense of the North American continent from enemy bomber attack. Canucks also equipped Canadian fighter squadrons based in Europe supporting the NATO alliance. It remains the only Canadian-designed and built fighter aircraft to enter mass production.

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Air Force selected for Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl



U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. (AFNS) — The U.S. Air Force Academy Falcons have been selected to play in the 2008 Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl in Fort Worth, Texas, Dec. 31, at 11 a.m. Central Standard Time. The Falcons will take on the University of Houston from Conference-USA.

This marks the second straight year that Air Force has been selected for the Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl, as the Falcons played California from the Pac-10 Conference last season. This season's bowl is the 19th in Air Force history, and the Falcons have posted an 8-9-1 overall mark. Air Force's last bowl win came in 2000 at the Silicon Valley Bowl against Fresno State, 37-34.

This year's game against Houston is a rematch from earlier this season, when the two teams played in Dallas on Sept. 13. Air Force won the game, 31-28, in the first ever meeting between the two schools. The game was originally scheduled to be played at Houston, but was moved to Dallas due to weather.



Air Force will be playing in the same bowl game in consecutive years for the third time. The Falcons played in the Independence Bowl in 1983 and 1984 and the Liberty Bowl from 1989 to 1992. This season also marks the first time that Air Force has played a regular season game and bowl game in the same

stadium in back-to-back games. The Falcons concluded the 2008 regular season at Amon G. Carter Stadium against TCU, losing 44-10. Air Force is 0-5 in Fort Worth all-time, losing at TCU in 1989, 1998, 2006 and 2008 and dropping the bowl game last year.

U.S. Air Force Academy tailback Kyle Lumpkin loses his helmet in the pile but still manages to move the sticks Sept. 13 in Dallas. Lumpkin carried 20 times for 74 yards as the Falcons grounded out their third win of the season by topping Houston 31-28.

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CHURCH DIRECTORY

Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church Christmas Eve Services

5:00pm: A Christmas Celebration for Children of All Ages. Experience the Christmas story as it is shared with the children, and close the evening singing "Silent Night" by light of glow sticks!

7:00pm: The Family Christmas Album. This is a great celebration of Christmas that the whole family will enjoy with the singing of "Silent Night" by candlelight.

9:00pm: A Candlelight Communion Christmas Celebration. A traditional Christmas Eve worship gathering where we celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and the singing of "Silent Night" by candlelight at the conclusion of the service.

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Christmas Eve

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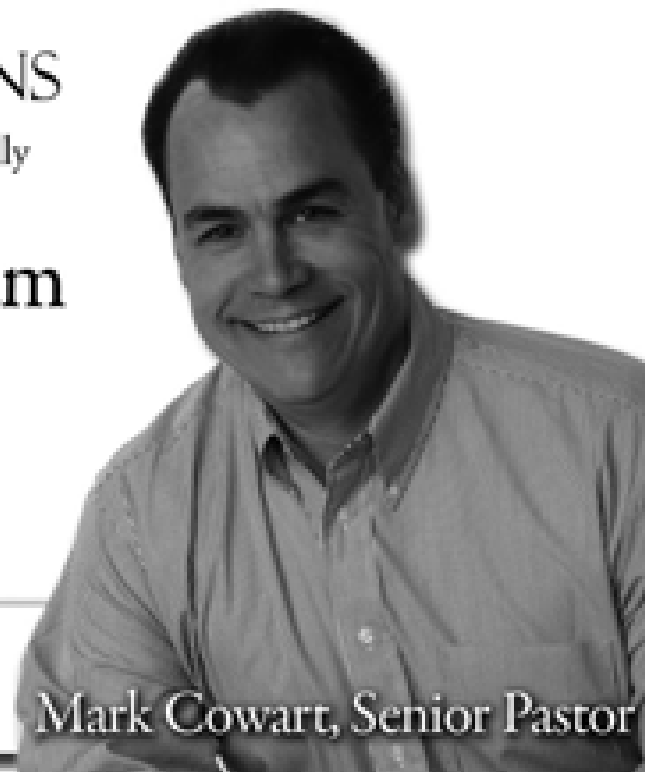
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