



TENTH AIR FORCE

times

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Air Force Reserve Command

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The Winding Road

of a Son's Footsteps

by Master Sgt. Shawn David McCowan
10th Air Force Public Affairs

Editor's Note:

This is the third of a three-part series about SSGT Francisco "Paco" Martinez, a Citizen Airman whose son was killed in Iraq, and how he plans to honor his son's life by protecting others who deploy.

Staff Sgt Francisco "Paco" Martinez, a member of 610th Security Forces Squadron at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, drove toward the base in the dark hours before the Texas dawn. He was about to deploy to Iraq, but his deployment wasn't the first thing on his mind. The road he was driving on made him think about the path that brought him to this point and the son who deployed to Iraq and never came home. That path seemed so full of turns, yet undeniably lead him to where he was.

Paco was born in America, but his family soon moved to Puerto Rico, where he was raised. He wanted to go to college, but in 1982 he decided to put those plans on hold. He joined the Army while in Puerto Rico, and remained on active duty for two years.

After his two-year term, Francisco made the move to the Air Force as a Security Specialist. It was around that time that Paco lost his younger brother. At just 17 years old, his brother was killed by a gunshot wound when an argument escalated in the streets near their home. Just weeks before Christmas 1991, Francisco decided to separate from the Air Force and return to family life. His father, Thomas, had moved to Texas many years ago.

In 1993, Paco's older brother was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's Disease (ALS). That same year father was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease. Francisco moved to Texas to help take care of his father.

"It was crushing to see my father like that. He was a strong man with a strong body and mind. He didn't really want help, but I had to be there for him," said Martinez.

While in Texas, Paco became a well-rounded software developer and eventually worked for IBM. His close relationship with his son, Francisco G. "Paquito" began early on. Paco married Maria Figueroa in 1995, and Paquito was the ring-bearer. And in May 2001, Maria and Paco welcomed their baby Monica to the family. From a very young age, Monica formed a close bond with Paquito.

At his father's company, M.F. Consulting, he was a web developer, software tester and graphic designer. He also wrote poetry, sang, sculpted and painted. While at his senior year at Eastern Hills High School he was honored with a "Who's Who" award for Art.

Paquito eventually joined the Army. While on patrol and escorting a news reporter in 2005, he was killed in Iraq by a sniper.

"I was a wreck for four months. It really felt like the lights were out everywhere I went. He was my first son. He was the person I was closest to. He was my best friend."

"Months later, once I started being able to live again, I could feel there was a way to bring a close to this nightmare. I couldn't avoid the thought of revenge, but I realized I had really an awakened a unique sense of service."

Paco reenlisted with the Air Force Reserve and went to technical school to become a Security Forces member.

"I spent a lot of time praying about it, because I didn't understand why things happened the way they did. It was tough to want

to leave my family and follow after Paquito, but I also knew in my heart it was something I was in a unique place to do for other parents.”

Paco joined hundreds of young men at Lackland Air Force Base for technical school.

“I saw all those kids at tech school. All determined to make a difference and defend this country... I saw my son in every one of them.”

He chose benevolence over revenge, and became determined to protect the sons and daughters who were still serving.

“I would like to have seen my son come home and walk through my door. But I had a chance to make sure everyone else’s kids get home safely. I couldn’t let that chance slip away.”

When Staff Sgt. Francisco “Paco” Martinez arrived in Qatar on his way to Iraq, he found another unexpected flashback.

“We landed just miles from the coast. You could smell the seawater from miles away. Coming from Puerto Rico, I knew that smell. It was a brief reminder of my youth.”

Once in Iraq, there was a lot of anxiety for everyone arriving for the first time. On his first day there, July 17, the heat index was 136 degrees, adding to the raw nerves. It was pitch black in Kirkuk and it was 106 at night. But the dryness of the air kept it from being unbearable.

With all that was on his mind, Paco slept just over three hours the first night.

His first patrol became his first emergency. There was an explosion just 150 meters from the perimeter fence.

“We all took cover, not knowing if this was an IED or an attack. It turned out the attacker had targeted an Iraqi police vehicle, but hit a civilian vehicle instead, killing the person inside.”

From July through November, Paco knew of nearly 30 rocket attacks. In November, he and a patrol partner thought they heard two rocket launches and an explosion. There were no other weapons fired. The next morning he found an impact crater just 100 yards from the patrol area.

“There were plenty of tense days and nights, but I don’t think it was bad compared to everyone outside the fence. Until December, anyway.”

After new security pact was signed in December, Paco faced nearly 30 attacks in his last month there.

Paco decided not to go to the place where his son had died. It was a long distance away, and he felt as though it wasn’t worth the risk to his fellow Airmen. But while he was there, he found closure in other ways.

“Of course there were many times when I thought about Paquito while I was there. But it was also rewarding to be there. Once I was there for a few weeks, I began to feel his presence.

Which was kind of strange. We all have many personalities that characterize us. For my son, there is the Paquito that rode skate boards with me, and there’s the Paquito who was a soldier in Korea.

“But while I was in Iraq, I could feel so in touch with the Paquito who patrolled there. He manifested himself in the people who were with me. We often worked with people from the Army who were doing the same exact patrols done by him.”

One of the major duties of Paco’s security forces unit was to protect 10th Mountain Division stationed at Kirkuk. Just as his last month began, he made a discovery that brought a final sense that he had done what he was meant to do there.

In November another unit arrived to replace the 10th Mountain Division. It was the 4th Infantry Division. Some of the members were wearing the patch of the 2nd Infantry Division – the one worn by Paquito. Paco began to inquire about why they wore that patch. The 4th Infantry Division had absorbed the unit Paquito belonged to. Then it occurred to Paco that he really was protecting the very people his son had worked with.



“A feeling of warm calm swept over me, and I was really able to feel a final sense of closure. I feel like I did what God meant for me to do. I helped protect the very people I came here to protect. I only did my little part to keep our Airmen and our Soldiers safe, but those sons and daughters were going home to see their parents... and they are safe.”

Paco returned safely home early in January. His first stop was to find his daughter in school, and let her know that he did his part. He was back home to be her daddy, and to start a new chapter in his family’s history.

And his family was whole again, because he knew he brought his son home in his heart.

NAF NEWS BRIEFS

Thrift Savings Plan Hoax

The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board (FRTIB) has become aware of an e-mail and Internet hoax purporting illegal activity on the part of an individual said to manage the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) I Fund. The TSP is actively investigating the origins of the bogus web site.

The individual named (Samuel Hoeffler) and his connection to the TSP investment funds is completely fictitious. Be assured that the TSP's I Fund has not suffered from accounting irregularities and is not insolvent.

All of the TSP funds, with the exception of the Government Securities Investment Fund (G Fund) are passive investments. In other words, they are invested in index funds; they are not managed by an individual actively selecting securities in an effort to outperform the market. The investment objective of each fund is to achieve approximately the same return as the particular market index that it tracks. The I Fund, for example, is invested in a stock index fund that tracks the Morgan Stanley EAFE Index. The TSP's C, S, I, and F Funds are managed by Barclays Global Investors, one of the largest and most respected investment managers in the world.

Participants should always exercise caution if they receive unusual or suspect e-mails.

New Evaluation Process Training (vPC-GR)

4 Apr 09

Virtual Personnel Center Guard and Reserve (vPC-GR) training will be conducted in the 10th Air Force upstairs training room at 0930 on Saturday 4 Apr 09. Training is mandatory for all personnel per 10 AF/CV. As of 9 Oct 2008, Phase II of the vPC-GR System must be used to transmit all evaluations (OPR/EPRs). Reports are to be processed from start to finish in the system. If you have not already reviewed the tutorials from ARPC, please do so now. Use the following link to preview the new process and review the tutorial or go to "Evaluations Tutorial" on the PSD Web page <<http://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/library/PSD/index.asp>>. The "phase-in" period is over! Any reports not following these rules will be sent back.

Uniform UPDATE

"There has been a lot of questions concerning the 100% cotton ABUs. The following information is provided: The 100% cotton ABU is only authorized for wear by airmen with a functional requirement as determined by their Functional

Authority. All other airmen will continue wearing the 50% cotton / 50% nylon ABU. As stated in the Sep 07 ABU Wear Policy message, the ABU should also only be acquired through the MCSS, IEE, or contract equivalent. Please visit the Uniforms and Recognition Branch Webpage on the Air Force Portal for more information."

National Crime Victims Rights Week

National Crime Victims' Rights Week is 26 April- 2 May 2009. This is a time to focus on victims of crime while celebrating our nation's progress in serving them. This year's theme, "25 Years of Rebuilding Lives: Celebrating the Victims of Crime Act" honors a landmark national commitment to victims of crime.

Before 1984, victims of crime received little public support. The President's Task Force on Victims of Crime, formed by President Ronald W. Reagan in 1982, found widespread poor treatment of victims by a criminal justice system that seemed indifferent to their needs. Although most states had some form of victim compensation, most programs were poorly funded. Despite the few victim assistance programs available in some states and the federal effort to fund victim/witness programs throughout the nation, most communities relied on a few grassroots organizations—funded by sporadic private donations and bake sales—to help victims of crime.

Since the inception of the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime, new light has been shed and new efforts have been made to better help victims.

The Air Force and Navy will celebrate this event in a joint effort. In honor of victims, the following events are taking place at the NAS JRB Fort Worth.

- Candlelight Service - Base Chapel - Wednesday, 29 Apr, 1130
- 5K Run/Walk - Base Gym - Friday, 1 May, 1130

There will be a brief memorial service in honor of the victims. The base chaplain will provide an opportunity for individuals to light a candle in the memory of a victim or place the name of a victim on paper for prayer. The 5K Run/Walk will begin and end at the base gym. Promotional items will be available. There will be a hotdog/hamburger sale after the event at the gym.

Please come out to celebrate the NAS JRB Fort Worth Victims' Rights Week. For more information, contact LNC Jordan at 817-781-7991, Ms. Connie Dye 817-782-5760 or Ms. Evelyn Mickles 817-782-7620.

TRAINING CORNER

10 AF/A1T CoP

Please click this hyperlink for the [Education and Training Community of Practice](#)

Quarterly Training Meeting Dates

All Supervisors and Training Monitors are required to attend quarterly training meetings per AFI 36-2201V3 Para 6.1.8.

All meetings will be 1300-1330 hours, 10 AF Upstairs Conference Room 231.

Next Meeting: **4 April 2009 and 11 Jul 09**

Ancillary Training

Status of Training Reports have been updated. Please go to [P:\DP-Personnel\TRAINING ROSTER DP\Ancillary](#) to see if you are due required training.

TRAINING TIDBIT OF THE MONTH:

All enlisted personnel should become a member of the **TBA CoP** and the **Air Force Training Record (AFTR) CoP** depending upon their AFSC and learn Training Business Area (TBA) and AFTR.

Please see the below flow chart for an overview of each process:

- To review AFTR Process Flow Chart follow link.
- To review TBA Set Up Overview follow link.

Setting up AFTR account:

Step 1. Log into ADLS via the AF Portal. <https://www.my.af.mil/faf/FAF/fafHome.jsp>

Step 2. At the ADLS home page, click on "training records"

Step 3. Next click on the AFTR logo at the top of the page

- You will then be taken to a screen to set up your AFTR account
- Select "your functional community", for example: "mission support". Also, when you select the base you are assigned to, please remember to select NAS JRB Fort Worth rather than Carswell.
- When your initial profile has been established, you will see a blank blue screen. Not to worry! The next step is to contact your Unit Training Manager (UTM) and he/she will set up your profile's user rights.

Setting up TBA account:

Step 1. If you have not been added get with CMSgt Rose Love A6, SMSgt Kelley Johnson A4, SMSgt Vickie Romero

A1, (most member were added during the initial upload of members)

Step 2. After you have been added you will be added to a work center

Step 3. Next you will be assigned roles

National Security Decision Making (NSDM) Course Announcement:

HQ AFRC is accepting nominations for the Naval War College Short Course (Major-04 and above). The Course is scheduled to take place 27 Apr through 8 May 2009 with travel dates on 26 Apr and 9 May 09.

This 12-day executive development course focuses on contemporary national security thinking and its implication for structuring future military forces. Course content is drawn from changes in the national security environment, foundations of national security, competition for national resources, international institutions and collective security and various alternatives for downsizing. Click here for official [course announcement](#) and instructions. Click here for [naval course NSDM Application Spreadsheet](#). Additional information can be reviewed at the following link: <http://www.usnwc.edu/academics/courses/nsdm/overview.aspx>

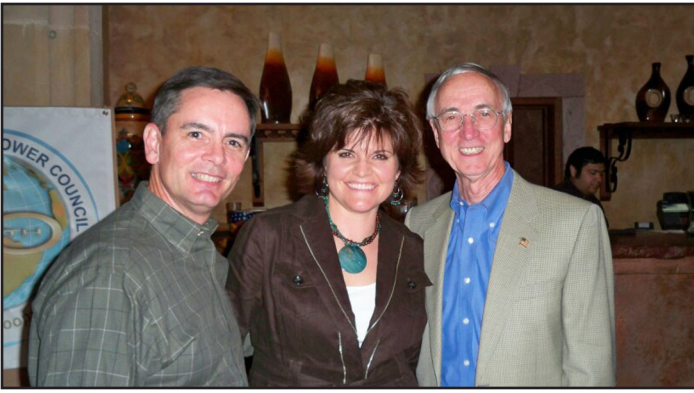
Mango Languages- the fastest way to learn to speak a foreign language!

HQ AF Libraries is considering an AF wide purchase of access to a new online language learning program called MANGO. There is a 60 day free trial through all of March and April. They want feedback (so does AF). Please try it out and let me know. Also, please tell any customers who are asking about learning a language, Rosetta Stone, etc. that they can use the website below and give the Base Library feedback on whether or not it is a worthwhile investment. Learning a language is a hot topic today; Rosetta Stone has a waiting list of about 200 people at AETC the last time I asked. This link will also serve as your 60 day free trial. Feel free to share it with other staff members, colleagues, friends, family, etc.

<http://www.mangolanguages.com/trial/login/a864a0a8fd55d884>

Mr. Chuck Dittell, DAF, Chief, Force Development Flight, Luke AFB, AZ, (623) 856-6851

To get the latest in Educational News, log on to: <https://rso.my.af.mil/afvecprod/afvec/SelfService/MyAFVEC.aspx>



From left: Col. Scott Irons, 10th AF Director of Safety, and his wife, Wendy, with Deputy Secretary of Defense (Retired) Gordon England during a "Texas Welcome Back" Celebration hosted by the Air Power Council and the Fort Worth Aviation Heritage Museum Association held at Joe T. Garcia's, recently. (USAF photo by Lt Col Roberta Smith)

MEDICAL/DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

APPT DATE	NAME	RANK	APPT TYPE
4/4/09 7:00	FRERICHS BRENT A	LTC	Short Fly
4/4/09 7:30	CAINE JAMES C	COL	Long Nonfly
4/4/09 7:30	DELOSSANTOS VICTORIA	MSG	Long Nonfly
4/4/09 7:30	SMITH CLIFFORD D II	COL	Long Nonfly
4/4/09 7:30	SPEECE CHARLES S JR	SMS	Long Nonfly
4/4/09 7:30	JOHNSON CONSTANCE J	TSG	Long Nonfly
4/4/09 7:30	KASE ERIC L	LTC	Long Nonfly
4/4/09 7:50	MCCOWAN ELIZABETH A	MSG	Long Nonfly
4/4/09 7:50	ZAJEC JULIE A	SMS	Long Nonfly

PROMOTIONS

SMSgt Michael D Carocci

SMSgt Ricky L Williams

UTA SCHEDULE DATES

4-5 Apr 2009	11-12 Jul 2009
2-3 May 2009	1-2 Aug 2009
6-7 Jun 2009	12-13 Sep 2009

APRIL UTA SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Saturday – 4 Apr

0630-0700 Sign In
 0900-1000 CC Staff Mtg., CC Conf Rm
 1400-1500 442 RAV Team ATSO Training, CC Conf Rm
 1545-1615 Sign Out

Sunday – 5 Apr

0630-0700 Sign In
 1000 SORTS Briefing, CC Conf Rm
 1545-1615 Sign Out

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