



THE

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TAKING AIM



FOR ACST

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

Maj. Rickardo Bodden, a student in the Advanced Contingency Skills Training Course, responds to a scenario during a training session in combat first aid on Feb. 5 on a Fort Dix, N.J., range. ACST is taught by the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center's 421st Combat Training Squadron and prepares Airmen for upcoming deployments. For more ACST photos, see Pages 24-25.

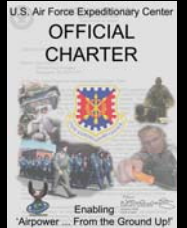
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Passing the baton

Best leaders are ones who mentor their successors

By Chief Master Sgt. Fitzgerald Hentz
U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center
Command chief master sergeant

Timing is everything in a relay race. That crucial area where two runners pass the baton can make the difference between victory and defeat.

Years ago I was running the third leg of a 4 x 400 relay team. I was no Carl Lewis, but I could hold my own. I was in the exchange zone, leaning forward. I reached back with my left hand and waited for the sturdy slap of metal on my palm. Instead, I felt nothing.

Our team lost that day and that bad hand-off not only ended my track and field career, but it now offers a great lesson about the importance of properly preparing our followers. How we hand off the baton of leadership to our young Airmen can lead to their triumph or career missteps.

As leaders, it is incumbent upon us to properly prepare our Airmen for greater leadership roles, and we must do it at the right time -- before the exchange zone. The expectation should not be for them to step directly into leadership roles without practical leadership experiences since that will more than likely cause missteps instead of successes.

Early leadership mentoring is essential to the development of confident NCOs and senior NCOs entrusted to lead the enlisted corps. Following are some tips that will help set the stage for a successful pass of the leadership baton:

❑ **Mentor young Airmen who show leadership potential:** From promotion ceremonies to DV visits, the Expeditionary Center's calendar is loaded with activities. These short-term projects are great opportunities to groom young Airmen for greater leadership roles. I started some informal Chief's Calls with Airmen, NCOs and Senior NCOs. I'm using these sessions as opportunities to enhance leadership skills and foster better communication.

❑ **Be a servant-leader role model -- lead by example:** Think of the best and worst leaders you've known in your career. If you're a supervisor, which category do you think the Airmen you supervise put you in? I hope it's not the "worst." Today, more than 26 years later, I still revere my first supervisor as a great leader. She trained, motivated, set standards and held me accountable. At the same time, she influenced me and gave me the autonomy to creatively use my own skills to enhance the work center and the community. Simply put, she was a leader!

❑ **Train and develop your Airmen to take your place:** One of the worst things we can do as leaders is to think we are irreplaceable; but the greatest legacy we can give to those we supervise is to transfer our skills and knowledge. The time we serve in uniform is limited, but our legacy lives on.

❑ **Recognize your Airmen:** I have launched a recognition pro-

gram, where I will personally reward Airmen for performance and/or leadership that is highlighted by subordinates or peers. The requirement: A simple e-mail or note listing the act and how it contributed to the development of Airmen or improved services at the Expeditionary Center. Create a recognition program of your own; it doesn't need to be anything extravagant.

❑ **Hold your Airmen accountable:** Don't confuse the term "taking care of Airmen" to mean always doing the popular thing. Taking care of Airmen also means holding them accountable. Rewarding substandard performance will lead them to repeat it whereas holding them accountable will motivate them to improve. Holding them accountable will also enable them to become better leaders as they move into roles with greater leadership responsibility. General W.L. Creech, Former Commander, Tactical Air Command said the following about accountability: "Leaders lead by example and set the tone. Above all, they do not countenance selective enforcement of standards. I know of no more ruinous path...than selective enforcement of rules and standards...Excellent leaders have very high standards and they enforce them without fear or favors."

❑ **Keep a positive attitude:** "Attitude is everything" is a true statement. Try this litmus test: When was the last time you communicated with someone who had a bad attitude and wanted to visit them again? Your Airmen are smart people; they will react to you as you act toward them.

❑ **Be accessible:** Get from behind the desk, visit your Airmen in their work centers and meet with them outside the work center to discuss anything but work-related items. This shows concern, fosters great communication and serves as a model of good leadership.

❑ **Know and perform your roles as NCOs and senior NCOs and lead Airmen accordingly:** Air Force Instruction 36-2618, the Enlisted Force Structure, identifies what is required of enlisted Airmen. Each one of us has specific roles to perform based on our rank. The Enlisted Force Structure clearly defines them.

❑ **Periodically review the NCO and senior NCO charges and practice the responsibilities outlined.** Those charges read to us when we willingly accepted the stripes that elevated us to the ranks of NCO and Senior NCO are still valid long after we affirm to accept them. They can quickly fade into the recesses of our memory if we do not internalize, apply and use them to lead in our day-to-day performance.

Everyday offers great opportunities to help create leaders who will guide the Air Force well into the 21st century. Let's do our part as leaders to ensure we properly prepare them.

The leadership baton is in our hand at this point. It is up to us to prepare for the hand-off well before the exchange zone, so our followers can easily accept it at the right time and garner many successes by effectively leading fellow Airmen.

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CSAF signs official charter for Expeditionary Center

By Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center
Public Affairs

The official charter for the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center at Fort Dix, N.J., was signed by Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton A. Schwartz on March 3 giving the center its "mandate to operate."

The charter outlines how the Air Force must provide expeditionary combat support, or ECS, capabilities to combatant commanders in support of their strategic objectives.

"Our ECS Airmen must be prepared to operate across the full spectrum of contingency operations," General Schwartz wrote in the charter. "Their training must be standardized and relevant as we need to eliminate duplication in our process. To focus this critical effort, I am tasking the United States Air Force Expeditionary Center to execute all assigned advanced ECS pre-deployment training courses."

The charter also defines the Expeditionary Center's span of responsibilities.

"The USAF EC reports to (Air Mobility Command) but works for and is responsible to all (major commands) for executing assigned advanced expeditionary skills training, incorporating lessons learned, tactics development and air mobility capability," the charter states.

Expeditionary Center Commander Maj. Gen. Kip Self said the charter process took more than a year of coordination, but it now provides solid framework and a mandate to operate in supporting ECS Airmen.

"Many people led this effort and poured their all into this charter because in the end it is about preparing and protecting our Airmen," General Self said. "For those of us in the Expeditionary Center, we can all take pride in this tasking by the CSAF. It demonstrates our value and his confidence in our ability to deliver 'Airpower...From the Ground Up!'"

There are four specific tasks General Schwartz wrote into the charter. They are:

- ❑ Develop and oversee assigned advanced pre-deployment and readiness training.
- ❑ Train future USAF mobility and expeditionary combat support leaders through advanced developmental, operational and tactical courses.
- ❑ Provide venues for directed, joint, integrated exercises and agile combat support-focused composite training (such as open-the-airbase and joint task force-port opening) for operational and tactical units from the USAF, sister services and coalition partners.
- ❑ Gather, refine, disseminate and be the repository for expeditionary skills lessons learned and tactics, techniques and procedures.

Other senior leaders praised the signing of the

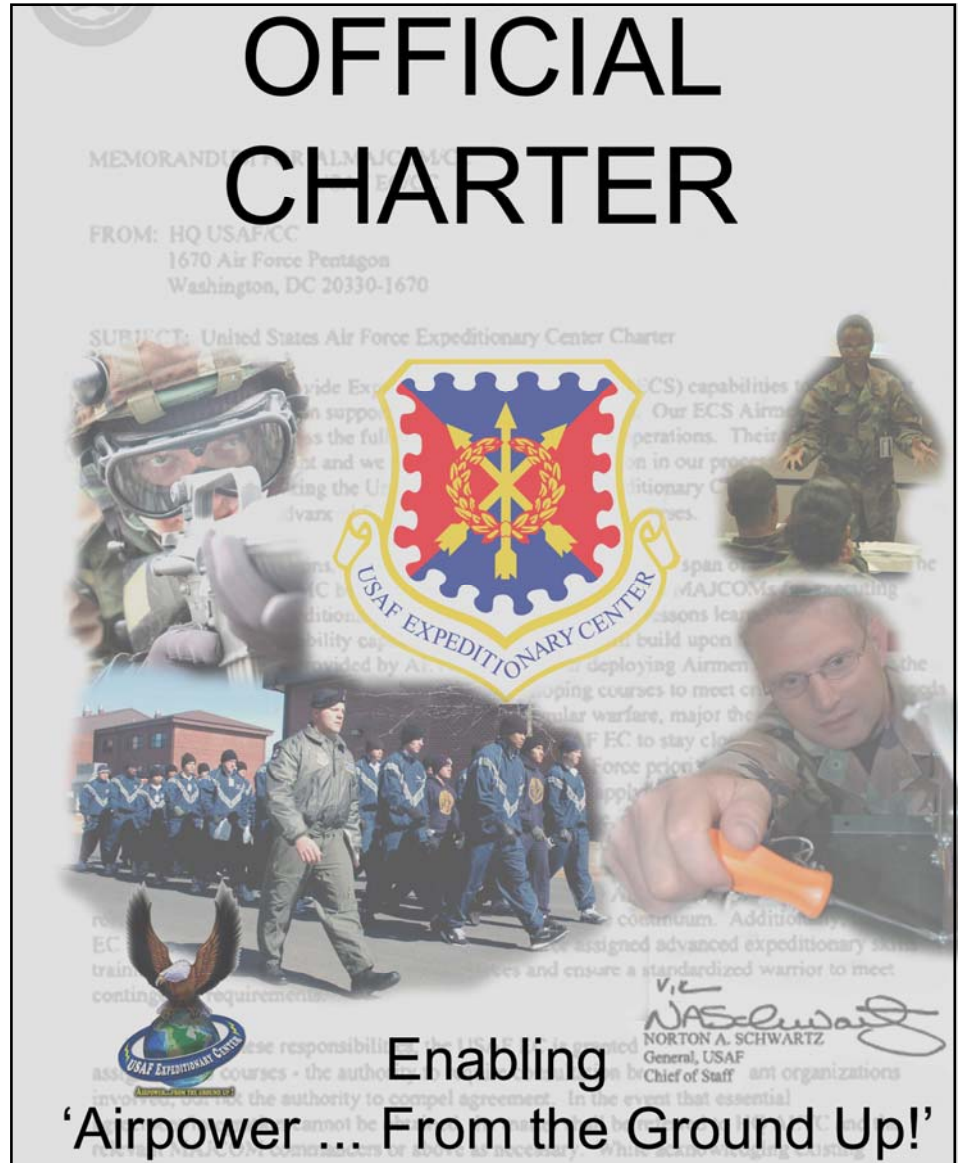


Photo Illustration by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

charter, calling it an important next step. Maj. Gen. Marke Gibson, Expeditionary Skills Senior Review Group Chair at the Pentagon, commented on the charter signing.

"The USAF EC will now assume a role in providing expeditionary combat support pre-deployment training that closely mirrors that of the Air Warfare Center for the flying communities," General Gibson said. "This document represents a ... critical step in our journey toward a vastly improved mechanism for meeting combatant commander training requirements."

Even within the Expeditionary Center, Airmen are responding to having the charter to guide them.

"It adds impact and validity from the very top to what we already knew...we're providing expeditionary Airmen with superior just-in-time

training," said Master Sgt. Jeff Norway from the Mobility Operations School.

In summing up the requirement for the charter, General Schwartz noted how this charter provides a guideline to the future of expeditionary training.

"In order to achieve strategic, operational and tactical objectives unhindered by time, distance or geography, we must ensure our expeditionary Airmen are prepared to deploy and ready to fight," General Schwartz wrote. "We are sustaining warrior ethos, refining the world's most advanced training system and adapting to the characteristics of 21st century warfare. It is for this reason that I am tasking the United States Air Force Expeditionary Center to take the lead in developing our mobility and combat support capabilities."

Secretary of the Air Force visits Expeditionary Center

By Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center
Public Affairs

Citing the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center as a “critical component of the Air Force’s ability to train Airmen,” Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley pronounced his first familiarization visit to the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center on Fort Dix on March 31 a success.

“The Air Force mission to fly, fight and win ... in air, space and cyberspace takes a lot of effort across all of our specialties,” Secretary Donley said. “It’s a huge team effort. In fact, most of the Air Force does not actually fly airplanes. Most of the Air Force is devoted to the work of preparing those air, space and cyber capabilities for wartime deployments. The kind of work that gets done at the Expeditionary Center reminds us that ‘airpower ... from the ground up’ is where we start.”

Secretary Donley also received the latest updates on joint basing initiatives and a helicopter tour of McGuire Air Force Base, Fort Dix and Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst. Largely though, his visit was focused on familiarizing himself with the Expeditionary Center’s mission preparing Airmen for deployments.

Lt. Col. Mitchell Monroe, commander of the center’s 421st Combat Training Squadron, led the effort to show the Secretary the expeditionary skills taught by his cadre. In addition to specialized security forces training, Secretary Donley was also shown how military operations in urban terrain, convoy operations and combat first aid are taught.

“What an honor,” Colonel Monroe said. “If we or anyone else needed an endorsement as to the importance of what the 421st Combat Training Squadron does on a daily basis, the Secretary of the Air Force’s visit should suffice. I can tell you all of my (cadre) were thrilled the Secretary would take time out of his schedule to come see them prepare Airmen to go into harm’s way.”

Col. Lindsey Borg, one of the most recent graduates of the Advanced Contingency Skills Training Course which ended April 1, said he enjoyed the opportunity to meet Secretary Donley.

“It was an honor to show Secretary Donley the results of the investment the Expeditionary Center team made in us as Airmen warriors throughout ACST,” said Colonel Borg, from Air Mobility Command Headquarters at Scott Air Force Base, Ill., and class commander for ACST Course 09-3. “Without exception, each Airman I spoke with during training called it the best in their Air Force experiences. The connection the cadre and course material built between the



Photo by Staff Sgt. Nathan G. Bevier

Maj. Gen. Kip Self, U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center commander, talks with Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley during Secretary Donley’s visit to the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center on March 31. The overall visit by Secretary Donley to the Expeditionary Center was to see its facilities and training venues. Besides Fort Dix, Secretary Donley visited neighboring McGuire Air Force Base and Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst to learn more about the Joint-Basing Initiative.

students and the warrior ethos is amazing. I saw the class change as combat skills and confidence grew through each training element. I’m glad Secretary Donley had the opportunity to see a small part of the return on this Air Force investment.”

The Secretary of the Air Force also did what he called a “drive-by” visit to the Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance conference going on in the Expeditionary Center. During that stop, he told the 100-plus joint and coalition military audience “thank you” and encouraged them to continue their work institutionalizing security force assistance lessons learned from Iraq and Afghanistan.

“What you’re doing is not only important for our country, but also for the international coalition that is working to resolve counter-terrorism issues and irregular warfare challenges we face today and in the years ahead,” Secretary Donley said.

The Expeditionary Center’s Mobility Operations School then showed Secretary Donley some of their areas in training mobile command, control and communication leaders. He saw first-hand the Hard-sided Expandable Lightweight Air Mobile Shelter, and learned about the Small Package Initial Communications Element used in training.

“His visit gave us an excellent opportunity to speak to our capabilities in providing the warfighter the latest training in deployed communications and command and control,” said Tech. Sgt. Don Colbert, course director for the Mobile Command, Control and Communications Leadership Course. “We were also able to show him the shelters in which our students train that are identical to those being used in the deployed environment today.”

Maj. Gen. Kip Self, Expeditionary Center commander, said Secretary Donley’s visit, which follows the signing of the center’s official charter by Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwarz, shows the Expeditionary Center is providing the Air Force a valuable service.

“All of us can take pride not only in the tasking set forth in our charter but also in knowing our senior leaders have taken notice in all the great work the Expeditionary Center’s ‘Eagles’ are doing for our deploying Airmen,” General Self said. “It demonstrates our value and their confidence in our ability to deliver ‘Airpower...from the Ground Up!’”

In addressing Airmen during his visit, Secretary Donley said that people are what drive the mission.

He emphasized those who work at the Expedi-

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Photo by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley visits with Airmen who are training in the Advanced Contingency Skills Training Course on March 31 on Fort Dix, N.J.

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tionary Center, and throughout the Air Force, are to be commended for their service.

“Thank you for your service in the United States Air Force,” Secretary Donley said. “People choose to join the United States Air Force – it’s a world class institution. Part of the reason it is that way is the kind of training that is provided here at the Expeditionary Center, and throughout the Air Force, to hone the skills of our Airmen. The training brings them along and matures them from the lowest enlisted and officer ranks and up through positions of great responsibility for our Air Force.”

Secretary Donley also noted that it takes the “Total Force” to make the Air Force successful throughout the world and the Expeditionary Center is part of that success.

“All these specialties that get trained here are valued across our Air Force,” Secretary Donley said. “This is one large team -- active, Reserve components and civilians -- all working together. The leadership of the Air Force appreciates the magnitude of the commitments being made by the Airmen who serve the Air Force and we’re dedicated to your service.”



Photo by Staff Sgt. Nathan G. Bevier

Secretary of the Air Force Donley addresses attendees at the Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance Working Group on March 31 during their three-day conference hosted by the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center. Mr. Donley encouraged the group to continue their work institutionalizing security force assistance lessons learned from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force learns Expeditionary Center's mission during visit

By Chief Master Sgt. Paula Paige
U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center Public Affairs

"Can I scream?" asks Technical Sgt. Angenette Caballero, her bright smile negating any of the frenzy her question implies.

Sergeant Caballero is 29 days into her new job as executive assistant to the command chief of the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center, and she is organizing her first big event: The Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Rodney J. McKinley, is visiting the Airmen of the McGuire Air Force Base-Fort Dix area.

Lighthearted impulses to scream aside, for Caballero and the staff of more than 300 people who comprise the Expeditionary Center, the chief's visit to the region Feb. 9-10 was an opportunity to showcase their mission and communicate with the ranking enlisted leader in the Air Force. Initially invited by the center, the chief's itinerary was expanded to include to its mission partners on McGuire, the 305th Air Mobility Wing and the 621st Contingency Response Wing.

Appointed by the Air Force Chief of Staff, Chief McKinley is the 15th Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force. He serves as the personal adviser to the Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Air Force on all issues regarding the welfare, readiness, morale, and proper use and progress of the enlisted force and their families.

"A lot of his decisions affect us," said Sergeant Caballero. "He is our liaison. What he'll learn from us, he'll take to the Pentagon. I'm looking forward to the two-way communication,



Chief McKinley surprised Master Sgt. Jennifer Mastan, Host Aviation Resource Manager Course director, by presenting her with a coin during his visit.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Nathan G. Bevier

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley talks to Airmen in the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center on Fort Dix, N.J., on Feb. 10. Tech. Sgt. Jad Aoun, from the Mobility Operations School's Air Transportation Branch, stands by after giving Chief McKinley a briefing on MOS course material.

not just to hear his voice, but for him to hear ours."

Full of energy, opinions and humor, Chief McKinley arrived at the center Feb. 10. A mission briefing with senior leaders was followed by a fast-paced tour of the expansive campus and its schools. Later, a trek into the muddied South Jersey pinelands revealed clusters of students learning everything from combat first aid to how to shoot an M-16.

"Who here smokes?" he asked a group of students who had just finished practicing their weapons skills. When two Airmen slowly raised their hands, he commanded, "Quit!"

Then he softened it with a question. "You gonna quit? I say that, because I care about you."

President Barack Obama also cares about Airmen, the chief said later in another setting. Military families are one of his concerns, he said, sharing details of a recent meeting with the new commander in chief.

"A week ago, I was called back from TDY to meet with President Obama, the vice president, the Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Adviser," Chief McKinley said Feb. 10. "We discussed concerns -- the added stress of reshaping the Air Force, the economy, the big need for improvements in education, the increase in suicide rates in the military.

"What a tremendous message this meeting sent to the enlisted branches of all military services," the chief said. "President Obama said he'd like to meet with us (the top enlisted leaders of all services) on a regular basis."

From meeting with senior leaders, addressing key issues at an enlisted call or observing Airmen honing combat skills, Chief McKinley said he was impressed by the men and women of the Expeditionary Center.

"There's a lot of job satisfaction here," he said. "The people are mission-focused and productive. It's refreshing to see that. Even though you see slides and hear stories, you can't get a real taste of a place without 'boots on the ground' and meeting Airmen. I leave the Expeditionary Center totally educated and impressed with the leadership at all levels and the quality of instruction that our Airmen are getting."

A course instructor at the center, Master Sgt. John Brooks said, "It was important to share our mission with the chief. I was impressed. I can rest assured that we have good sponsorship and a good enlisted advocate for Air Force enlisted members."

Others added their voices to the chorus of praise. "I thought he was a really nice down-to-earth guy," said Technical Sgt. James Carson, course director in the Mobility Operations

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School. "He seemed like he cared, that he wasn't just saying the party line. He seemed like he believed in his mission, that he wasn't just giving it lip service.

"It was very important that we got the chance to share what we do with him," Sergeant Carson continued. "The stuff that we do here is very specific and cutting-edge. I got to tell him about our Mobile Learning program and how we are capitalizing on today's technology to further our current web-based training capabilities."

For Chief Master Sergeant Fitzgerald Hentz, the Expeditionary Center's command chief, the visit was a reunion, of sorts, as the two were stationed together at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, in the late 1990s. The two hadn't spoken since Chief McKinley was named to his new position.

"I first met him when he was my wing command chief," Chief Hentz said. "Having him give input impacted my career. From that exchange to now, he's inspired me. It's exciting having him see me as a brand new master sergeant to now a command chief."

Chief McKinley has returned to his office at the Pentagon; yet his presence lingers.

"To hear him tell you personally where the Air Force is going was awesome," Technical Sergeant Jonathan Tourville, of the Expeditionary Center's 421st Combat Training Squadron, said. "You see pictures of him, you see him on the news, you see him all over, and there he is standing in front of you -- next to you. Not a lot of people get the opportunity to shake hands and talk to the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, let alone have him pin your stripes on. It was hard to believe that the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force and Major General (Kip) Self were tacking new stripes on my sleeves."

Sergeant Tourville was promoted to technical sergeant through the Stripes for Exceptional Performers, or STEP, Program by the center's commander, General Self, during an enlisted call, which featured the chief as guest speaker.

Chief McKinley also impressed senior officers. "(Chief McKinley) hit the ball out of the park," General Self said of the chief's visit. "He inspired me and the men and women of the center. What an incredible gentleman. He fits hand in glove with (Air Force Chief of Staff) Gen. (Norton) Schwartz. As a team, their vision is clear. The roadmap is certainly focused on the future, and the Expeditionary Center Eagles are 'all in.'"

As for executive assistant Sergeant Caballero, her next big event is waiting in the wings; and even if tempted to scream, it will likely be tempered by a brilliant smile.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Nathan G. Bevier

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley talks to Airmen in the Expeditionary Center's Advanced Contingency Skills Training Course on a Fort Dix, N.J., range on Feb. 10.



Tech. Sgt. Jon Tourville, 421st Combat Training Squadron, receives his new technical sergeant stripes from Maj. Gen. Kip Self, Expeditionary Center commander, and Chief McKinley on Feb. 10. Sergeant Tourville was promoted by General Self through the Stripes for Exceptional Performers program.

Air Force's 'Top Cop' kicks off 15th anniversary speaker series Airmen discuss chance to share EC story

By Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center Public Affairs

Nearly 100 people showed up in the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center's Grace Peterson Hall on Fort Dix, N.J., on March 26 as the Air Force's top cop addressed the latest news and information in the security forces career field.

The Expeditionary Center audience was small in comparison to the thousands who watched the briefing at 15 locations worldwide by Brig. Gen. Mary Kay Hertog, Air Force Director of Security Forces at the Pentagon. General Hertog kicked off the Expeditionary Center's Professional Development Speaker Series as part of the center's 15th anniversary observance.

In her one-hour teleconferenced briefing to Airmen around the world, General Hertog spoke about many issues, to include deployments, leadership and more. One of the people in attendance, a former member of the center's 421st Combat Training Squadron, said he was enlightened by what he heard in the briefing.

"It was really encouraging for a guy in the field to hear that our leaders are concerned about our Airmen who are going to deploy for war," said Chief Master Sgt. (Retired) Gary Kelly, currently the assistant operations officer for McGuire Air Force Base's 87th Security Forces Squadron. Chief Kelly served as the superintendent of the 421st CTS from September 1998 to December 2003.

"From my previous experience in the 421st CTS, we didn't hear things like that from our senior leaders years ago," he added.

In addition to her one-hour briefing, General Hertog also received a tour of the Expeditionary Center's facilities and training venues. Tech. Sgt. Jon Tourville, a security forces instructor from the 421st CTS knew he was the general's driver on her visit, but he didn't know she would be re-enlisting him that same day.

"It was really cool," Sergeant Tourville said. "It was actually kind of the spur of the moment for me. Honestly it's really great she did the re-enlistment and took time out of her schedule to do it. Six more years -- hooah!"

"Hooah" seemed to be the reaction of many members of the Expeditionary Center had for General Hertog to her during the visit.

"It's always good to meet the top cop, have a voice and show how effective our training is," said Staff Sgt. James Chubb, also a security forces instructor for 421st CTS. "It was great that we could show her a live combatives demonstration of what we do, instead of her seeing it in a briefing or in an after-action report. She actually was able to see how the training is affecting our security forces students."

From the center's Mobility Operations School, Senior Master Sgt. Troy Coville led the effort to show General Hertog its mobile command, control and communications training facility. He said the opportunity to teach Air Force leaders about the training the center provides for the mobility air force community is always beneficial.

"It's a great opportunity -- no matter what Air Force specialty we get in here -- to give them an insight into what we are doing being that since it's such a non-standard job that we do," Sergeant Coville said. "When she came in to our area, she said she had never been inside a Hard-sided Expandable Lightweight Air Mobile Shelter (HELAMS) before. That was a great opportunity to educate her on its capabilities. I think she walked away from here learning something, and that's really our objec-



Photo by Staff Sgt. Nathan G. Bevier

Brig. Gen. Mary Kay Hertog, Air Force Director of Security Forces, addresses an audience of more than 100 Airmen on March 26 in the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center's Grace Peterson Hall on Fort Dix, N.J. General Hertog's presentation launched the Expeditionary Center's Professional Development Speaker Series observing the center's 15th anniversary. The speaking engagement was also teleconferenced to 15 locations Air Force-wide to include Japan, Germany, Nevada, Texas, Illinois, Hawaii and California.

tive -- to teach and educate people on what we do."

As part of the same effort for MOS, Tech. Sgt. Adrian McDonough showed General Hertog MOS' new Small Package Initial Communications Element (SPICE) Course.

"It was another great opportunity to show the relevance of the SPICE to somebody who would be outside the communications career field like security forces -- particularly with the intrusion detection," Sergeant McDonough said. "It was great that someone such as General Hertog was able to see the value SPICE brings to security forces and others. We talked about class size, class length, how it applies to opening the airbase and that force construct. We also highlighted on how it related specifically to the general and her troops."

Staff Sgt. Joshua Sager, instructor in MOS' Mobile Command, Control and Communications Systems Course, said he believes General Hertog learned more overall about how mobile communicators and security forces work together. "We showed we're providing today's warfighter with reliable and secure short- and long-range communications that are needed and required to complete the mission," he said.

As far as her impressions of the Expeditionary Center, General Hertog said she liked what she saw and wished the center a happy 15th anniversary.

"You're the advanced combat skills people," General Hertog said. "You provide that great service for us."

"And also, let me just say congratulations on 15 great years," she said. "You've gotten better as the years progress. I'm glad to be a customer of the Expeditionary Center and I'm so grateful that you're doing the top-off training that I need to have you do for our security forces. I wish you great success in the next 15 years because I think you're only going to evolve and get better."

Air Force security forces director discusses training, career field

By Staff Sgt. Paul R. Evans
U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center

On March 26, Air Force Director of Security Forces Brig. Gen. Mary Kay Hertog visited the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center.

During her visit, she took time out to answer questions about what she saw while visiting the center and to update Airmen on the status of the security forces career field.

Expeditionary Airman: *During your visit, what have you seen and learned about the Expeditionary Center that impresses you the most?*

General Hertog: "First off, this is my first in-depth visit with the EC. I have to say that what I'm impressed with the most is the professionalism of the cadre of instructors and their enthusiasm and motivation. You can really tell these folks love to do what they're doing and it's across the board. It's not just one functional area but all of them -- from officer to enlisted. I'm also impressed with the scope of training you do here. I know what (the EC) does for security forces because I've asked you to do that, but I was not aware of all the other training you do for the other Air Force specialties, such as Advanced Contingency Skills Training. I also didn't know that your courses gave Airmen Community College of the Air Force credits, which I think is outstanding."

EA: As a past security forces squadron commander, how do you view the quality of training the Expeditionary Center and its 421st Combat Training Squadron have been providing to deploying security forces?

General Hertog: Let me talk to you about not just squadron command, but I've had the honor of also being a group and a wing commander for a training group and a training wing. I can speak to that with a unique perspective. I love training, I have a passion for training and I think the 421st is doing an outstanding job. We don't do enough training in the Air Force in my book. And I can speak as a former security forces squadron commander three times over, that there's always an excuse somebody can come up with for not training. They'll say, 'Oh, we're working 12-hour shifts,' or 'We're working too hard.' You've got to train. That's the bottom line. I can see it's taken seriously here by everybody involved and I think you're doing an outstanding job.

EA: What is your vision for the security forces career field, and in particular, the vision for expeditionary training for security forces?

General Hertog: I have a couple things wrapped up in my vision. First is nuclear



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
Brig. Gen. Mary Kay Hertog, the Air Force Director of Security Forces at the Pentagon in Arlington, Va., talks with security forces Airmen in training on a Fort Dix, N.J., range on March 26.

security. We're doing some nuclear security training that we've never done before. The bottom line is to regain credibility as part of the Air Force nuclear enterprise. We want to make sure that we know what we're doing when it comes to the nuclear enterprise, and that everyone must do an outstanding job every day.

My other focus of course is on expeditionary training. I don't see our expeditionary role going away anytime soon. It may diminish a little but I don't see it going away in a big way. I have to be ready to make sure that all of our security forces members are ready to go out the door, regardless of the mission, properly trained.

The one thing we're doing now more and more is "outside the wire." We have more Airmen -- more cops -- outside the wire than we have ever had in the past. We have anywhere from 600 to 700 out on a daily basis in the (deployed) area of responsibility in Iraq and Afghanistan and other places. Our security forces (expeditionary) training has got to be focused for that as well as for irregular warfare.

As security forces, we are doing a lot. We're doing Police Transition Team training, which trains Iraqis to secure their own nation as police officers. We have Airmen serving on Provincial Reconstruction Teams. PRTs, which besides cops have many different Air Force specialties, are building up the infrastructure of countries like Iraq and Afghanistan. In order to help them out, you

have to provide security for those teams and our Air Force security forces are doing just that.

We're doing so much outside the wire and so much in irregular warfare that I've started to re-vector my basic training for security forces Airmen and officers in that direction. That's my overall vision.

EA: Since Sept. 11, 2001, security forces operations tempo has sky-rocketed. Because of that, have you noticed a large attrition rate in first- and second-term security forces Airmen due to that increased tempo?

General Hertog: I track attrition all the time. That's what keeps me up at night. Right after Sept. 11, right after we started the surge, our Zone A retention rate was close to the Air Force average. You want to have about a 55 percent retention rate of your first-termers because you've got to grow a force. From 2004 or 2005 to now we've gone from about 45 percent to 32 percent retention for Zone A (first-termers).

(Editor's note: Zone A refers to first-term Airmen serving their first four- or six-year enlistment.)

"I know why and there are two reasons. It's not just because we're so deployed, but that's a big reason. Folks are tired. I have Airmen I have visited in theater who have apologized to me because they're going to separate when they return. It may be because they're married to somebody else on active duty. They may be a single parent or their spouse may have said, 'Hey, enough is enough. You need to be home.'" I can't offer them the predictability and the stability they need. It's been one of my goals since I've been the director to work towards that predictability and stability and we're doing many things to achieve that.

The other reason is our cops are highly marketable. They come in, they're disciplined, their trained, they have the right clearances and they're drug free. I actively have people recruiting security forces members for law enforcement jobs. I've had that since I was a squadron commander. Our cops are in great demand.

That's a growing business for the Department of Homeland Security, Drug Enforcement Administration -- you name it. You've got those skills where you can go. Coming out of the military gives you great credibility. Many police departments are willing to waive somebody who doesn't have a four-year degree if they've got military experience. So it's two things that we're trying to

See Security forces, Page 10

Security forces, from Page 9 fight, and that's the marketability and deployability of our Airmen and the fact that they're tired. I realize they're tired. I can't offer them an end-state to say that, "Hey, you get to this point and you're not going to deploy."

I have more colonels and chiefs deployed now more than I've ever had in this career field. I also have, and this is to me a huge sign of success, about 23 chiefs out as command chiefs and 19 colonels out as either wing, vice wing, or group commanders in the Air Force.

We're growing them up and out to do other things. To me that is a sign of success that we have done an outstanding job with these folks.

EA: With technology comes the technologically smart Airman. What kind of leadership advice can you give the new NCOs and even the senior NCOs to deal with this new generation of Airmen?

General Hertog: We need to be consistent. We need to be back to basics. The fact that we have great technology now and folks that are coming up that are more technologically apt than perhaps maybe you and I were should not make one bit of difference.

You have to be an analog in a digital world. People spend way too much time, in my opinion, on electronic mail and not enough time out walking their areas of responsibility getting to know their Airmen.

We should not have people who get counseled by e-mail, it should be face-to-face. Nor should we be fired by e-mail -- it needs to be face-to-face. If somebody is out there doing something wrong, they need to know it by you looking them in the eye and saying, "You have not lived up to my standards, but here's what you can do to correct that."

Just the same reason, somebody should not have praise heaped on them by e-mail.

They should be trotted out in front of everybody and congratulated for doing that and getting that kind of affirmation with their peers. Leadership doesn't change. Your basics of leadership will not change. I don't care how much technology you bring in.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Nathan G. Bevier

Maj. Gen. Kip Self, U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center commander, and Brig. Gen. Mary Kay Hertog, Air Force Director of Security Forces, talk about future training opportunities at the center during her visit March 26.



General Hertog talks with students in a combat first aid class for the Advanced Contingency Skills Training Course on a Fort Dix, N.J., range on March 26.



Tech. Sgt. Shaylin Butler (center), instructor with the 421st Combat Training Squadron, talks to General Hertog about security forces training on a Fort Dix range.

Expeditionary Center earns 14th AF Organizational Excellence Award

By Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center
Public Affairs



For the 14th consecutive time since the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center opened its doors in 1994, the unit has earned the Air Force Organizational Excellence Award.

The award was presented to the center by Air Mobility Command on Jan. 30 and received at the center Feb. 24. The award period covers June 6, 2007, to June 5, 2008. Airmen assigned to the Expeditionary Center at Fort Dix and its detachments at Scott Air Force Base, Ill., and Hurlburt Field, Fla., during that time are eligible to wear the AFOEA ribbon.

Gen. Arthur Lichte, commander of Air Mobility Command, sent a congratulatory letter to Expeditionary Center Commander, Maj. Gen. Kip Self, telling the men and women of the center the award was justly deserved.

"Congratulations to you, and all the men and women of the United States Air Force Expeditionary Center for earning the Air Force Organizational Excellence Award," General Lichte wrote in the letter to General Self on Jan. 30. "The dedication and hard work you have displayed in preparing our Armed Forces for its many global challenges has been especially noteworthy."

"I'm extremely impressed with the 'total team' effort you put forth to earn this award," General Lichte wrote. "Keep up the great work."

In the citation for the award, it shows how the center distinguished itself through a year of excellence. The citation shows the Expeditionary Center graduated "more than 7,560 students from 67 in-residence courses and more than 10,200 students through 11 Web-based training courses."

During that year, the Expeditionary Center also ensured more than 13,000 Community College of the Air Force credits were awarded to deserving Airmen. Additionally, the center provided readiness training in the full spectrum of mobility air forces to people of more than 100 Air Force specialties. As a result, the center's Mobility Operations School garnered the AMC nomination for the Frank G. Brewer trophy for aerospace education in 2007.

"Furthermore, the Expeditionary Center led five Air Force Chief of Staff-directed Eagle Flag exercises, 14 Advanced Contingency Skills Training Courses and developed Air Forces

Central Command's Fly Away Security Team training preparing more than 3,000 Airmen to deploy in support of the Global War on Terrorism," the citation also shows. "Finally, the Expeditionary Center's Air Mobility Battlelab leveraged \$4.2 million to orchestrate 33 innovative concept demonstrations, despite a 55 percent manning cut, saving billions of dollars and revolutionizing expeditionary and mobility capabilities."

This was the second time the award was given under the name of the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center. Prior to 2007 when the center's name changed, 12 awards were given as the Air Mobility Warfare Center.

According to the Air Force Personnel Center at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, the Secretary of the Air Force authorized this award on Aug. 26, 1969.

The Air Force Organizational Excellence Award recognizes the achievements and accomplishments of U.S. Air Force organizations or activities.

It is awarded to Air Force internal organizations that are entities within larger organizations.

They are unique, unnumbered organizations or activities that perform functions normally performed by numbered wings, groups, squadrons and related organizations.

Mobility Operations School wins AMC nod for Brewer Trophy

By Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center
Public Affairs

The U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center's Mobility Operations School at Fort Dix, N.J., is Air Mobility Command's nominee for the 2008 Frank G. Brewer Trophy, according to an AMC announcement Jan. 28 from AMC Headquarters.

"The entire team at the Mobility Operations School can take great pride in this selection as it represents Air Mobility Command in this competition," said Gen. Arthur J. Lichte in the announcement.

"The U.S. Air Force Mobility Operations School makes contributions to both Air Mobility Command and the Global War on Terrorism by producing the most highly qualified mobility experts to support the mobility air forces worldwide," General Lichte said. "We wish the men and women of the Mobility Operations School the best as they compete at the



national level."

According to the USAF EC fact sheet, the Mobility Operations School is the Air Force Center of Excellence dedicated to prepare every graduate to perform their mission by educating, training and exercising Department of Defense personnel in the full range of expeditionary operations.

Using both resident and Web-based instructional media, the MOS offers 57 courses, including the Director of Mobility Forces Course and the Advanced Study of Air Mobility Intermediate Developmental Education and graduate program. Other courses cover topics in operations, tactics, intelligence, transportation, maintenance, aircrew resource management, and command and control from both a global and theater perspective. The MOS also sponsors a range of exercises, including the futures wargame GLOMO.

USAF EC announces annual award winners



2008 U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center Company Grade Officer of the Year
Capt. Todd Caskey, Expeditionary Center Resources Directorate



2008 U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center Senior NCO of the Year
Master Sgt. Jennifer Mastan, Mobility Operations School



2008 U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center NCO of the Year
Tech. Sgt. Scott Sturkol, Expeditionary Center Public Affairs



2008 U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center Airman of the Year
Airman 1st Class George Son, Expeditionary Operations School



2008 U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center Category I Civilian of the Year
Ms. Sandy Lewis, Expeditionary Center Resources Directorate



2008 U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center Category II Civilian of the Year
Ms. Patricia Burke, Expeditionary Center Resources Directorate



2008 U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center David E. Bass Leadership Award
Master Sgt. Joseph Coyle, 421st Combat Training Squadron



2008 U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center Reynolds A. Kuntzman Superior Performance Award
Staff Sgt. Eric Brewster, Mobility Operations School

Not pictured is **Mr. James Oats**, 2008 Category III Civilian of the Year, and **Master Sgt. Timothy Wasut**, 2008 First Sergeant of the Year.

Congratulations also goes out to all of the following nominees:

- **Senior Airman Matthew Keim**, USAF EC Resources Directorate Airman of the Year
- **Staff Sgt. John Hoffecker**, 421st CTS, Reynolds A. Kuntzman Superior Performance Award finalist
- **Tech. Sgt. Kendrick Ross**, USAF EC Resources

Directorate NCO of the Year

- **Tech. Sgt. Joseph Neubauer**, Mobility Operations School NCO of the Year

- **Tech. Sgt. Richard Oliver**, Expeditionary Operations School NCO of the Year

- **Master Sgt. Marcus Hughes III**, Expeditionary Operations School Senior NCO of the Year

- **Master Sgt. Benigno Rodriguez**, MOS, David E. Bass Leadership Award finalist

- **Capt. Teri Hunter**, Mobility Operations School Company Grade Officer of the Year

- **Capt. Robert Prausa**, Expeditionary Operations School Company Grade Officer of the Year

- **Mr. Domenic Fazzo**, Mobility Operations School Category II Civilian of the Year

- **Mr. Philip Mohacsi**, USAF EC Resources Directorate Category III Civilian of the Year

‘Eagles’ earn top awards in AF, AMC Media contests

AMC Media Contest

Four members of the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center Public Affairs Office on Fort Dix compiled nine awards in the 2008 Air Mobility Command Media Contest, according to results released by AMC Jan. 26.

Tech. Sgt. Scott Sturkol, NCO in charge of public affairs, was the biggest winner, earning Journalist of the Year, Series Writer of the Year, Best Combat Documentation Photograph, Best News Photograph, Best Art and Graphics runner-up, and third place, Photojournalist of the Year. It was the second consecutive year Sergeant Sturkol was named AMC’s Journalist of the Year.

Staff Sgt. Nathan Bevier, NCO in charge of public affairs photography, was named AMC’s 2008 Photographer of the Year runner-up.

Staff Sgt. Paul Evans, 421st Combat Training Squadron security forces instructor and unit PA representative for the 421st, earned the Best Portrait/Personality Photograph.

Chief Master Sgt. Paula Paige, individual mobilization augmentee to the USAF EC Public Affairs Office, earned third place for News-writer of the Year.

“We’re very proud of the efforts of these young men and women as they work to get the AMC message out to our audience,” said Col. Dedra K. Witham, IMA to the director of AMC Public Affairs.

Air Force Media Contest

When the Air Force Media Contest results were announced on March 12, **Sergeant Sturkol** and **Sergeant Evans** both placed in the contest.

Sergeant Sturkol won third place for Air Force News Photograph of the Year for his photo titled, “Air Force hero placed to rest after nearly 40 years.”

The photo was taken during a funeral for a former missing in action Airman at Arlington National Cemetery on April 9, 2008.

Sergeant Evans won third place for Air Force Portrait/Personality Photograph of the Year for his photo titled, “Training Break.”

The photo was taken on a Fort Dix range during the Phoenix Warrior Training Course on June 5, 2008, while security forces students were training in combat first aid.



Air Force hero placed to rest after nearly 40 years



Training break

WINNING ENTRIES:
(Above) This photo, taken by Tech. Sgt. Scott Sturkol of the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center Public Affairs Office on April 9, 2008, won third place for 2008 Air Force News Photograph of the Year.

(Left) This photo, taken by Staff Sgt. Paul Evans of the Expeditionary Center’s 421st Combat Training Squadron and taken on June 5, 2008, won third place for 2008 Air Force Portrait/Personality Photograph of the Year.

Joint Assessment Team cites Eagle Flag as great prep to survey 7 OEF, OIF bases in less than 30 days

By 1st Lt. Nicole Langley
615th Contingency Response Wing Public Affairs

TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. -- Airmen assigned to the 615th Contingency Response Wing here completed a nearly 30-day assessment mission in Afghanistan and Iraq in February.

The 10 Airmen were part of a 13-member joint Air Force-Army team, which received their mission tasking from U.S. Transportation Command.

The group, known as a Joint Task Force-Port Opening, Joint Assessment Team, traveled to Afghanistan and Iraq to provide the U.S. Central Command, International Security Assistance Force and Multi-National Corps-Southeast coalition leadership and planners information about seven bases.

"We identified baseline capabilities of mobility, airfield suitability, base operating support and force protection, as well as recommendations for improvements in all areas," explained Col. Steven Jordan, 570th Contingency Response Group commander and team lead for this trip.

The joint Air Force and Army team consisted of Airmen from the 615th CRW and Soldiers from the 688th Transportation Detachment (Rapid Port Opening) at Fort Eustis, Va.

While the team's initial tasking included assessments of just two airfields in Afghanistan to support Operation Enduring Freedom, after they arrived in the USCENCOM area of responsibility, they received additional assignments.

"Once we arrived, our JAT was further tasked to conduct four additional OEF assessments and another one in Iraq," Colonel Jordan said.

Although typically the JAT mission is to open aerial ports in support of contingency or humanitarian operations, during this recent mission, the JAT focused on assessing the airbases' capabilities.

"We provided unique capabilities to the theater that only a CRG is capable of providing in a timely manner," explained Lt. Col. Craig Theisen, 570th Global Mobility Readiness Squadron commander and JAT member responsible for assisting the team lead and providing daily reports to higher headquarters.

Not only did this JAT conduct operations outside of its normal scope, it also marked a first for the 615th CRW.

"This was the first operational full-scale airfield assessment team that the wing has deployed," Colonel Jordan added.

The team credits their success in completing seven airfield assessments in less than 30 days to the fact that they were well prepared and were an established team before they ever departed home station.

"There were no surprises when we were out in the field," said Colonel Jordan. "We dealt with some unique situations, but the training we've been through laid the groundwork to accomplish this mission."

Specifically, the team agreed that the 10 days of grueling training they received at Air Force Exercise Eagle Flag — a Chief of Staff-directed expeditionary combat support exercise conducted at the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center at Fort Dix, N.J., helped prepare them for the situations they encountered while in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"The goal of Eagle Flag is to provide Airmen with an environment to exercise the knowledge and skills required to open and establish an air base and achieve initial operating capability, for any type of forward operation, in any environment, regardless of mission or aircraft type," the Air Force fact sheet for the exercise shows. "Eagle Flag is considered a final rehearsal of the expeditionary combat support skills necessary to open and establish a base and provide command and control before Airmen deploy in support of real-world contingencies."

"It was challenging, but I had good people on the team," Colonel Jor-



Photo by Senior Airman Julius Delos Reyes
A "villager" talks to an 1st Lt. William Newby, 95th Communications Group, Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., Sept. 19, 2008, as part a scenario for Air Force Exercise Eagle Flag 08-6 at Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst, N.J. The exercise is managed by the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center's 421st Combat Training Squadron at Fort Dix, N.J., and tests and trains Airmen in expeditionary combat support skills.

dan said. "The Airmen in the CRW are all well prepared and ready to deploy at a moment's notice when unique missions like this arise."

Another unique aspect of the team's mission was they conducted assessments at airbases operated by several different coalition partners, including the United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany and Italy, as well as the United States.

This meant that the team not only performed their technical assessments of each base, but also served as ambassadors for the United States, as they lived and worked at each location for approximately three days.

As a nomadic evaluation team, the group primarily slept in tents, often using those same tents as their workspace to compile all of their assessments.

There may have been some challenging aspects of the trip, but the team concurred that it was a good opportunity to put their training into action.

"It was a great experience to be a part of our first team to go out and accomplish the mission that we have all been training for," said 1st Lt. Mike Fiedler, 570th GMS Civil Engineer Flight commander and JAT member.

With the regular training these specialized teams receive, it's obvious that they're postured for immediate response anywhere, anytime, said Lieutenant Fiedler.

(Note: Air Force Exercise Eagle Flag is the Air Force's only Chief of Staff-directed, flag-level exercise testing and training Airmen in expeditionary combat support skills. In September 2002, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John Jumper designated Air Mobility Command as the lead command to execute a flag-level program to prepare all Air Force expeditionary combat support Airmen. The first EAGLE FLAG exercise began Oct. 13, 2003, with Airmen tasked from across the Air Force. The exercise comprises more than 400 Airmen from 183 unit type codes across 30 Air Force functional areas. For more on the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center, visit: www.expeditionarycenter.af.mil.)

Artist completes, donates four Expeditionary Center-themed pieces



Artist John Witt, the chairman of the New York Society of Illustrators, and Maj. Gen. Kip Self, U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center commander, stand next to a 6-by-8 painting Mr. Witt created with the center as the theme. This painting and three other art pieces are for the Air Force Art Program and will eventually find their home at the Expeditionary Center.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Nathan G. Bevier
This set of nine framed sketches by Mr. Witt are of Expeditionary Center personnel that were completed in preparation for the large oil painting by Mr. Witt.



This oil painting, unveiled in April, shows General Self with Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley observing the Expeditionary Center's mascot statue of "Liberty" the Eagle. Chief McKinley was on hand for the unveiling of the large oil painting in February and this piece is a follow-up to the chief's visit.



Chief McKinley holds a framed sketch of himself created by Mr. Witt in February. Chief McKinley requested the piece be included with the other art pieces created by Mr. Witt and displayed at the center.



NY Times reporter visits

Ms. Elisabeth Bumiller, New York Times reporter, interviews a student about his upcoming deployment during a visit to the Air Advisor Course, hosted by the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center, at a range on Fort Dix, N.J., on Jan. 27. The Air Advisor Course is a combined effort between the Expeditionary Center, Air Education and Training Command, Air Forces Central and contractors to prepare Airmen deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan to train air force members in those countries.

Photos by Staff Sgt. Nathan G. Bevier

Philly Inquirer covers training

Photographer Larry Kesterson and reporter Ed Colimore, both with the Philadelphia Inquirer, listen as Tech. Sgt. Charles Glunt, of U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center armory, provides them with information during a visit on Feb. 17. Mr. Kesterson and Mr. Colimore visited Fort Dix to cover the Advanced Contingency Skills Training Course taught by the center's 421st Combat Training Squadron. The end result was a story and numerous photos in a Sunday edition of the Inquirer.



State Department leader discusses PRTs

Mr. Pat Capriglione, from the U.S. State Department, talks to Expeditionary Center personnel about his experience as a Provincial Reconstruction Team leader in Al Ramadi, Iraq, on Feb. 3. Mr. Capriglione said, "In 10 months, I've seen a lot of progress. We are effectively helping the Iraqis to rebuild their country." About 70 "Eagles" attended the event.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Nathan G. Bevier



Photo by Staff Sgt. Nathan G. Bevier

New LMTV

Maj. Gen. Kip Self, U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center commander, listens to Tech. Sgt. Scott Mueller of the 421st Combat Training Squadron, as he describes one of the new Light Medium Tactical Vehicles, or LMTV, the center has on hand for training. The LMTV is a troop and cargo truck that is the eventual replacement for the older "deuce-and-a-half" trucks currently in use.

Canine handlers build confidence in Phoenix Warrior course

By Staff Sgt. Paul R. Evans
U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center

Having confidence in their abilities is a key ingredient for the success of any military working dog team, especially on deployments.

In the Air Force Phoenix Warrior Training Course at the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center on Fort Dix, N.J., two new military working dog, or MWD, handlers are “building a stronger sense of confidence” during their training here from Feb. 17 to March 6. The confidence, they say, to be better able to work with their MWDs on an upcoming deployment.

The students include Senior Airman Timothy Jones and his military working dog, Arris, from Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., and Senior Airman Jeremy Rice and military working dog, Banto, from Eglin AFB, Fla.

Both teams are attending Phoenix Warrior, which is taught by the center’s 421st Combat Training Squadron. The 19-day pre-deployment training course teaches Air Force security forces Airmen 21 core tasks, plus an additional five for canine teams.

For MWD teams, the course provides exposure to different types of combat situations that normally aren’t taught at the team’s home station. In those five additional tasks they learn ahead of other students, they gain specialized knowledge in mounted patrol tactics, improvised explosive device recognition, advanced urban operations tactics, tactical communications and weapons drills.

Airman Jones said he became an MWD handler because he wanted to try something new. Tired of working the gates and the flightline, he said he yearned for more adventure. Now in training, Airman Jones and his explosive detection and patrol MWD, Arris, are about to deploy for the first time to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

“Despite having a few deployments under my belt, I’m unsure what to expect now as a MWD handler in the deployed environment,” Airman Jones said.

Airman Rice is no stranger to deployments either as he’s had prior experience with detainee operations and other missions in Iraq. As a new MWD handler, however, he said this will be his first deployment, and believes Phoenix Warrior has made him better prepared.

“This training is so much better than the training I’ve previously had,” Airman Rice said. “The explosions, gunfire from different caliber weapons, smoke grenades and other training is great.”

While Airman Rice said he’s looking forward to his deployment, his Phoenix Warrior instructors are working to update the course after one recently returned from one. Phoenix Warrior



Photo by Staff Sgt. Paul R. Evans

Canine handler instructor, Staff Sgt. Brennan Pierce (left), directs students in the Air Force Phoenix Warrior Training Course through a combat first aid scenario on a Fort Dix, N.J., range on Feb. 28, 2009. The course, taught by the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center’s 421st Combat Training Squadron also on Fort Dix, prepares security forces Airmen for upcoming deployments.

canine handler instructor, Staff Sgt. Brennan Pierce, recently returned from Iraq with a new perspective on how to train Air Force canine handlers. Prior to his deployment, he attended his own course as a student.

“After my return, I got together with Staff Sgt. Luke Plemons, the course director, to revitalize the MWD portion of Phoenix Warrior with new tactics, techniques and procedures,” Sergeant Pierce said.

The changes they made included adding more nighttime operations, exposure to a variety of weapons systems, live-fire and explosions with ground burst simulators.

“We’ve also incorporated the actual application of giving the dog fluids intravenously for first aid and urban tactics training,” Sergeant Pierce said. “The MWD handlers and dogs also learn how to work within small groups, or fire teams, and around civilians in the urban environment.”

Working in small groups is done so the dog gets comfortable with working around local civilians, other security forces members and Army Soldiers within close proximity, Sergeant Plemons said.

“It also gives the handler better security and control when operating in an urban environment while searching for explosives or narcotics,” Sergeant Plemons said.

The canine track of the Phoenix Warrior course is wrapping up its second year of operations. Born from the need for additional pre-deployment for MWD teams, course founder Tech. Sgt. Jeffery Dean of the 421st CTS said after collecting information from those who deployed to the Middle East, the goal was to develop a realistic training course that focuses on the areas that military working dogs teams cannot get at their base.

“Our goal was to offer much-needed training to MWD teams who may encounter similar scenarios while deployed in support of the war,” Sergeant Dean said.

Recent students of the course, Airmen Jones and Rice said the work of Sergeants Dean, Plemons and Pierce is paying off and will help them be ready and confident.

“This training has given me a lot more confidence,” Airman Jones said.

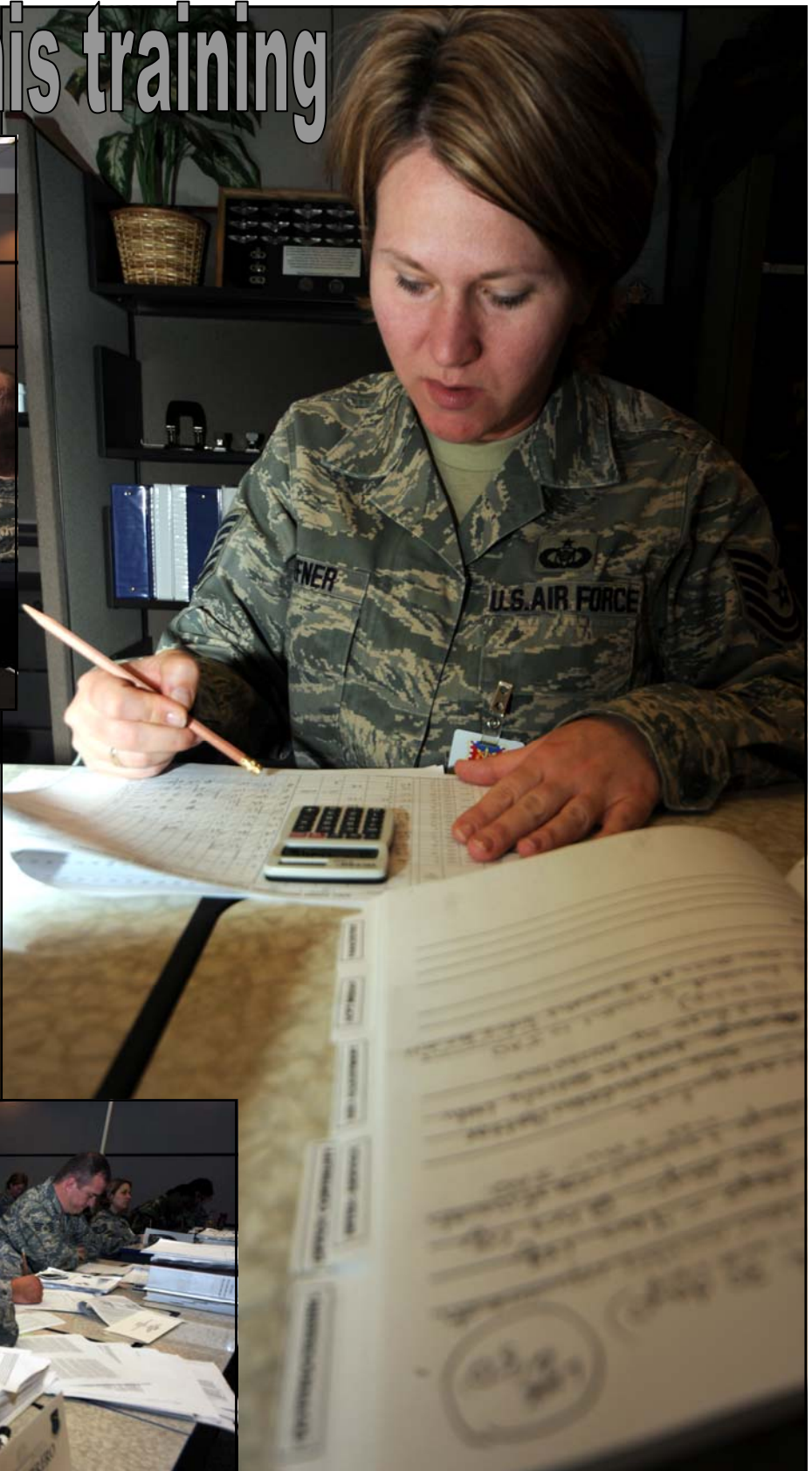
“You just can’t get this kind of training at your home base,” Airman Rice added.

No HARM in this training



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

(Above) Master Sgt. Jennifer Mastan, from the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center's Mobility Operations School, talks to her students in the Host Aviation Resource Management Course during a class session April 7 in the center on Fort Dix, N.J.



(Right) Tech. Sgt. Heather Heffner, from the 52nd Operations Support Squadron at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, and an aviation resource management craftsman, works on a project during a class session April 7 in the HARM course.



(Left) Students in the Host Aviation Resource Management Course work on a project during a class session April 7 in the center.

Preparing contingency response leaders: Course develops command and control Airmen

By Staff Sgt. Veuril McDavid
U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center Public Affairs

Master Sgt. Chris Sherman says his students “influence world events.” It’s his way of saying he’s training leaders.

Sergeant Sherman teaches the Mobility Air Forces Mobile Command and Control (C2) Leadership Course at the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center here. The course teaches Airmen, both officer and enlisted, to become better leaders as contingency response element (CRE) commanders, or contingency response team (CRT) chiefs.

“Our goal is to prepare them and their unit for a variety of mission scenarios in advance,” said Sergeant Sherman whose course falls under the center’s Mobility Operations School. “This will help them be successful when they arrive at any deployed location.”

Airmen attending the course must be assigned to a contingency response wing, contingency response group, or airlift control flight. Students usually are in upgrade training to CRE commander or operations officer or CRT chief.

“Primarily, our students are pilots, navigators, loadmasters and boom operators,” Sergeant Sherman said. “However, the course can teach Airmen in any Air Force specialty who are assigned to those units.”

For the contingency response community, Sergeant Sherman said every mission is different. Students have to learn every possible aspect of what they could face as contingency response leaders.

“One mission might be opening an airbase and another might be humanitarian support in the United States or overseas,” he said. “Another mission could be to support the president’s travel to foreign countries. It’s important for this course to concentrate on core items, which are similar in all those missions.”

The MAF Mobile C2 Course lasts seven academic days and has been a part of the Expeditionary Center curriculum for more than 10 years. Sergeant Sherman said the focused training in the course hits subjects such as Air Force doctrine, pre-mission planning, deployment, employment, mission management, reporting, force protection, airfield surveying, financial planning and deployed legal responsibilities.

“This course is a melting pot of what is successful at the Expeditionary Center,” Sergeant Sherman said. “The students do a lot of work researching information for mission planning purposes. They also get some practical application, like in our media interview practice. We also go to the aircraft parking ramp and discuss what they can learn from the ‘boots on the ground’.”

Tech. Sgt. Andrea Inmon, a February course graduate and a KC-135 instructor boom operator/ramp coordinator with the 36th Mobility Response Squadron, Andersen Air Base, Guam, said she believes the course has improved her abilities as a leader.

“I believe the course improved my skills through the hands-on and tabletop sessions conducted in class,” Sergeant Inmon said. “This has allowed me to not only learn about my job, but also have examples to relate it to when I’m out in the field.”

Maj. Kristen McCabe, also a February course graduate and a flight nurse from the 615th Contingency Operations Support Group at Travis AFB, Calif., added, “The training at the U.S Air Force Expeditionary Center made me more aware of capabilities and limitations to better prepare for deployments through training and preparation.”

On leadership skills, Major McCabe said, “The course provides the knowledge base of how to better support Airmen on the ground. The training sets the tone to lead those Airmen -- especially those going to establish an air base and therefore set the tone for operations.”

Senior Master Sgt. Greg Lucas, an airfield services manager from the



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
Lt. Col. Christie Dragan, U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center Public Affairs director, talks to students in the Mobility Operations School’s Mobility Air Force Mobile Command and Control Leadership Course during media relations training on Feb. 19 in the center on Fort Dix, N.J. The class was taught by the USAF EC Public Affairs Office including Colonel Dragan, Chief Master Sgt. Paula Paige and Ms. Taccora Jones.

Kentucky Air National Guard’s 123rd Contingency Response Group at Louisville who also graduated the course in February, said he’s looking forward to implementing the skills he’s gained.

“I will be able to use the information gained from the course to further my skills as a leader and to help my Airmen lead,” Sergeant Lucas said. “I believe the more information an individual can learn, the better prepared we will be in our careers as both workers and leaders.”

Becoming a better mobility team leader is what the course is all about, Sergeant Sherman said. And he knows they’ll do their leading all throughout the world.

“It’s rewarding to see my students out there influencing world events,” Sergeant Sherman said. “Whether it’s the mission to Tbilisi, Georgia, delivering relief supplies to Darfur, or supporting our citizens during Hurricane Ike -- my students are there leading those air mobility support operations. They are leaders in action.”

Course trains Air Force intelligence analysts in ground combat operations

By Staff Sgt. Nathan Bevier
U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center
Public Affairs

Air Force intelligence analysts have been trained to focus on air threats since they first entered the service. There's now a need for them to be trained to provide support for worldwide ground combat and force protection operations.

The Air Force Force Protection Intelligence Formal Training Unit Course here at the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center on Fort Dix, N.J. recently trained the first set of students in February to focus on force protection and ground threats, said 1st Lt. Eric Snelgrove, course director for the 421st Combat Training Squadron. The 18-day course teaches intelligence analysts the principles of integrated base defense, the proper employment of intelligence surveillance reconnaissance assets, asymmetric threats, and they will also learn and apply intelligence preparation of the operating environment to a real-world area of operations. The course concludes with a three-day real-world scenario and field training exercise reinforcing force protection concepts and principles.

"Headquarters Air Force identified a need for intelligence Airmen specifically trained to support force protection and ground combat operations," Lieutenant Snelgrove said recently. "Airmen are regularly filling roles in Iraq and Afghanistan that traditionally would have been performed by the Army and Marines. Just as these Airmen received specialized pre-deployment training to execute their new responsibilities, intelligence Airmen also require specialized training to ensure that all Airmen are receiving the best intelligence support available."

Tech. Sgt. Crystal Rapelje, from the 93rd Bomb Squadron at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., and a student in the February class, said communication plays a vital role in force protection.

"As an Air Force intelligence analyst, it's just as important to look at ground threats as it is to look at air threats," Sergeant Rapelje said. "This class has taught me to think outside the box when it comes to force protection. We have to learn to reach out to our counterparts in the

office of special investigations and security forces, but also to our intelligence counterparts in other branches and fuse our information to provide a solid base and force protection plan."

Intelligence analysts typically conduct aircrew pre-mission briefings and debriefings, analyze surface-to-air threats and attack trends, and brief senior leadership on strategic and tactical security issues in their area of operations.

Lieutenant Snelgrove said this course has become a requirement for intelligence analysts who are preparing to deploy.

"Intelligence Airmen who have been assigned to a force protection position will be required to attend this course," Lieutenant Snelgrove said. "Other students will attend as mandatory pre-deployment training. Whether they are new to force protection intelligence or have been doing it for years, they will leave this course as a better intelligence analyst."

The Expeditionary Center has succeeded in assembling a group of course instructors who have significant ground combat and force protection experience. "Teaching the course here allows access to the top-notch equipment, facilities, and experience that is organic to the Expeditionary Center and the 421st Combat Training Squadron," Lieutenant Snelgrove said.

Another student in the February class, 1st Lt. Renee Bernecker, from the 48th Operations Support Squadron at Royal Air Force Lakenheath, England, said the course prepares intelligence Airmen for a better role in supporting ground forces.

"I learned how to view the operational environment from the perspective of Airmen who operate outside the wire and as a result, how to provide tailored and ground operation-centered intelligence," Lieutenant Bernecker said. "I



U.S. Air Force graphic

have a much better understanding of what threats, capabilities and other factors should be considered for pre-deployment planning. As Airmen, we are trained to focus on air threats. In the environment we operate in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is essential to also train Airmen to support ground forces. This course is a big step toward making that happen."

One student from the 204th Intelligence Squadron at McGuire AFB, N.J., said this course paves the way for the future.

"This course lays the foundation to provide the deployed warfighter the mission-specific ground intelligence needed to win the fight," Tech. Sgt. Carmine Giangeruso said. "Creative intelligence products for nonpermissive environments at a classified level will save lives. This course is one of a kind."

Lieutenant Snelgrove said his students are prepared for real-world operations.

"Ask any intelligence Airmen what the range of a particular surface-to-air missile system is and you'll get a prompt answer," Lieutenant Snelgrove said. "Now ask that same Airmen what the range of a particular mortar round is and you'll get a blank stare. But in the current operating environment, what are Airmen really in greater danger from? This course is not only answering that question and a thousand others like it, but also teaching intelligence Airmen that airpower starts from the ground up."

Mind over matter: Ravens reflect on mental challenges of training

By Staff Sgt. Nathan G. Bevier
U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center
Public Affairs

Many of the 35 students attending the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center's Phoenix Raven Training Course said they expected a "tough, physical experience" while training. By the end of the course on Feb. 20, many found the mental challenges of Raven training outweighed the physical side.

Phoenix Raven is an intensive 18-day, 12-hour-a-day course for security forces, said Tech. Sgt. Ryan Thompson, Raven course director for the 421st Combat Training Squadron. Once graduated, Raven teams fly with aircrews to austere air bases throughout the world, protecting the aircraft, cargo and personnel aboard. Since the Raven Program's inception in 1997, no aircraft or person has been lost under the care of a Raven team.

"This course covers specialized training in areas such as cross-cultural awareness, legal considerations and unarmed self-defense techniques," Sergeant Thompson said. "Students are exposed to more than 70 use-of-force scenarios where stress is simulated by role players. Training includes instruction and realistic practical exercises using skills that include defensive tactics and verbal judo."

Verbal judo, as related by a majority of the students, was one of the top skills learned in the course. The training helps security forces "use words as a tool to redirect behavior, defuse difficult situations and generate voluntary compliance from unruly individuals without the use of force," according to the Air Force Phoenix Raven Program guide, Air Force Instruction 31-104. "We teach the skill, so Ravens can defuse a situation with the least amount of physical

reaction," Sergeant Thompson said. "Developing a mind-mouth harmony is the greatest skill in the world. Without this skill, you may instigate violence, lose your credibility, alienate people, or lose friends."

Staff Sgt. Meghan Donahue, from the 437th Security Forces Squadron at Charleston Air Force Base, S.C., said Raven training is designed to challenge you both physically and mentally.

"Every drill, warmup and technique prepared



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

Tech. Sgt. Rudolph Stuart (right), an instructor in the Air Force Phoenix Raven Training Course, talks to students on Feb. 19 during a training session in the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center on Fort Dix, N.J. The Raven course, taught by the USAF EC's 421st Combat Training Squadron, teaches security forces Airmen specialized training in aircraft security, combatives and verbal judo.

me mentally and physically for each and every day of training," Sergeant Donahue said. "I learned how far I could push my mind and body while performing the proper techniques. The Raven course is the most beneficial training I have ever experienced. It helps with testing your skill and abilities."

Airman First Class Keith Perry, 143rd Security Forces Squadron at Quonset State Airport, R.I., praised his newfound verbal judo skills. "Verbal judo showed me that words are more powerful when used correctly," Airman Perry said. Sergeant Thompson said verbal judo is not only used by security forces to control situations, but can also be used in normal everyday activities. "It can

enhance professionalism by reducing complaints and personal stress by having fewer arguments," Sergeant Thompson said. "At the same time it increases efficiency by saying things right the first time."

One security forces Airman from the 817th

Contingency Response Group at McGuire Air Force Base, N.J., said the training pushed her to her limits.

"I feel better prepared for a mission because the training was so in depth," Senior Airman Amber Reese said. "It pushed my body and mind further than I could have imagined. I would relay to others to keep their head in the game and to never quit, even when you feel like you may not make it. It's just push-push-push! Other Ravens will keep encouraging you, so don't give up."

Airman Perry added the training not only prepared the students to detect, deter and counter threats, but gave them the confidence to do so. "You must be prepared in all aspects to find out about yourself," he said.

"Be ready to expand your comfort zone willingly or the instructors will do it for you," Airman Perry said.

Since 1997, the Raven course has taught more than 1,700 Ravens and each one has learned that mind over matter is one of their best weapons, Sergeant Thompson said. Many also refer back to their training as life changing.

"The training gave us the right skills to accomplish the mission we have set before us," said Master at Arms Seaman Kyle Reed, Naval Air Station North Island, San Diego, Calif. "The training is some of the best I have ever received."



RAVEN TRAINING COMBATIVES

'It's chess, not checkers'

By Staff Sgt. Nathan G. Bevier
U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center
Public Affairs

"Space is opportunity. It's chess, not checkers," said Tech. Sgt. Rudolph Stuart while instructing students in ground-fighting skills, or combatives, on Feb. 16.

Sergeant Stuart, combatives instructor with the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center's 421st Combat Training Squadron here, uses those words to tell his students in the Air Force Phoenix Raven Training Course to be ready when an aggressor leaves an opening for a possible take-down. "It's looking for an open space, and then determining the right move to establish a 'checkmate,' like in chess," he said.

Phoenix Raven is an intensive 18-day, 12-hours-a-day program. The course's combatives training regimen takes up a large portion of that training because it ties into everything they learn, Sergeant Stuart said. It's designed to teach Raven teams how to use an acceptable level of force to ensure the security of aircraft, personnel and cargo at austere airfields throughout the world.

"We all hope that we don't have to harm another person in our day-to-day lives," Sergeant

Stuart said. "But if the time or situation arises when we have to, a Raven and his team are well trained and willing to do whatever it takes to defend themselves, their crew or the mission."

All Phoenix Raven students train in a ground fighting-program that includes combatives from the Army and Air Force-designated hand-to-hand combat techniques to include pressure point compliance techniques, Sergeant Stuart said. The purpose of the program is to provide modern, realistic defensive tactics to develop the fighting spirit required to "close the gap" and end a fight quickly.

"After combatives training, I expect every student to have the ability to close the distance with the enemy when the moment calls for it, and dominate an altercation," Sergeant Stuart said. "If for whatever reason they can't dominate, they need to put themselves in a position where their other Raven partner can assist and both are afforded -- what we call in the Raven world as well as the Air Force -- a successful mission. It's the ability to go home to their families at the end of the day."

Senior Airman William Carson, a security forces journeyman from the 818th Contingency Response Group at McGuire Air Force Base, N.J., praised the training he received.

"It shows what you will do when you become overwhelmed with an individual," Airman Carson said. "It is by far the best training experience I have ever been a part of. Now, I have the tools to complete the full mission."

Sergeant Stuart said Ravens can be in "extremely threatening situations." These are situations that could even result in death.

"Being able to compose themselves and take control of the situation with less than lethal force when the moment calls for it is good for the Raven, their family and the Air Force mission," Sergeant Stuart said. "Equally important is being able to recognize a deadly situation and react."

Another Raven student, from the 374th Security Forces Squadron at Yokota Air Force Base, Japan, said the mental and physical aspects of the combatives training instilled lessons he'd never forget.

"The combatives exercises pushed my threshold both mentally and physically and showed I can keep going," Airman 1st Class Ashton Cummings said. "Combatives training shows your true character and willingness to never give up."

Besides active duty Air Force security forces, the Phoenix Raven course trains sister service security personnel such as Navy Sailors and Army Soldiers. It also trains students from the Guard and Reserve of all services.

"The hand-to-hand combatives shows a person can fight and handle it," said Master at Arms 2nd Class Jose Guzman from Naval Air Station North Island, San Diego. "The academic and physical training is intense."

If they pass the combatives training and evaluations, the students eventually become elite Ravens and earn their own number for life. Since 1997, more than 1,700 Ravens have graduated and earned this title.

"To be a successful Raven, you must believe in the team concept, or family concept," Sergeant Stuart said. "Everyone with a number is your brother or sister and shares something the rest of the career field or the Air Force doesn't."

"Yet just like in a family you have cousins, uncles and nephews, and you all still have the same title -- family," Sergeant Stuart said. "A good Raven believes that about everyone he or she encounters, not only in the Air Force, but on every mission they will fly on. Everyone on the mission is family and no one messes with family."

And thanks to combatives training, the Raven "family" will win their game of chess.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

Tech. Sgt. Rudolph Stuart, instructor in the Air Force Phoenix Raven Training Course, talks to students on Feb. 19 during a training session in the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center on Fort Dix, N.J. The Raven course, taught by the USAF EC's 421st Combat Training Squadron, teaches security forces Airmen specialized training in aircraft security, combatives and verbal judo to name a few.

SNOW WON'T SLOW TRAINING



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

Despite a recent heavy snowfall, students in the Advanced Contingency Skills Training, or ACST, Course practice dismounted patrol tactics in a scenario on a Fort Dix, N.J., range on Feb. 4. ACST is taught by the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center's 421st Combat Training Squadron.



An ACST student takes aim during a scenario in a tactics class.



Another ACST student responds to "enemy fire" during a tactics training scenario.

COMBAT FIRST AID



Photos by Staff Sgt. Nathan G. Bevier



(Above) Students in the Advanced Contingency Skills Training, or ACST, Course move a simulated victim during course training in combat first aid March 27. The class was one of numerous efforts teaching Airmen live-saving and survival skills for a deployed environment.

(Left) Tech. Sgt. Matthew Thompson, 421st Combat Training Squadron medical instructor, oversees ACST students going through a training scenario for combat first aid.

Some good advice from a senior enlisted leader

By Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center
Public Affairs

My wife Bobbi and I approached his table slowly. It's rare to meet someone of this magnitude in an Air Force career, much less for an extended sit-down talk.

We were at a dinner social on McGuire Air Force Base, N.J. In total, there were probably 30 to 40 people at this gathering. We all had different reasons why we were there, but mostly it was to meet and greet one of the Air Force's top leaders.

After formal exchanges, we sat down to talk. At first, I didn't know what to ask of this leader.

So I started talking about things from his biography. He may have thought of me as silly, my wife included, but my nerves were getting the best of me, so I went with instinct.

We discussed career and family. I found out he's a grandparent like me and has a great love

for his family, both personal and professional, just as I do. I also learned more about his view on the Air Force he sees in the future, and how proud he is of "our Air Force."

Toward the end of the conversation, I asked him, "What is your definition of success?" To my surprise, his answer was very simple, yet broken into different areas.

First, he said, "Be the best at your job that you possibly can be."

I understood that statement as, in terms of being successful, you should work hard and do the best you possibly can, no matter what is thrown your way at work or in life. To me, this embodied our Air Force core value of excellence in all we do.

Then he added, "Take care of your family and those closest to you. They are the ones who will be there with you long after the military."

I agree. I've always believed that we should never forget our wingmen at home. I've learned that after 17 years in the Air Force, the one

consistent thing for me is my family. They've always been there when I needed them. I also know they will be there long after I retire.

Finally, this senior leader offered the best advice. He said, "Be true to yourself, your family and your fellow Airmen. Be proud of who you are and remember our core values."

"Integrity first, service before self and excellence in all we do" are our core values, and I know by using them you can be true to yourself, your family and your fellow Airmen.

Hearing this advice was like hearing from the wise man on the mountain top. The words reflected how I feel in many ways and made me proud to be an Airman.

So who was this wise senior leader? It was Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley.

I may have been one of the last Airmen to ask this 30-year Air Force hero to share good career advice before he retires. I hope he knows, I'll look at them as words to live by.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Nathan G. Bevier

AETC's General Lorenz meets Air Advisor students

Gen. Stephen Lorenz, commander of Air Education and Training Command, talks with students in the Air Advisor Course on April 2 in the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center on Fort Dix, N.J. The Air Advisor Course is owned by AETC and it trains Airmen to go to places such as Iraq and Afghanistan to assist host nation air forces in elevating their abilities and skills. The course runs approximately three weeks. General Lorenz came to review the course and learn about its curriculum.

Brothers in basketball

Sons of Expeditionary Center senior NCO help McGuire team to state championship

By Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center
Public Affairs

For Master Sgt. Marcus G. Hughes III, the thrill of victory is certainly better than the agony of “not enough playing time.”

The father of two starting players, Marcell and Marcus E. Hughes, said he watched in jubilation as his sons played basketball on March 7 at St. Leo the Great High School in Lincroft, N.J. He watched as they helped lead the McGuire Air Force Base “Falcons,” to a 54-52 victory over St. Mary’s of the Lakes of Medford in the 2009 New Jersey Catholic Youth Organization High School Basketball Championship. He said he was pleased to see his sons, who played sparingly on a local junior varsity league a year ago, have an opportunity to shine as starters for the McGuire team.

“It’s hard to put into words how I felt that day, but immediately after they won the game, I couldn’t stop smiling and thanking God for their victory,” said Sergeant Hughes, who is the chief of training for the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center’s 421st Combat Training Squadron on Fort Dix, N.J. “It’s one thing to have personal success, but when you’re able to see your children have success, it’s an indescribable feeling.”

Championship teammates

Marcus, 19, and Marcell, 17, are both guards on the McGuire team. They said playing in the championship was tough; however, it was an overall team effort to win the title.

“I approached it like it was a regular season game,” Marcus said. “The toughest part was fouling out of the game in the fourth quarter. I played good defense, used all my fouls, and left my effort on the floor. The turning point was when we started to press and pressure our opponent in the fourth quarter. This caused a lot of turnovers and scoring opportunities for us.”

Marcell said he and his team never gave up -- they believed that “it ain’t over ‘til it’s over.”

“The game was mentally and physically tough,” Marcell said. “Being down by 11 points at halftime and having the patience to come back made it tougher. As a team playing our defense, we were able to cause those multiple turnovers in the fourth quarter and create that turning point in the game.”

In the game, Marcell had 10 assists, two points, and two steals. Marcus added 15 re-



Courtesy photo

Marcell and Marcus E. Hughes, sons of Master Sgt. Marcus G. Hughes III of the Expeditionary Center’s 421st Combat Training Squadron, show off the 2009 New Jersey Catholic Youth Organization State High School Basketball Championship trophy on March 7 at St. Leo the Great High School in Lincroft, N.J. Both Marcell and Marcus were starters for the McGuire Air Force Base (N.J.) Falcons as they beat St. Mary’s of the Lakes of Medford, N.J., 54-52 for the championship. In the game, Marcell had 10 assists, two points, and two steals. Marcus added 15 rebounds, five points and two steals.

bounds, five points and two steals. Neither earned most valuable player -- that honor went to senior guard Donnie Redding who scored 24 points.

In winning the game though, Falcons coach Kevin Hansen said in a post game article that Marcell’s assists and steals, Marcus’ rebounds and points, and the defensive cohesion of the entire team all came together at the right time. “The tenacious man-to-man defense by Cajiid

Ceruit and Marcell, Marcus and Donnie were the keys to the victory over Medford,” Mr. Hansen said.

Family connections

A love fore basketball has bounced around the Hughes family tree for years and the branches include some successful relatives.

“They have an uncle who played in the National Basketball Association,” Sergeant

See **Basketball**, Page 28

Basketball, from Page 27

Hughes said. "His name is Bo Kimble. He was a star in the Philadelphia public school leagues and made a name for himself with another notable player named Hank Gathers."

Sergeant Hughes said "Uncle Bo" played for Dobbins Tech High School and won the Philadelphia City Title in 1985. "Bo and Hank were recruited by the University of Southern California, but after the coaches were fired, they transferred to Loyola Marymount (University, Calif.) where the team broke records for high scores that still stand today," he said.

In 1990, Hank Gathers collapsed from a heart attack while playing basketball.

"Bo is most known for shooting a foul shot with his left hand (like Gathers) as a tribute to the loss of his best friend," Sergeant Hughes said. "Bo was drafted by the Los Angeles Clippers and also played for the New York Knicks."

Uncle Kimble is a family connection, but both Marcus and Marcell say they play basketball because they enjoy the game tremendously -- not to impress anyone.

"It's my favorite sport," Marcus said. "I like the fast pace of running the floor and the play-by-play excitement of the game."

Marcell said basketball is about practice and denying your opponent the chance to score.

"I try to play every day," Marcell said. "My favorite part of the game is playing defense because it gets everyone excited when you steal the ball and score."

Walking through the 'open' door

For Marcus and Marcell to be a part of the championship team was "a lesson in redemption and dedication to a cause," Sergeant Hughes said. The McGuire team comprised both military family members and local athletes -- all getting a "second chance" as starters.

"Some of the players were cut by their local high school basketball teams," Sergeant Hughes said. "In Marcus' and Marcell's case, they both played junior varsity in the 2007-08 season and



Courtesy photo

McGuire Falcons senior point guard and team captain Marcell Hughes (center with ball) secures a rebound during play in a state semi-final game. Marcell is the son of Master Sgt. Marcus and Pamela Hughes of the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center's 421st Combat Training Squadron.

had limited playing time. So this year, they decided to take the show somewhere else."

Sergeant Hughes said the true challenge for a military family member entering a new school system and sports is overcoming new coaches and sports programs.

"The average civilian student who stays in the same school system will most likely benefit from years of experience and continuity with coaches in their communities," he said. "So for a military child who moves to different bases with their parents, unless you make an immediate mark for yourself, it's easy to be overlooked. The whole McGuire team, this championship team, learned that when one door closes, another one opens somewhere else and all you have to do is walk through it."

More roads, more basketball

With both Marcus and Marcell being high school seniors and graduating this year, their next step is the college game. Marcell is being recruited by Wesley College, Del., for football while Marcus will attend junior college and continue to play basketball.

Meanwhile, at home, Sergeant Hughes said his two younger children -- son Malique and daughter Makayla -- will keep him and Pamela busy on the local sports scene.

"Malique plays basketball and baseball, while Makayla is a cheerleader and soccer player," Sergeant Hughes said.

"That's the life of a sports parent -- you just keep on going."

Marcus and Marcell said they'll savor their team's historic run and the success they had becoming a 21-5 team.

"We all played hard and it feels good to know that it really does pay off," Marcus said. "It feels good being known as No. 1 in your league, but even better that we all did it together."

"Being our senior year in high school, it was a good feeling to claim a state title before we graduate," Marcell said. "This is something I will remember for the rest of my life."

Sergeant Hughes said in addition to his sons, the entire McGuire team should be proud of what they accomplished.

"This entire Falcons team dedicated themselves to one goal and that was winning this title," Sergeant Hughes said.

"I'm so happy they can feel the joy of success through hard work and sacrifice," Sergeant Hughes added. "It's a lesson they will take with them for life."



McGuire's state championship team.

U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center Phoenix Spouse



Mrs. Sarah Krzysik

Contact information
E-mail: sskrzysik@hotmail.com

About the Phoenix Spouse program

The program provides military families with someone who can assist them in channeling information for events and opportunities directly from the commander to the family member.

Quarterly Award winners

Congratulations to the following U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center quarterly award winners:

January to March 2009

NCO: Staff Sgt. James Chubb

Senior NCO: Master Sgt. Jeff Norway

Company grade officer: Capt. Natalie Paull

Civilian, Category II: Mr. Richard Geraci



Anniversary Events

Speakers Series (Webcasted to 15 locations)

June 18 — Retired Lt. Gen. Christopher Kelly, Former Expeditionary Center Commander

Oct. 17 — Mr. Dan Clark, Former Air Force Thunderbird pilot, motivational speaker

Upcoming Expeditionary Center Family Events

July 10 — Expeditionary Center Annual Picnic

Oct. 17 — Expeditionary Center 15th Anniversary Gala in Atlantic City, N.J.

Morale, welfare and recreation

To find out more about what events and opportunities are taking place on McGuire Air Force Base, N.J., visit the 87th Force Support Squadron Web site at: www.gomdl.com.

For events and opportunities on Fort Dix, visit its Web site at: www.dixmwr.com.

U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center First Sergeant



Master Sgt. Timothy Wasut

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About the first sergeant

The first sergeant is your connection for help and support throughout the Expeditionary Center.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

Bite work

Col. Darryl Stankevitz, Mobility Operations School deputy director, presents a bite sleeve to a military working dog during a demonstration April 23 as part of "Bring Your Child to Work Day" at the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center on Fort Dix, N.J. For the children attending, the day included physical training, vehicle static displays, this military working dog demo and an explosive ordnance disposal demo.

U.S. AIR FORCE EXPEDITIONARY CENTER



PUTTING THE
'EXPEDITIONARY' ...
IN EXPEDITIONARY AIRMAN

Photo by Staff Sgt. Nathan G. Bevier