


102nd INTELLIGENCE WING

Seagull



www.102iw.ang.af.mil

MARCH 2009

VOLUME 24 NO. 3



Air Operations Group stands up

| pgs 6-7

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SEAGULL IDEAS?

Do you have an idea for a Seagull article? Would you like to be the subject of a story? Births, marriages, sympathy notices and other information are always welcome. Let us know what is going on in your section. 500 word maximum.

The next Seagull deadline is 2 p.m. Sunday, March 8, 2009.

DINING HALL MENU

Hours: 10:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 6

SPINACH RAVIOLI WITH SAUCE
ROAST PORK

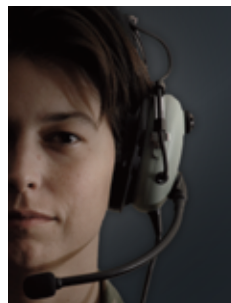
SATURDAY, MARCH 7

NEW ENGLAND BOILED DINNER
CHICKEN A LA KING

SUNDAY, MARCH 8

REUBEN SANDWICHES
PULLED PORK SANDWICHES

ON THE COVER >>



Senior Airman Alexis Colonna, 102nd Air Operations Group intel analyst. The 102nd AOG began conducting unsupported missions at Otis in early February to augment the 608th AOC at Barksdale AFB, La.

U.S. Air Force Photo/Tech Sgt. Aaron Smith

UPCOMING UTAs >>

UTA duty hours are 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

MARCH 2009						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
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APRIL 2009						
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MAY 2009						
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FROM THE DESK OF THE 102 IG COMMANDER

By Col. James LeFavor

How I learned to stop worrying & love the Defense Travel System

I suppose we had just better get used to it – it is becoming a “do-it-yourself” Air Force. Everything from travel, to orders, to pay, to personnel records, to awards and decorations...it is all “DIY” in the cyber realm.

One of the biggest changes is the Defense Travel System (DTS). This DIY system can be very frustrating for a few reasons.

First, the program was thrust upon many of us with little to no training. Eventually conquered via the trial and error method, this was for me at least, a slow and inefficient process. Once, I was at the airline counter with what appeared to be a valid e-ticket itinerary in hand (with my credit card number), only to find out that DTS had not, in fact, confirmed the reservation. I had no ticket, and my flight was in one hour! Luckily they weren't full.

Second, being a cyber program, it is susceptible to all the vulnerabilities of a Web-based system. It does not respond well to last minute travel plan changes, nor have a back-up capability when the network or Web site is down. Luckily, those scenarios never happen to us.

Third, the lack of personal regulatory knowledge can be dangerous, especially when it comes to travel and PCS rules. Although very clever, your average, say, 1N1 (Imagery Analyst) is not an expert on Joint Travel Regulations (nor should they be). Therefore, when creating travel orders, airline tickets, ground transportation, and lodging, etc., the risk of violating a regulation is increased. This is really no surprise. What used to be handled by dedicated travel experts is now largely in the hands of the individual traveler.

The danger that everyone needs to be very attune to is that errors with travel vouchers can have very severe consequences. Leavenworth has Airmen who, intentionally or not, were convicted of fraud while filing a travel voucher.

So I have compiled a few rules of thumb (ROT) that I have learned and will pass on:

ROT #1: Don't guess, ask. Because of the aforementioned danger, my first bit of advice is that if you are in doubt, ask your orderly room DTS Resource Advisor (RA) first, or the DTS expert in finance.

ROT #2: The best ROT is to be a good steward of the taxpayer's money. Even though in DTS you have the ability to pick the flight of your choice, you must be able to justify your choice when confronted. In the old days, you had no choice in flights...automatically given the lowest fare seat regardless of inconvenience. Thankfully, gone are the days of having to travel

to Knoxville via Seattle. However, the responsibility for proper cost analysis also rests with the traveler. Members should always start with the cheapest fare available and then strike a balance with the routing and efficiency. Be aware that there are three levels of oversight that approve your travel orders once you hit “submit.” Any one of them may challenge your choices. The ROT that has worked well for me is to treat the travel as if you were using your own money.

ROT #3: Explain yourself in the comments section. If your travel itinerary is unusual, or major changes occurred, then always put your alibis in the available comment section of the voucher process. Our RA's will thank you for a clear explanation. Please leave the wisecracks out.

ROT #4: Complete the travel voucher ASAP. Your first order of business once back at Otis is to complete your travel voucher. If you delay, the chance of having a 30-day (or worse) overdue claim from Citibank increases. Overdue Citibank accounts get some of the highest negative attention on this base. Just make it a routine to file your travel voucher immediately upon your return.

ROT #5: Keep all your receipts. You must still scan them into DTS (if over \$75).

DTS does have some advantages with individual customization of travel plans. Please keep in mind that our RA's are now quite experienced with what people have tried to submit through the system. Anything questionable will be analyzed. Be forthright, thrifty, and mission oriented, and your choices will be fine.

Finally, I will leave you with one piece of advice that I give to anyone who will listen. The Government Travel Card (GTC) system has high visibility throughout the Air National Guard and Air Force. Every month each unit must report on delinquencies of payment. These reports can be a major “black eye” for the wing. The major causes of delinquencies are timeliness of filing vouchers, improper digital signatures, and missing a small amount during split disbursement. So, follow ROT #4, and remember the following technique: only use your GTC where mandatory. There are three mandatory GTC purchases: major transportation (Air, Rail, and Bus), lodging, and rental cars (repeat this out loud to yourself). That's it. Keep it simple. Your Citibank expenses will be so much easier to track and pay.

While I am not yet convinced DTS is the travel panacea (try doing group travel!), it is starting to grow on me. Let's try and adapt to the change smartly. We're used to it.



Pictured from left to right: Master Sgt. Chris Reed, Senior Master Sgt. Dave Jones, Airman 1st Class Brittney Weeman, Capt. Stephen Dillon and Tech. Sgt. Tony Fantasia
U.S. Air Force Photo/ Staff Sgt. Mike Forte

Inaugural support

By Tech. Sgt. Andrew Reitano

Two units of the 267th Combat Communications Squadron were deployed to the Washington, D.C., area for six days during the presidential inauguration in January to provide communications support in the event of an emergency.

The Joint Incident Site Communications Capability (JISCC) was stationed at Andrews AFB, Md., and was assigned to Joint Task Force-Washington, D.C. The unit was on stand-by in the event additional resources were needed. There were several other operational JISCCs providing

primary communications support.

The JISCC is a dedicated communications system that connects military and civilian agencies, allowing them to work together more effectively. According to Capt. Stephen Dillon, 267th CBCS, seven Airmen were tasked to man the JISCC. "I'm proud of each and every one of the Airmen for volunteering to be a part of an historic moment and be ready, if called upon, to execute their duties flawlessly," said Dillon. "This mission was a continuation of the important role the 267th CBCS plays in supporting homeland defense and security."

The Interoperable Communications Extension System (ICE-S) unit was stationed at Fort A.P. Hill, Va., and was assigned to Joint Task Force-29. The unit was teamed up with the North Carolina Guard JISCC team that was supporting the Army's 134th Armored Unit from Minnesota. Their mission was to provide communications support for the 134th

Armored Unit if it was to go into action. Members of the 134th were on hand for crowd control.

The ICE-S is a cellular system on wheels that first responders can set up in an affected area re-establishing cell phone connectivity on a prioritized basis during emergencies. Four members of the 267th CBCS accompanied the ICE-S for the assignment. "We were happy to provide this capability in the event it was needed, which thankfully it was not," said Master Sgt. Mike Ulich, 267th CBCS.

Both the JISCC and ICE-S were designed and implemented after Hurricane Katrina identified problems with the communications setup between civilian and military agencies.





Hail to the Chief

By Evan Lagasse & Tech. Sgt. Andrew Reitano

After 39 years of distinguished military service, Chief Master Sgt. John Silva is hanging up his uniform for the final time.

Chief Silva's military career began in 1970 when he enlisted in the Massachusetts Army National Guard and promptly graduated with honors from both Basic Military Training and Field Artillery School. Joining the 102nd in 1973, Chief Silva enjoyed many successes over the next 36 years, not least of which was serving as the 102nd Fighter Wing's command chief master sergeant in the late 1990's.

Before departing Otis for the final time as a uniformed member of the 102nd Intelligence Wing, Chief Silva graciously reflected on the past four decades and shared some tips for a successful military career with the *Seagull*.

Q: Reflecting on your career, is there anything you would change or do differently?

A: Looking back on my almost 39 years of military service, I can't think of anything I would have done differently. I owe some of this to commanders and supervisors that saw potential in me and assigned me where they thought I was needed. My career was never boring.



Q: What would you say to a lower ranking Airman whose goal is to become a chief master sergeant?

A: Always do your job to the best of your ability. This, coupled with completing all levels of Professional Military Education (PME) and all facets of training, will help pave the way to becoming a chief master sergeant. Remember; never have a promotion wait for you.

Q: You were significantly involved with several professional military education venues. Why the focus on this aspect of the Air Force?

A: After attending the NCO Academy in 1984, I realized how important Professional Military Education was, not only to an individual but to the mission. This was the driving force that got me involved in the satellite programs for the NCO Preparatory Course, Airman Leadership School and the NCO Academy. In-residence PME is a "re-bluing" process that everyone should have to go through. This process can not be accomplished in a career development course.

Q: What's the biggest difference you see between the Air Guard in 1973 and now?

A: I would have to sum this up by saying mission changes, and improved educational benefits.

Q: What's the secret to a long, successful military career such as yours?

A: It is not a secret but a career path that starts when an individual is a "slick sleeve." Hard work, determination, and teamwork are the key. Strive to be the "best of the best."

An official retirement ceremony honoring Chief Silva's devoted service to the United States and the commonwealth of Massachusetts is scheduled for March 7 at 2 p.m. in the 253rd Combat Communications Group headquarters facility.

Time line

1970: Begins his military career by joining the Army National Guard. Graduates with honors from both Basic Military Training and Field Artillery School.

1973: Joins the Air National Guard as a member of the 102nd Security Police Flight. Assumes a variety of positions including flight chief and training Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC).

1988: Holds the positions of personnel utilization NCOIC, career enhancement NCOIC, superintendent of base training and superintendent of military personnel with the 102nd Mission Support Squadron (MSS).

1997: Pulls double duty as the command chief master sergeant of the 102nd Fighter Wing and chief of security forces.

2004: Becomes the air operations superintendent for the 102nd Operations Group.

2007: Returns to the MSS as the personnel superintendent. Responsible for the overall management of personnel issues relating to 102nd Airmen.

2009: Retires from military duty after 39 years of service.

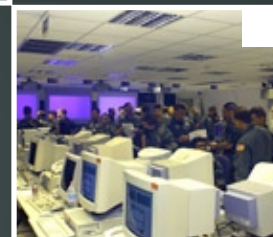
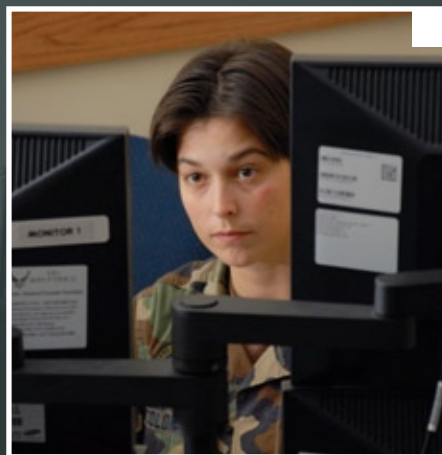
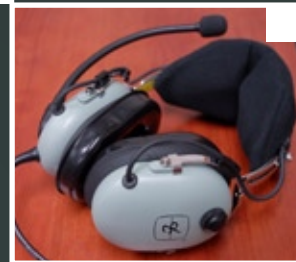


Left: Senior Airman Alexis Colonna, 102nd Air Operations Group intelligence analyst, monitors information feeds at a watch station on Otis Air National Guard Base.

Air Operations Group stands up

Story and photos by
Tech. Sgt. Aaron Smith

As Senior Airman Alexis Colonna, working on the ops floor of the 102nd Air Operations Group (AOG), sits down at a large new desk, she looks toward the four computer monitors in front of her. Two large flat-screen televisions, mounted on the far wall, stream out the latest news and information. She dons the heavy headphones lying on the desk in front of her and a voice from more than 1,000 miles away comes on the line. Airman Colonna listens and watches the monitors as the voice talks her through the most current status updates and briefings. She looks over the information and prepares herself to take over part of the 24/7 battle watch mission from the 608th Air Operations Center (AOC), located at Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana.



(U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Bill Kimble)

Air Operations Centers are not a new concept. AOCs have been around in one form or another since the days of the Army Air Corps and World War II. Early AOCs were often ad hoc centers consisting of nothing more than phones, radios, maps and grease boards where the theater air commander and his team planned and observed the air campaign.

Modern AOCs are state of the art facilities, connected to multiple information sources from news to aircraft and ships to field units and an endless number of other assets. Most individual AOCs are responsible for planning and observing the air campaign for their specific areas of coverage. The 608th is uniquely responsible for the Global Strike Mission. They plan and monitor missions that involve strategic assets that are too important to be released to a specific theater of operations. Part of this commitment involves a 24/7/365 watch mission. On the watch they monitor news and information sources for anything that might effect current operations or plans.

The 102nd AOC's role, as of now, is to augment the Airmen at the 608th AOC and to take up part of the operational workload from them. Traditionally, National Guard units that were assigned this mission would deploy personnel and equipment to the physical location of the AOC and worked with active duty Airmen on site. This is what makes the missions currently happening between Barksdale and Otis unique, the use of distributed operations.

The ability to conduct distributed operations enables units to work as one even though they are miles apart. Airmen can share information and collaborate with each other using electronically linked systems within their respective work centers. Network Operations Centers have worked in this manner for some time to command and control network defense units. These operations have become more and more common as technology has grown and been able to support the transfer of information needed. Now, operators in the Air Operations Center on Otis Air National Guard Base can monitor mission activities as if they were present at the 608th AOC. The two operations centers can distribute the workload seamlessly.

In February, the 102nd AOC officially began supporting the Operational



(U.S. Air Force photo)



Battle Watch, a year and a half ahead of schedule, through the use of distributed operations using Web based command and control tools. "To our knowledge, we are the first AOC in the Air Force to conduct distributed operations with an Air National Guard unit in this manner," said Col. Stephen Luxion, 608th AOC commander.

There have been many challenges and milestones in getting to the point of taking over this standalone mission. Whether it was recruiting new Airmen, training Airmen, or revamping a fighter squadron building to house an AOC, Lt. Col. Richard Sweeten, 102nd AOG commander, attributes the fact that the unit is so far ahead of schedule to its proactive and innovative Airmen. "The speed at which we have adapted to this new mission is a testament to the men and women of the 102nd AOG. Instead of sitting back and waiting for our AOC augmentation role to be defined for us, we defined it ourselves and then worked with the 608th to make it a reality. Our efforts are laying the groundwork for future distributed operations between other AOCs and guard augmentation units." There is hope for future expansion and increased responsibility as the 102nd AOC continues to prove itself. For now though, from a small room on Cape Cod, the voice finishes its briefings and Airman Colonna, along with the 102nd AOC, takes control and steps into an important real world mission.

Above: Senior Airman Alexis Colonna and Staff Sgt. Antonio Santiago monitor information feeds in the watch room of the 102nd Air Operations Center.

“ To our knowledge, we are the first AOC in the Air Force to conduct distributed operations with an Air National Guard unit in this manner. ”

Col. Stephen Luxion, 608th AOC Commander

Otis unit to receive annual Red Cross award



By Evan C. Lagasse

The 267th Combat Communications Squadron is scheduled to receive a 2008 Cape Cod and Islands Red Cross Hero Award in the category of "Military/Community Service" at the 7th Annual Heroes Breakfast, March 6, in Hyannis, Mass.

According to a Red Cross press release dated Jan. 28, a committee of six members of the community evaluated many nominations received from all over Cape Cod and the Islands. Based upon these nominations, they chose Heroes in 20 different categories.

"The 267th CBCS...played an instrumental role supporting the United States Air Force and their Air Expeditionary Force rotations from September 2007 through January 2008. Twenty-five Airmen assigned to the 267th CBCS deployed to Balad and Kirkuk Air Bases, Iraq. They led and augmented teams of deployed combat communicators providing mission critical command and control communications and warfighting support, to not only the Air Force but also the Joint and Coalition Teams determined to win today's fight in the Global War on Terrorism," said Maj. Christopher Willander, 267th Combat Communications Squadron detachment commander.

A few of the 267 CBCS' endeavors included in their official award nomination letter were providing a rapid response capability to the Cape & Islands communities and others with a reliable interoperable communications system to support domestic and homeland security emergencies. In 2008, Airmen of the 267 CBCS deployed personnel in support of the Independence Day celebration in Boston, the Boston Marathon and the Falmouth Road Race. Critical communication capabilities to civil support personnel greatly enhanced public safety through a Joint Incident Site Communications Capability System. The unit's JISCC included Airmen, power generators, portable shelters, heating and air conditioners, portable laptop computers, telephones and Land Mobile Radios which delivered interoperable and seamless communications aiding efforts to various first responders and civil agencies. These communications capabilities allowed first responders and civilian agencies to have instant access to critical information, providing services to include internet, video, teleconference, telephone and portable radio communications.

As 2008 came to a close, the 267 CBCS already had a lengthy list of accomplishments; however, their services were called on once again after a devastating ice storm wreaked havoc on various locations throughout New England, leaving tens of thousands of Massachusetts homes and businesses without power while the winter holidays quickly approached. True to form, the Airmen of the 267 CBCS answered the call, helping to establish a Massachusetts Air National Guard communications command response center to coordinate mutual aid in helping to restore electrical power to more than 60,000 Massachusetts residents. The unit's actions gained nationwide attention in being able to deploy these new communications technologies in support of real time emergency events.

The 7th annual Heroes Breakfast will be held March 6, from 7 to 9 a.m., at the Resort and Conference Center in Hyannis, Mass. Master of Ceremonies at the breakfast will be Peter Meyer, Publisher of the *Cape Cod Times* and awards will be presented by members from the community. Judge Joseph Reardon (ret.) is the Honorary Chair.

For tickets or sponsorships, visit www.capecodandislandsredcross.org, call (508) 775-1540, email heroes@cciredcross.org or write to: American Red Cross, Cape Cod and Islands Chapter, 286 South



Photo by Master Sgt. Sandra Niedzwiecki

Above: Airmen of the 253rd Combat Communications Group and 267th Combat Communications Squadron stand in front of building 330 on Otis Air National Guard Base, Mass.



Right: Lt. Col. Joseph Morrissey, 267th CBCS commander, poses with his family after returning from an overseas deployment.

Photo by Lt. Col. Patrick McNamara



Photo courtesy of Lt. Col. Patrick McNamara

Above: Left to Right - Senior Airman Brittany Weeman, 1st Lt. John Stringfellow, Master Sgt. Joseph Morgado, Master Sgt. Jon Whitcomb, Tech. Sgt. Anthony Fantasia, Staff Sgt. Michael Forte

Right: Staff Sgt. Brian McNally, 267th CBCS, with his family after returning from an overseas deployment.

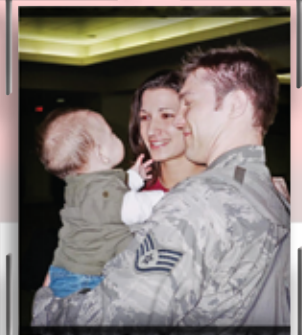


Photo by Lt. Col. Patrick McNamara

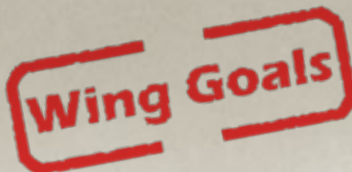
Below: Airmen from the 253rd CBCG & 267th CBCS deploy to Texas in support of Hurricane Ike relief efforts in September 2008.



Photo courtesy of Lt. Col. Patrick McNamara

102nd Intelligence Wing

Layout by: Tech. Sgt. Aaron Smith



MISSION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- ✓ Achieve Initial Operational Capability in the Digital Ground Station with mission ready facilities, people and equipment
- ✓ Lead the Air Operations Group community in demonstrating Distributed Operations
- ✓ Achieve an Excellent or higher rating on all inspections scheduled for Fiscal Year 2009
- ✓ Support 100 percent of tasked Expeditionary Combat Support and State Missions
- ✓ Obtain funding for secure Operations room to support Air Operations Group Joint Worldwide Intelligence Communications System capability
- ✓ Begin construction of Digital Ground Station Phase One facility to support its Full Operational Capability
- ✓ Secure Military Construction funding for the Operations and Training building

PERSONNEL AND AIRMAN DEVELOPMENT

- ✓ Recruiting and Retention - 85 percent to 90 percent strength in new missions and 100 percent in existing missions
 - o 150 accessions for Fiscal Year 2009 - leverage Guard Recruiting Assistance Program with 90 percent enrollment of qualified members
 - o 95 percent retention rate of ETS eligible Airmen
- ✓ Maximize availability of Professional Military Education to all wing members
 - o Continued support for satellite NCO Academy, secure at least five slots for Senior NCO Academy
 - o All new second lieutenants attend Air and Space Basic Course and advocate SOS in residence for all captains
- ✓ Enhance leadership opportunities at all levels for eligible, qualified and interested personnel
 - o Build and support our mentoring and diversity programs as a force multiplier
- ✓ Advocate an aggressive recognition and awards program for superior performance
 - o Commanders set a deliberate path to recognize the top 10 percent of their unit in Fiscal Year 2009
- ✓ Strengthen the wing's physical fitness program through education and facility improvements
 - o Achieve 95 percent pass rate during testing and evaluate the merits of increased frequency
- ✓ Partner with the Massachusetts Army National Guard in the Recruit Sustainment Program for Student Flight members

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

- ✓ Showcase the Wing's mission and people to the diverse community in which we live
 - o Accomplish at least two community outreach events per quarter and two open house events
- ✓ Forge a responsive Family Support Program for our deployed Airmen and their families
 - o Fully establish & advocate participation in our reintegration / Yellow Ribbon programs

DID YOU KNOW?

On Jan. 17, there were Otis Airmen serving as Mission Operation Commanders (MOC) at every Air Force Distributed Ground Station (DGS) site in the continental United States.

- DGS-1: Langley AFB, Va.**
- 2nd Lts. Matthew Ferringer & Sean Andersen
- DGS-2: Beale AFB, Calif.**
- Maj. Robert Kinney
- DGS-Alabama**
- Maj. Michael Raszka
- DGS-Arkansas**
- Capt. Matthew Jackson
- DGS-Kansas**
- Lt. Col. David McNulty
- DGS-Nevada**
- Maj. Robert D'Alto



Master Sgt. Brian Eastman, 102nd Intelligence Wing first sergeant, with his daughter Savannah and son Nicholas.



Photos by/ Erin Creighton

HEROES

At Home



Operation Military Kids, an organization dedicated to recognizing and supporting military children, recently presented Savannah and Nicholas Eastman with "Hero" backpacks filled with supplies. The backpacks were given in recognition of their contribution to the military and their sacrifice while their father, Master Sgt. Brian Eastman, was deployed to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan.

ANNOUNCEMENTS >>

WANT TO QUIT SMOKING?

If you want to quit smoking, please call the Military Tobacco Quit Line: (877) 726-6211 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday. Free to Active Duty, Guard and Reserve Airmen, the telephone quit line provides live smoking cessation intervention, counseling, education, and nicotine replacement therapy for the purpose of quitting smoking.

TRICARE RESERVE SELECT MONTHLY PREMIUM RATES

The Tricare Management Activity announced new monthly rates effective Jan. 1, 2009, decreasing the current amounts for both member and family coverage. The new rates will decrease from \$81 to \$47.51 for member only coverage and from \$253 to \$180.17 for member and family coverage.

2009 GUARD AND RESERVE PERSONNEL FACT SHEETS

The Air Reserve Personnel Center has released the 2009 Guard and Reserve Personnel Fact Sheets. This publication offers valuable information on a variety of subjects including pay charts, promotion and retirement information, entitlement benefits and assignment information. The publication is available online at:

<<http://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-090128-038.pdf>> or via the team Otis Intranet under special interests.

2009 FEDERAL WOMEN'S AWARDS SUBMISSIONS

Nominations for the 2009 Federal Women's Program awards are being accepted until April 1, 2009. The award categories include: Army National Guard Woman of the Year; Air National Guard Woman of the Year; National Guard Civilian Woman of the Year; and National Guard Mentor of the Year. Nomination packets must be submitted through the chain of command to Ms. Tammy Lashley at Tammy.Lashley@us.army.mil. For more information, please contact Lt. Col. Doris Lopilato at (508) 233-6569 or doris.lopilato@us.army.mil.

CIVILIAN EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION ACCESS ON VPC-GR

Updated Civilian Employment Information provides Defense officials visibility of who can be called up for active military duty without jeopardizing the civilian forces responsible for safeguarding our country. Airmen can access the OSD Guard-Reserve Portal to update their CEI when they log into the vPC-GR Dashboard. Beginning 60 days before their birthday, a pop-up reminder will appear when Ready Reserve Airmen log on to the vPC-GR Dashboard. The reminder will appear until the update has been completed or until their birth date. All ANG and Reserve Airmen, with the exception of Active Guard Reserve members and retirees, must complete this annual requirement. A link to the OSD Guard-Reserve Portal <<https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/Guard-ReservePortal>> is also located on the vPC-GR home page to help Airmen update their CEI.

PROMOTIONS >>



Kevin Monahan



Brian McGovern



LaKiesha Mendoza



Erik Jones



Kelsey Ivers

CHAPEL CALL

By Chaplain (Capt.) Mary Scheer
102nd Intelligence Wing Chaplain



I was visiting with an elderly gentleman last week who was struggling with depression. As I listened, he shared how he and his wife of forty-plus years had worked their whole lives building a business that would support their family and hopefully provide an income for their retirement years. With an eye to the future, they lived very carefully, saving

for the years that lay ahead. They had plans and dreams to travel and enjoy their time together. They raised children who had grown into successful adults. They retired their mortgage on their small home and had a close network of friends in the community. When the time to retire finally arrived, they sold their small business for a modest profit and planned their first vacation in as many years as they could remember. But before they could go anywhere, the elderly gentleman suffered a sudden back injury and he had to have surgery. As he was recovering from the back surgery, he had surgery on both wrists for carpal tunnel that had to be repeated twice without success. As I listened, he recounted problem after problem that seemed to spring up out of nowhere, he felt blind sided and now, he was permanently on oxygen for breathing difficulty. The unexpected problems and mounting medical bills had already eaten through their retirement savings and every available cent, making it difficult to pay for even the basics. And just like that it was over. Years of planning and

dreaming, everything they had worked for seemed to evaporate resulting in profound disappointment and depression. At one point, he looked up at me and said, "What am I supposed to do now? I spent my life working with a sense of purpose that kept me moving toward this retirement goal, now what? What is my purpose now?"

His thoughts which frame the question, "How do you find meaning and purpose in difficult times?" are shared by many these days. There are those who have lost so much in the failing economy and those who make it to retirement and instead of enjoying vacations are making trips to the hospital for surgery, chemotherapy or other treatments.

Finding our sense of meaning and purpose begins with self awareness and grows from within, from who we believe ourselves to be. It's born out of passion and expressed in action. But if we wrap our world around one sense of purpose that later becomes threatened, we are left trying to re-imagine ourselves and if that happens during difficult times that can be a huge challenge.

Here are some tips for finding meaning and purpose in difficult times:

Be Flexible. Be willing to try new things. Just as flexibility is the key to airpower, it is also the key to adapting in difficult times.

Be aware. Take time for self discovery. If your dream has taken another direction perhaps there are other unconsidered passions waiting to be discovered and developed.

Be available. Set time aside to volunteer. One of the best ways to take a closer look inside is to give more outside.

Be hopeful. "...walk by faith and not by sight." (2 Cor 5:7 KJV) Don't just consider what you see with your eyes, think about what your faith tells you is possible and look farther than the current circumstances, to other events, people and passions in your life.

Be diverse. Don't put all your eggs in one basket. "Divide your investments among many places, for you do not know what risks might lie ahead." (Ecc 11:2)

Be encouraged. Nurture your spirit and think positive. Focus on the things you believe in and draw your support and strength from your faith. Surround yourself with positive and encouraging people. Read things that build up your faith.

Be inspired. Do some reading. Reading about somebody else's journey can be affirming and inspiring.

Be patient. Remember that life is a journey with many twists and turns and the meaning and purpose you find within may look different at times and that's good.

Be proactive. Don't wait for things to be perfect. "Farmers who wait for perfect weather never plant. If they watch every cloud, they never harvest." (Ecc 11:4 NLT) The path has a way of unfolding after we start down it!

Blood Drive to benefit Children's Hospital Boston

The Otis Chief's Council is sponsoring a blood drive that will be held on base. Keep an eye out for the Children's Hospital Bloodmobile and "give pints for half-pints."

To Make an appointment contact:

Chief Master Sgt. Lucas @ (508) 968-4200

Chief Master Sgt. Groeneveld @ (508) 968-7330

Schedule:

Outside of Building 158

Friday, March 6, 2009

Outside of 253rd Combat Comm.

Sunday, March 8, 2009



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