



EXPEDITIONARY AIRMAN

United States Air Force Expeditionary Center's Official Publication

Air Mobility Warfare Center no more

USAF Expeditionary Center stands up

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

A snare drum roll accented the occasion as the colors of the Air Mobility Warfare Center were rolled up and the new flag holding the name "United States Air Force Expeditionary Center" was unfurled during a re-designation ceremony here March 5.

Gen. Duncan McNabb, Air Mobility Command Commander, presided over the ceremony renaming the former AMWC to the USAF EC. Also attending from his immediate staff were Lt. Gen. Christopher Kelly, Vice Commander and former AMWC Commander, and AMC Command Chief Master Sgt. Joseph Barron.

"If you want to know why you've become the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center, it's because you earned it," General McNabb said to a standing-room-only audience of more than 300 people in the Center's Grace Peterson Hall.

In discussing the need for the name change, General McNabb said it began with the decision to align all warfare centers under one center – the Air Force Warfare Center at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. From there, through further discussion, it was determined the mission of the AMWC was still something the Air Force needed.

"We said what we're doing there is Air Force level (training)," General McNabb said. "A good example of that is Eagle Flag.

"So we said this shouldn't be 'air mobility,' we said this should be the United States Air



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

The new flag to the United States Air Force Expeditionary Center is unfurled during a special ceremony at the Center March 5, 2007, at Fort Dix, N.J. Formerly named the Air Mobility Warfare Center, the center is officially named as the "center of excellence" for Air Force expeditionary training. Observing the flag unfurling are Gen. Duncan McNabb, Air Mobility Command Commander, and Maj. Gen. Scott Gray, U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center Commander. Standing next to the flag is Tech. Sgt. Ryan Holmes and holding the flag is Staff Sgt. Ryan Fisher, both from the USAF Mobility Operations School.

Force Expeditionary Center."

The general went on to note the historical achievements of the Air Mobility Warfare Center and how, as each mission or task was assigned to help the warfighting Airman, the AMWC got the job done and "lives have been saved." He also referenced how former AMC Commander and Air Force Chief of Staff, retired Gen. Ronald R. Fogleman, recently shared with him that standing up the Center was "one of the biggest and best decisions he ever made."

The Center's Commander, Maj. Gen. Scott Gray, said the name change was part of a historic day for the USAF EC, but it also means the work will only get tougher.

"We have demonstrated velocity and precision in the work we've done," General Gray said. "Now, more than ever, we need to demonstrate veracity. We must continue to use lessons learned and apply them to the best training, tac-

BEHIND THE LINES

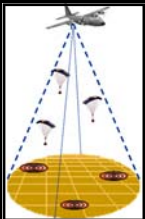


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From the USAF EC Commander ...

By Maj. Gen. Scott Gray
U.S. Air Force Expeditionary
Center Commander



Welcome to the first edition of the United States Air Force Expeditionary Center's newspaper – The Expeditionary Airman.

This newspaper was developed to help tell the story of this organization and help Airmen throughout the Air Force understand the importance of the Center's mission.

Our mission is to serve as the Air Force's premier organization for expeditionary innovation, education, training and exercises.

The Center delivers innovative expeditionary combat support concepts and capabilities for air mobility, Air Force and joint missions. Through education, training and exercises, the Center prepares forces to effectively accomplish combatant commander and USAF missions.

Throughout the pages of this paper you'll find stories that provide

a further in-depth look of some of the great things going on here in that great mission. You'll find items from the Air Mobility Battlelab, the Mobility Operations School and the Expeditionary Operations School.

All you see supports our vision to be the "Expeditionary Center of Excellence." Our organization of nearly 500-strong does an outstanding job preparing forces to perform their mission by providing the benchmark for integrated training and exercises, education and innovation.

As you read about the great AMB initiatives, the MOS' effort to expand the learning environment, or the EOS' great work with Eagle Flag and Advanced Contingency Skills Training, think about the students who pass through the Center's hallowed halls.

What the Center is doing is literally saving lives in the field. That is evidenced in the Joint Precision Airdrop System initiative and through ACST and other courses we teach. In fact, more than 5,000 predeploying Airmen we instruct annually.

The reason we are here is to help Airmen achieve new heights of excellence and preparation for their home station and deployed missions. Our cadre are the best the Air Force has to offer.

Combine everything we do with the great people we have here and you'll see why the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center is making history.

Standards: Can we pick and choose?

By Chief Master Sgt.
Jeffrey Helm
U.S. Air Force
Expeditionary Center
Command Chief
Master Sergeant

The Pareto Principle states, "You will spend 80 percent of your time dealing with 20 percent of your people".

Well, after 24 years in the Air Force I can testify that the above is a true statement.

This article is not directed at the 80 percent of the people

who follow and enforce standards all of the time...it's directed to the 20 percent who like to pick and choose what standards they follow and enforce.

I'm amazed at the number of people who blatantly disregard standards set forth in the Air Force. The worse thing is that most people know they're violating the standards, but they just don't care.

If you want to see what I'm talking about, look around you when you are out eating lunch

or running to the MPF...you'll see violations all around you.

Recently, as I was leaving the dining facility, I encountered a technical sergeant walking and talking on his cell phone. When I approached him to let him know he shouldn't be walking and talking on his phone, he promptly hung up. I asked him if he was aware of the Air Force Instruction that stated not to do that and he said, "Yes."

I then asked him the next logical question, "Why were

you doing it if you knew it was wrong?"

His reply was, "I didn't think it was that big of a deal."

As I continued towards my car I saw two Airmen and two staff sergeants walking towards the dining facility. One of the Airmen was walking with his hands in his pocket.

When I approached the group the Airman pulled his hands out of his pocket before I could say a word. I asked him if he was aware of the AFI that stated not

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THE EXPEDITIONARY AIRMAN

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tics and procedures possible to ensure that what we're teaching is 100 percent correct."

General Gray added that even with the new name, students and commanders will continue to get a great value from their training time here.

"In terms of value, we have to provide the best bang for the buck," General Gray said. "Commanders entrust us with their Airmen and we must always ensure they are getting a better trained and prepared Airman back in the unit."

The Air Mobility Warfare Center was activated here on May 1, 1994. The brainchild of General Fogleman, it served as the command's single focal point for advanced education, training and testing.

Since offering its first course in June 1994, the Center's curriculum catalog has grown to include over 60 in-residence courses and 12 accredited Web-based courses. The number of students completing these programs is approximately 8,700 per year.

On Dec. 1, 2003, the Air Mobility Warfare Center streamlined and reorganized its directorates and schools to meet the mobility challenges of the 21st century.

Created were the USAF Expeditionary Operations School and the USAF Mobility Operations School. The USAF Mobility Weapons School also fell under the AMWC from 2003 to 2006. It was deactivated in 2006 and the three MWS squadrons (C-17, C-130 and KC-135) were realigned under the USAF Warfare Center at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.

Prior to the redesignation, the Center was presented with the Air Force Organizational Excellence Award from General McNabb. General Gray reflected on the award and then highlighted the need to set new benchmarks for excellence.

"What we've done in the past is fabulous and one of the proudest moments of my career was to accept this Air Force award on behalf of the Center," General Gray said. "But that's all history now. We need to go forward and make new history – as the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center."



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

Gen. Duncan McNabb, Commander, Air Mobility Command, and Maj. Gen. Scott Gray, U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center Commander, pass the flag of the USAF EC during a renaming ceremony in Grace Peterson Hall of the USAF EC March. 5. General McNabb was the presiding officer for the event.



Gen. Duncan McNabb, AMC Commander, spoke to a packed Grace Peterson Hall noting the many accomplishments of the Air Mobility Warfare Center and the promising path of the future for the USAF EC.

Maj. Gen. Scott Gray gave the final comments during the resignation ceremony highlighting the need to "make new history" as the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center.



Mobility Operations School earns major award for on-line air transportation career field course

Compiled by U.S. Air Force
Expeditionary Center Public Affairs

An on-line course aimed at training students in the Air Force air transportation career field in aerial port air freight operations earned a Gold Award in the 2006 Brandon Hall Excellence in E-Learning Awards competition in Denver, Colo., in late 2006.

The U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center's Mobility Operations School here designed the winning course, "Air Freight Web-based Training Lesson," and partnered with their on-line contractor, TraCorp Inc., to make it a success overall, said Tech. Sgt. James Carson III, an MOS instructor who assisted in coordinating building of the course.

The competition is put on by Brandon Hall Research – a nationally known research company that provides "independent expert advice in the form of published reports and phone consultations on the tools of e-learning ... and other tools to help organizations develop successful e-learning solutions."

The winning Air Freight course began with an initiative by instructors in the Mobility Operations School's Air Transportation Branch who facilitated a mobile-learning, or M-learning, pilot project that was fielded by Airmen during Air Expeditionary Force deployment cycles 9 and 10 from January to April 2006.

"Air Mobility Command provided full support and funding for use of a personal digital assistant initiative to assist deployed and home station members in the air transportation career field with completion of upgrade training requirements and use as a job enhancement aid," Sergeant Carson said. "The MOS, through its partnership with TraCorp, developed the Air Freight Web-based Training Lesson and transferred four out of six modules of that lesson for use on the PDAs we received. Those lessons were entered into the Brandon Hall awards competition and are what earned the award."

Col. David Lawton, MOS commandant, said the award shows the drive and initiative his school's instructors put in to their work.

"I am proud of the dedication and hard work of everyone in the

MOS who helped make M-Learning a success," Colonel Lawton said. "With the aerial porters of the Air Mobility Warfare Center winning the Brandon Hall award, it demonstrates to all that we are providing cutting edge media education and training to Department of Defense personnel that is second to none."

Tech. Sgt. Dan Spain, air transportation program manager for the MOS, said the competition for the award was similar to a "David vs. Goliath" tale.

"The companies that we beat out in the competition are top notch in the e-learning business," Sergeant Spain said. "This certainly is an achievement for all involved."

Overall the awards competition had 252 entries from 16 countries, according to information on Brandon Hall's Web site, www.brandon-hall.com. Entries are submitted online and are reviewed by four independent, randomly assigned judges. The judges rate the entries on specific criteria and add written comments. All entrants receive the judges' comments as feedback.

Andy Schermuly, chief executive officer of TraCorp, Inc., said TraCorp and AMC are very close to offering deployed troops the opportunity to use innovative mobile PDA delivery strategies to earn college credits with this award-winning course.

"Once the last two modules of the course are formatted and added to the current PDA-based course, it will be possible for an Airman to earn one Community College of the Air Force

credit while flying to a deployment, sitting in an aircraft loader, or even waiting in line at the dining facility," Mr. Schermuly said.

Overall, besides the air freight course, the AMWC offers 10 on-line learning courses covering such topics as air mobility operations, aircrew stage management, Tanker Airlift Control Element fundamentals and air transportation. Of these courses, four courses offer CCAF credits upon completion. These courses can be accessed at <https://amc.csd.disa.mil>.

Maj. Gen. Scott Gray, USAF EC commander, said the Air Freight course and other on-line learning tools the AMWC provides is what the Center is here to do.

"M-Learning is just one example of the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center initiatives out there to generate velocity in training," General Gray said.



JPADS continues ‘revolution in air drop technology’

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

FORT DIX, N.J. – Since October 2005, the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center here has partnered in an effort to revolutionize the way the Air Force does its air-lift air drops in the expeditionary environment and around the globe with the Joint Precision Air Drop System, or JPADS, initiative.

“When it was said to make this concept of JPADS a reality and we became Air Mobility Command’s lead on this project, we started work right away,” said Maj. Gen. Scott Gray, AMWC commander. “General (Duncan) McNabb (AMC Commander), made this a command priority and he definitely made it my number one priority. I’m proud of how far we’ve come and how fast we got there.”

In November 2005, AMC opened a JPADS “Tiger Team” that included representation from dozens of agencies at command headquarters, especially the Combat Operations Division and Plans and Programs, as well as people from the Air Mobility Battlelab and the Air Force Mobility Weapons School. The team was chaired by the USAF EC Vice Commander, Col. Charles Stiles.

Within a short time, the team’s work paid off when the first combat air drop using JPADS took place in the skies over Afghanistan on Aug. 31, 2006.

“That effort put us a day ahead of the goal for combat operability by Sept. 1, 2006,” said Maj. Dan DeVoe, USAF EC project officer for JPADS who deployed to Afghanistan in 2006 as part of the mobile training team establishing system operations in theater.

The system, according to Major DeVoe, is a high-altitude, all-weather capable, Global Positioning System-guided, precision air drop system that provides increased control upon release from the aircraft.

“When you’re able to complete air drops at higher altitudes for example, it keeps the aircraft and aircrews safer and out of range of the enemy,” Major DeVoe said. “Additionally, with the ability to precisely drop bundles to multiple, small drop



Air Force Photo Illustration

In this photo illustration, a Joint Precision Air Drop System-equipped bundle is dropped from an Air Force aircraft. The illustration shows the GPS-guidance system attached to the deployment of steerable and traditional parachutes en route to the bundle landing within feet of a desired location. The JPADS bundles are now being used for combat air drop missions in the Global War on Terrorism.

zones, JPADS brings an entirely new capability to the warfighter while saving lives and resources in the process.”

Traditional air drops by Air Force airlifters, such as the C-130 Hercules and C-17 Globemaster III, are at altitudes of anywhere between 400 and 1,000 feet. With JPADS, those same airlift aircraft have the potential to guide air drop bundles from as high as 25,000 feet.

Components of JPADS include a mission planner used to plan the airdrops and optimal release points using special soft-

ware residing on a laptop computer. The computer is loaded with a high-resolution grid of forecasted winds. The mission planner also receives updated near real-time wind speeds while in the air using hand-launched dropsondes (hand-sized, parachute-equipped wind indicators).

There are also multiple types of JPADS parachute systems that either have one or two types of parachutes – steering and traditional, an airborne guidance unit equipped with a GPS receiver that has

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steering lines attached to the steering parachute, and a GPS retransmit kit mounted inside the bundle to ensure uninterrupted signal reception.

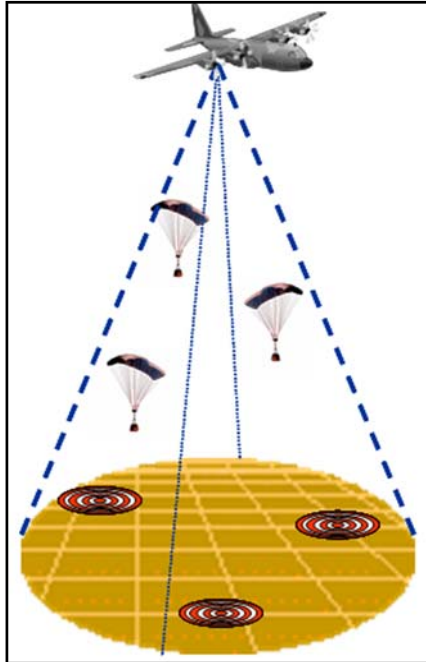
“When dropped, GPS receivers use the steering mechanisms to basically fly the bundles to their predetermined drop zones,” Major DeVoe said. “In combat zones right now, JPADS-equipped bundles are being delivered in the 2,000-pound category carrying everything from ammunition to food for forward troops in remote, hard-to-reach places.”

JPADS mission planners have also found a role in improving traditional airdrops as part of the Improved Container Delivery System, or ICDS.

“Using their JPADS computer equipment, mission planners are now flying along traditional air drop missions providing better aerial release points for those bundles as they are dropped from the plane,” Major DeVoe said. “They’ve been able to increase air drop accuracy and altitude for traditional CDS bundles. It’s getting better every day with this technology.”

As of December 2006, 120 ICDS air drops and 9 JPADS air drops were completed delivering more than 1,000 bundles to troops on the ground.

Major DeVoe said combat operations utilizing JPADS will continue to grow.



*Air Force Graphic Courtesy
USAF EC Multimedia Office*

This graphic illustration shows how an Air Force C-130 can air drop supplies to multiple locations utilizing the Joint Precision Air Drop System, or JPADS. The system uses Global Positioning System-guidance along with steerable parachutes to deliver air drop bundles into multiple landing zones.

“This has been successful in Afghanistan and soon we hope it will be further utilized in the Iraq theater of operations,” Major DeVoe said.

Precision air drops could eventually lessen the amounts of convoys military forces undertake in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the major said.

“Fewer convoys means less exposure to improvised explosive devices and other hazards troops face on the roads,” Major DeVoe said. “That translates to saving lives.” JPADS has been tested and deployed successfully in the 2,000-pound range, Major DeVoe said. However, further testing to air drop bundles eventually weighing up to 60,000 pounds is expected.

“This technology and its applications are only at the beginning,” Major DeVoe said. “The sky is the limit on where this can go for improving operations on the battlefield.”

The overall Department of Defense JPADS initiative is led by the U.S. Army, but is a joint effort involving the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps. The AMWC’s involvement has been a significant part of the Air Force’s comprehensive effort and AMC’s support for the joint development of JPADS will only continue to grow.

“This is a revolution in the way air mobility supports the warfighter,” General Gray said. “We want to save lives and win the war. This will help us get there.”

Air Force research provides seed to high-tech cargo delivery system

By Erin Crawley
Air Force Office of Scientific
Research Public Affairs
(Quantech)

ARLINGTON, Va. — Years of basic research investments by the Air Force Office of Scientific Research here have paid off in a technology transition that supports a high-tech cargo delivery system. The Joint Precision Airdrop System or JPADS was deployed in a combat zone for the first time in August in Afghanistan in support of the warfighter.

JPADS is used to drop cargo bundles from cargo planes with precision accuracy – from high altitudes of 24,000 thousand feet at Mean Sea Level (MSL)

and higher. This cutting edge technology will introduce a new era of reliable and safe means for supplying troops on the ground and conducting humanitarian relief missions more efficiently.

The system uses the same global positioning technology that fighter pilots use to identify targets for smart bombs with amazing accuracy.

In August 2006 the 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron employed JPADS to drop supplies to a U.S. Army unit serving in Afghanistan, marking the first time the system was used in a combat zone by the U.S. Air Force and Army.

Managed by the U.S. Army Natick Soldier Center, the Air

Mobility Command, and many other services and organizations, JPADS is the result of a successful integration of Air Force and Army technology, conceived and supported by basic research funding from AFOSR and the Army.

Steve Walker was the program manager at AFOSR from 1997 to 2001 and oversaw the JPADS basic research investment.

“JPADS was part of a series of special projects that came out of the New World Vista study initiated by Sheila Widnall in 1995 when she was secretary of the Air Force,” Walker said. “Her concept evolved from an Air Force Scientific Advisory Board recom-

mendation to pump up several areas of research and development investment – one of them was precision air delivery.”

“During the time I was involved with the precision drop investment, we [AFOSR] invested in three key areas – winds prediction, guided and controllable air shoot drops, and the computational algorithms and planning software required to tie it all together,” Walker said.

In 1998, during U.S. humanitarian missions in Bosnia, Air Force pilots faced a significant challenge of dropping cargo loads within 150 meters of the intended target while flying 130-plus knots indicated air

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speed (KIAS) at 15,000 to 25,000 feet MSL. As a result, AFOSR decided to fund the U.S. Army Research Development and Engineering Command at the Natick Soldier Center, Natick, Mass., to examine revolutionary ways to improve high altitude air drops with great accuracy.

“This was an unusual program for AFOSR, since it was really between basic research and development work with universities, companies and government lab working together to make it happen. It was referred to as 6.1.5 research, so it was somewhere between basic research and development,” Walker said.

By 2001 the JPADS project was ready for a live rollout at the 2001 Precision Airdrop Technology Conference and Demonstration (PATCAD-2001) in Yuma, Ariz., where the research and development team successfully demonstrated the global positioning system (GPS) guided parachute (known as the Affordable Guided Airdrop System (AGAS)), improved winds prediction technology, and the laptop based planner.

In 2002 AFOSR’s investment of approximately \$1.5 million started to pay off. At this stage of development, the research team successfully demonstrated the system

as an affordable and reliable means to increase accuracy of high altitude airdrops. The development and testing phase improved the system’s design by further enhancing guidance, navigation, and control algorithms. At that time the system was known as one decelerator candidate within the Joint Precision Aerial Delivery System (JPADS) program.

In the following years, the Army focused on developing the physical hardware and mechanisms that steer the parachute to a pre-programmed GPS location after the cargo is released from the plane. Meanwhile the Air Force and the Army developed and fine tuned JPADS-Mission Planner (JPADS-MP), which is a laptop that allows aircrews to release their payload at a precise location accounting for aircraft’s position, course, and airspeed, as well as a whole host of other environmental variables that influence the airdrop’s accuracy.

JPADS-MP allows aircrews to perform



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
OVER AFGHANISTAN: Humanitarian supplies airdropped from the back of a C-130 Hercules.

airdrops out of harm’s way at higher altitudes with greater accuracy.

The JPADS-Mission Planner (JPADS-MP) component has also been used by the Special Operations Command for military freefall (MFF) operations, according to Richard Benney, technical manager of the JPADS project at the US Army Natick

Soldier Center.

“The laptop dramatically increases the stand off capability for Special Operation Forces MFF warfighters,” Benney said.

Standoff is the horizontal distance that the system can travel from where the aircraft released the payload to the planned ground impact point.

While many services and organizations lead the JPADS efforts across the Department of Defense, the majority of testing has taken place at the U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground.

To date, the total research development testing and evaluation (RDT&E) investment in the JPADS-MP project is approximately \$35 million.



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Cecilio M. Ricardo Jr.
Air Force News

FIRST JPADS-IMPROVED SYSTEM AIRDROP OVER IRAQ A SUCCESS:
(Left) Six 1,200-pound bundles of water and Meals, Ready to Eat are dropped off a C-130 Hercules to support the Army's 82nd Airborne Division in Iraq Feb. 16. (Right) Capt. Kenny Bierman programs the Joint Precision Airdrop System software on a C-130 Hercules Feb. 16 at Balad, Iraq, in preparation for the first JPADS mission in support of Operation Iraq Freedom. JPADS



is a new airdrop system used by C-130 aircrews to drop cargo at higher altitudes with improved accuracy. Captain Bierman is assigned to the 777th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron.

Air Mobility Battlelab's HASK initiative combines cargo, passenger loaders

Compiled by U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center Public Affairs

With a mission to make loading passengers and cargo easier, the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center's Air Mobility Battlelab came up with an innovative idea using existing technology — the Halverson Air Stairs Kit, or HASK.

The HASK concept is a passenger stairs attachment kit designed to entirely replace the existing walk deck found on the right side of the Halvorsen 25,000-pound capable cargo loader, according to the project manager of the HASK initiative, Master Sgt. Rudy Cartagena of the Air Mobility Battlelab.

"This is done with minimal changes for adaptation, so all functionality of the loader remains," Sergeant Cartagena said. "Height adjustments are controlled and provided by the loader.

In the 'stairs' mode, the steps remain level regardless of height adjustments provided by the loader. In the 'cargo' mode with the stairs stowed, the steps close flat and work as a walk deck. At any time, the stairs can be removed and the original walk deck

can be re-fitted. The HASK was built by FMC Airline Systems, who also builds the Halvorsen."

The idea of dual-use material handling equipment like the HASK originated from former Air

Force Chief of Staff, retired Gen. Ronald R. Fogleman, to address the lack of passenger stairs at forward bases.

"Often times, passenger stairs are not available during the first few weeks after



Air Force Photo

Airmen use the aircraft stairs portion of the Halvorsen Air Stairs Kit-modified cargo loader during a demonstration of the loader at McGuire Air Force Base, N.J., in 2006.

the onset of deployed operations," Sergeant Cartagena said. "Cargo loaders will always be available because they're needed to download aircraft cargo. Modifying a loader with passenger stairs makes both cargo and passenger capabilities

available simultaneously.

The idea with HASK, Sergeant Cartagena said, is to have it deploy with first responders in support of global contingencies, where cargo handling is needed.

"The idea of being able to handle both cargo and passengers with one piece of equipment, while not increas-

ing the footprint, seems like a sure winner," Sergeant Cartagena said. "All branches of the military that travel by air can potentially benefit from this technology. The concept may also provide a

means of deploying personnel anywhere a commercial aircraft can land."

One concern brought forward by members of the Air Force air transportation career field against using a HASK-modified cargo loader is that it would take the loader away from its primary mission of handling cargo.

"However, feedback from the field indicates that when passenger stairs are not available at air travel hubs, the loaders are frequently used to download passengers," Sergeant Cartagena said. "So why not add passenger stairs to the loader to download passengers more safely?"

Sergeant Cartagena said dual-use equipment like the HASK-modified loaders can definitely play a role in military operations of the future with a high potential to improve passenger and cargo handling.

"Even if further field testing finds the HASK loader not to be ready for prime time, all the work and resources were not lost," Sergeant Cartagena said.

"HASK might serve as the ground work for the future cargo and passenger handling concepts. Perhaps future generations of loaders will incorporate a lighter, fully automated version of the HASK concept."



Air Force Photo

An example of the Halvorsen Air Stairs Kit, or HASK, modified cargo loader moves on the flightline at McGuire Air Force Base, N.J., in 2006 during a demonstration of the modified cargo/personnel aircraft loader.

Future of Air Force aircraft ground ops may be easier thanks to Air Mobility Battlelab's wireless intercom initiative

Compiled by U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center Public Affairs

FORT DIX, N.J. – For five days, Air Force aircraft maintainers at Travis Air Force Base, Calif., and Robins Air Force Base, Ga., demonstrated the Telephonics TruLink Wireless System at their respective bases to great success. The system demonstration was conducted as part of an initiative dubbed, “Wireless Intercom for Aircraft Ground Operations,” or WIAGO, by the Air Mobility Warfare Center’s Air Mobility Battlelab here.

The purpose of the WIAGO system is to improve on the current corded aircraft intercom systems by extending them into a wireless system, said Master Sgt. Rudy Cartagena, the battlelab’s project officer on the initiative. The current intercom system for short range communications in and around airlift and tanker aircraft utilizes 50- to 100-foot-long cords that physically connect maintainers and aircrew to the aircraft. These cords, by their very nature, restrict user movement.

“The problem is amplified when cords become tangled with other cords and equipment,” Sergeant Cartagena said. “When maintenance must be conducted beyond the reach of the cords, maintainers are forced to use hand signals which can be misinterpreted.”

The WIAGO system is based on a hand-held radio-size, battery-powered (AA batteries) adapter.

“There are two, almost identical, variations of the adapter, with the only difference being the connectors they use,” Sergeant Cartagena said. “This is because one connects to the aircraft intercom system, called the access point, and the other connects to the user’s headset, called the portable transceiver. WIAGO can operate as a stand-alone system, independent from the aircraft intercom system, or in concert with it, allowing personnel wearing a portable transceiver to communicate with personnel connected to the aircraft intercom system via cords.”

The access point does not require permanent installation and connects to any active aircraft intercom terminal, using an aircraft-specific cable, Sergeant Cartagena said. The portable transceiver clamps on to the uniform and has a banana jack receptacle for use with standard Air Force issue headsets. “WIAGO operates in the 2.4 Gigahertz license free band,” Sergeant Cartagena said. “The adapters have 50 channels and can support 31 users per channel, six in full duplex. Full duplex capability means no ‘push to talk’ is needed – similar to carrying a conversation on a regular phone using a receptionist headset.

“The system has a low probability of intercept due to its short range and use of frequency hopping,” Sergeant Cartagena added. “It also has a very effective noise suppression system; we were extremely impressed.”

During the demonstration of the system, WIAGO adapters were used to transmit and receive during pre-determined scenarios and maintenance tasks to assess adapter’s functionality. C-5 Galaxy and KC-10 Extender aircraft were selected for use in the demonstrating because of the challenge their large size would present to WIAGO



Air Force Photo

U.S. Air Force aircraft maintenance Airmen from the 60th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Travis Air Force Base, Calif., use wireless headsets utilizing the Telephonics TruLink Wireless System as part of a test of wireless communication capabilities for the Air Force maintenance career fields.

wireless system. “The logic going in was if WIAGO works well with these large aircraft, it should also work with smaller ones,” Sergeant Cartagena said. “Using maintenance Airmen at Travis and Robins to demonstrate the system made sense because it provided a larger user sample and enabled equipment assessment in two different maintenance environments – at organizational and depot levels.”

Some of the maintenance tasks performed during the demonstration time period included towing an aircraft, an engine run and a floor board installation at the depot.

During towing, WIAGO enabled cordless, spoken communication between all tow-team members, Sergeant Cartagena said. “Being able to communicate specific instructions directly into one’s ear is a more efficient approach than using hand signals,” he said. “This was also an improvement when connecting the tow truck.”

During the engine run, WIAGO’s noise suppression capability enabled clear spoken communication in a high noise environment of more than 120 decibels.

“This in turn, eliminated time wasted repeating instructions due to background noise,” Sergeant Cartagena said. “The system’s compatibility with the aircraft communication system enabled an Airman in the cockpit to communicate with maintainers on the ground as well as with the air traffic control tower.”

First Lt. Steven LeBlanc, maintenance officer for the 60th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Travis, said the wireless intercom system was well received by the maintainers.

“The Airmen expressed great interest in the system and felt it would really help them in their day-to-day operations,” Lieutenant LeBlanc said. “They appreciated the fact they were able to move in and around the aircraft unrestricted while keeping clear and sustained communication with their teammates.”

Although the WIAGO system did not face every possible maintenance scenario during demonstration period, it faced enough scenarios to confidently arrive at one conclusion — WIAGO will provide maintenance personnel increased mobility, improving efficiency and enhancing communications capabilities during ground operations.

Team effort leads to successful demonstration for Air Mobility Battlelab translator initiative; possible future field implementation

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

FORT DIX, N.J. – In a joint effort between the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center's Air Mobility Battlelab and Expeditionary Operations School, the AMB demonstrated the use of a speech-to-speech translator during Eagle Flag 07-3 in mid February.

The effort now is in the data analysis stage, said Maj. Gary Honsinger, project manager for the Speech-to-Speech Translator Initiative from the AMB.

"The concept of the initiative is to assist forward operating units communicate with host nation personnel -- military and other -- in order to help establish bases and relationships," Major Honsinger said. "The objective of this effort was to demonstrate this emerging technology in a simulated 'real-life' military environment."

The hardware used for the demonstration is a ruggedly packaged notebook computer. The notebook comes with a power pack, speakers, and a microphone.

"The key element of this demonstration, however, is the software, which translates, real-time, spoken English to Arabic and spoken Arabic into English," Major Honsinger said. "It makes communication between people from divergent nations with a clear language barrier possible where, in the past, this was not possible."

The incorporation of the demonstration into an Eagle Flag exercise took some coordination with the Expeditionary Operations School and the 421st Combat Training Squadron.

"Essentially, we brought the Battlelab people into the exercise as role players," said Master Sgt. Mike Yudinsky, Eagle Flag master section superintendent for the 421st CTS. "Our public affairs cadre created an event for them to participate as non-English speaking media with embassy escorts. That event was then placed into the master schedule of events for the exercise. The effort went fairly seamlessly and I believe it was a great effort between our organizations to complete this demonstration."

Major Honsinger added, "Clearly, Eagle

Flag, training for opening an air base, was the perfect military environment for this demonstration."

The demonstration team consisted of two Battlelab supervisors, two contracted Arabic translators, and one observer. The team interviewed approximately 15 Eagle Flag participants whose ranks ranged from airman to lieutenant colonel and nearly everything in between.

Maj. Shayne "Kip" Kiefer, also from the AMB and part of the team who coordinated the demonstration, said they learned that a technology like the translator is a potential invaluable asset to deploying units faced with working with host nation personnel.

"We also learned that the system does have some shortcomings and it took a demonstration like this to expose some these shortcomings to help the system designers to improve their systems," Major Kiefer said. "Ultimately, with some revision to the software, it will certainly be a strong asset. I will not be surprised if many units deploy with a system like this in the near future."

Major Kiefer said that even though the system is still in a development phase and there was some confusion and frustration working with it, the people who were interviewed thought it could be a useful tool for deployed troops.

"They said if the system bugs were



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Lowell Olson, first sergeant from the 60th Civil Engineer Squadron, Travis Air Force Base, Calif., and assigned to the fictional "421st Air Expeditionary Wing," is interviewed by an Arabic speaking translator while Maj. Shayne Kiefer, Air Mobility Battlelab, Fort Dix, N.J., operates a English to Arabic language translator as part of an event for Air Force Exercise Eagle Flag 07-3 Feb. 12, 2007, at Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst, N.J.

cleaned up, this would be an amazing piece of equipment that would clearly help them meet mission objectives," Major Kiefer said.

Major Honsinger said from this point, the AMB is compiling their after action report and will brief the Air Mobility Command vice commander.

"At that point AMC will decide if and how they want to integrate the translator into AMC operations," Major Honsinger said.

Airmen complete first Fly Away Security course

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

FORT DIX, N.J. – Sixty security forces Airmen from across the Air Force prepared for an overseas deployment while attending the Fly Away Security Training or FAST, Course 07-1 January 18. Each student gained new skills in everything from hand-to-hand combat to anti-hijacking training.

The FAST course is the first of its kind taught by the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center's 421st Combat Training Squadron. It provided students with high level training from an established schoolhouse, and met an immediate need for Airmen deploying to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, said Capt. Brent Gallant, flight commander for the 421st CTS operations flight.

"We received a request to fill a need to formally train security forces who are deploying to places like Afghanistan and Iraq who will be performing fly away security for military aircraft going in and out of forward bases," Captain Gallant said. "We worked with U.S. Central Air Forces and Air Mobility Command to fit the training into our schedule and after about three months of coordination and work, we got it done."

All Airmen get combat skills training before they deploy, the captain said, but in the case of fly-away security, some special training needed to be done.

"Fly away security is a little bit different of a mission and there was no formal training program for that," Captain Gal-



Photo by Ken Mann

Staff Sgt. Jason Taylor, an instructor with the 421st Combat Training Squadron, U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center, oversees a student subduing an intruder during anti-hijacking training as part of the Fly Away Security Training Course 07-1 on the McGuire Air Force Base, N.J., flightline Jan. 16. This was the first FAST course taught by the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center to prepare the students prior to their departure for deployment to Iraq.

lant said. "It made sense to get this training off the ground."

During the 10-day course, students received classroom training in areas such as fly away security concept of operations, legal use of force, verbal judo and cross cultural communication. They also learned practical, out of the classroom, training in subjects such as self defense and anti-hijacking training.

"The students were taught, for example, the importance of providing force protection advice to aircraft commanders and how to provide positive entry control to an aircraft," said Tech. Sgt. Daniel Koenigsmann, a 421st CTS instructor for the course. "They also learned about guarding the flight deck and denying access to the flight deck when there are passengers on the plane."

Sergeant Koenigsmann said the course also included a lot of scenario-based training.

"That's where we put the

troops under different situations to show them things that are happening in the deployed theater of operations," Sergeant Koenigsmann said. "We show them things that could happen through the different scenarios and we make sure they know the right level of force to use when responding to certain situations. Several days of the training that we had were scenario-based."

Some of the training done for the FAST course is similar to what the 421st CTS offers in its Air Force Raven Training Program, but it's not the same, said Master Sgt. Mike McHone, course director for the FAST course.

"The FAST course is specific for the combat environment and is not as rigorous as our Raven course," Sergeant McHone said. "Trained Ravens can operate anywhere in the world and they receive more intensive, longer training than the FAST course provides."

Some of the students in the FAST course noted the hand-to-hand, self defense and verbal judo training as some that will help them the most.

"The verbal compliance techniques we learned in verbal judo taught us how to use professionalism while at the same time taking control of a possible situation we could deal with," said Airman 1st Class George McCain, a security forces student in the course from the 72nd Security Force Squadron, Tinker Air Force Base, Okla.

"My favorite learning experience was during the self defense class," said Staff Sgt. Joseph Brown, security forces journeyman from the 100th SFS, RAF Mildenhall, England. "It was more in-depth in defense tactics than any other security forces classes most of us have attended before."

Senior Airman Katherine Bates, a student in the course from the 95th SFS, Travis Air Force Base, Calif., said this kind of training will help the security forces career field overall.

"In security forces, anything can happen," Airman Bates said. "Having this training is a plus knowing I could go away on a fly away mission while I'm deployed."

Added another student, Senior Airman Richard Nieves from the 12th SFS, Randolph Air Force Base Texas, "This course teaches us the new way the Air Force mission is going in the combat environment and provides the tools to not only protect yourself, but also the aircraft and the aircrew."

The next FAST course is slated for the July timeframe and an additional two classes are being planned for fiscal 2008, Sergeant McHone said.

Airmen deployed to Eagle Flag 07-3 built tents in tough conditions

By Tech. Sgt. Ron Rogers,
Air Force News Agency, and
Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol,
U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center
Public Affairs

NAVAL AIR ENGINEERING STATION LAKEHURST, N.J. — Nearly 400 Airmen deployed to support the fictional “421st Air Expeditionary Group” here for Eagle Flag 07-3 Feb. 4-14 simulated a real world war zone and being tested on their ability to conduct airfield operations and build an air base.

Part of that effort is building the “tent city” for all the students to sleep in and work out of during the exercise.

The U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center’s 421st Combat Training Squadron operates the exercise and one of the main training sessions they hold for students at the very start is a four-hour block of training on building the Alaskan tent. It’s the most commonly used style of tent used at Eagle Flag and in deployed locations for the Air Force.

“The four-hour block mostly focuses on the fundamentals of the Alaskan shelter,” said Tech. Sgt. Marcus Hughes, civil engineering structures craftsman for the 421st CTS and training instructor for the course. “In the training we highlight safety points, proper anchoring of the tents for high winds, and all the basics. We teach the students step-by-step and the training includes a practical hands-on block where they actually build a tent.”

Sergeant Hughes noted that the information taught is also found in the Air Force Manual 10-100 — the Airman’s Manual. He said the training has really aided the students in the field.

“For building tents, it’s important all Airmen have that basic knowledge,” Sergeant Hughes said. “We’ve seen the benefits of that effort in the past few exercises.”

For Eagle Flag 07-3,



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

U.S. Air Force Airmen deployed with the fictional “421st Air Expeditionary Group” work on building up their camp amidst falling snow and cold temperatures during operations for Air Force Exercise Eagle Flag 07-3 Feb. 13, 2007, at Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst, N.J. The exercise is operated by the Air Mobility Warfare Center’s 421st Combat Training Squadron from Fort Dix, N.J.

Airmen deployed to the exercise had to endure near below zero temperatures, frozen ground, snow, ice and a host of other extremes. Those extremes in turn made building tents that much more difficult.

“The ground was frozen so we had to use sledgehammers to pound the stakes in,” said Master Sgt. Stephan Hammond, deployed to Eagle Flag from the 60th Civil Engineer Squadron, Travis Air Force Base, Calif. “It was so cold that we had to work for 30 minutes, then rest for 30 minutes. So, because of that, it took longer to get the tents up.”

Normally, it takes about two hours to set up a tent, but the cold temperatures added about an extra hour of set-up time.

Sergeant Hammond said by the time they would be all done there would be more than 100 tents ready to house Airmen.

Tech. Sgt. Christopher Lauderback, 571st Contingency Response Group, Travis AFB, Calif., said having training benefited the effort to build the tents for this exercise.

“In a CRG, we train and prepare

for all climates,” Sergeant Lauderback said. “For this exercise we brought a mechanical hammer with us to help get the stakes in the frozen ground.”

Building a base of operations is undoubtedly one of the toughest jobs during Eagle Flag and is one of the few places where this training and practice affects a lot of Airmen, said Staff Sgt. Dustin Humbert, another 421st CTS civil engineer instructor.

“Eagle Flag offers one of the only places, other than basic training, where Airmen can practice the effort to build Alaskan shelters and other facilities in tough conditions,” Sergeant Humbert said. “Doing the work is tough and tedious, but I believe it’s important to our expeditionary Airmen in today’s Air Force.”

Eagle Flag is the Air Force’s only flag level exercise that tests Airmen in nearly all support career fields on their expeditionary combat support skills, according to the Air Force fact sheet on the exercise.

The training provides a dynamic environment with scenarios tailored to exercise combatant commanders and operations in a deployed environment.

Lessons learned from the deployed environment in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom and other major efforts in the Global War on Terrorism are used in the scenarios for the exercise.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

Airmen deployed with the “421st Air Expeditionary Group” build an Alaskan tent during operations for Air Force Exercise Eagle Flag 07-3 Feb. 11, 2007, at Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst, N.J.

Eagle Flag 07-3



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
Airman 1st Class Daniel Fuentez, security forces journeyman from the 572nd Global Mobility Readiness Squadron, Travis Air Force Base, Calif., watches over a checkpoint with an M-60 machine gun during operations for Air Force Exercise Eagle Flag 07-3 Feb. 10.



First Lt. Lindsay Hahn, public affairs officer from Travis Air Force Base, Calif., talks with "host nation" reporters, played by Tech. Sgt. Ron Rogers, Air Force News Agency, Texas, and Master Sgt. Melissa Phillips, Dover Air Force Base, Del., during a scenario for Air Force Exercise Eagle Flag 07-3 Feb. 10, 2007.



A U.S. Air Force Airman adjusts an antenna in a camp area at Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst, N.J., during operations for Air Force Exercise Eagle Flag 07-3 Feb. 10.



U.S. Air Force Airmen deployed with the "421st Air Expeditionary Group" spread out concertina wire during operations for Air Force Exercise Eagle Flag 07-3 Feb. 11 at Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst, N.J.



U.S. Air Force Airmen deployed with the "421st Air Expeditionary Group" gather for a formation at sunset during operations for Air Force Exercise Eagle Flag 07-3 Feb. 11.

Eagle Flag role players: Airmen helping Airmen

By Master Sgt. Melissa Phillips
436th Airlift Wing Public Affairs
Dover Air Force Base, Del.

NAVAL AIR ENGINEERING STATION LAKEHURST, N.J. — In a matter of minutes, one master sergeant here became a “chief” during a briefing for Exercise Eagle Flag 07-3 Feb. 5 at Fort Dix, N.J.

“As a role player, you’re deployed here to help push the students to do better, but we learn right beside them,” said Master Sgt. James Gardner of the 60th Maintenance Operations Squadron from Travis Air Force Base, Calif., whose acting role was to play the “chieftain” of the “Citheron” village during the exercise.

In order to provide a more realistic setting, the Air Mobility Warfare Center’s 421st Combat Training Squadron works with more than 85 role players -- Airmen from across the Air Force -- to assist instructors, called cadre, create realistic scenarios to test Eagle Flag students.

“This is done to give the students that real interaction they could face in the deployed environment, such as in Iraq and Afghanistan,” said Master Sgt. Dean Steele, Eagle Flag role player manager for the 421st CTS. “We bring in people from across the Air Force to specifically test career fields -- whether it be media for public affairs, banking people for finance Airmen, or contractors for the contracting career field. In essence we have Airmen who help train Airmen.”



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Jason Ridder, Schriever Air Force Base, Colo., and Tech. Sgt. Brian Bahret, Anderson Air Force Base, Guam, both playing roles as embedded media reporters, talk with Master Sgt. Lowell Olson, Travis Air Force Base, Calif., during a scenario for Air Force Exercise Eagle Flag 07-3 Feb. 13, 2007, at Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst, N.J.

“The idea is to put the expertise in place to make our scenarios for the exercise as real as possible,” Sergeant Steele said. “This is achieved through the role players we have in every exercise.”

For more than a decade, the 421st CTS has been well known for its combat skills training course — in the past with Phoenix Readiness and now with the Advanced Contingency Skills Training Course. However, with more Airmen performing ground combat-related jobs in the battlefield, senior leaders designed Eagle Flag in 2003 to increase the level of understanding that expeditionary combat support

Airmen could face during a deployment. This is where role players help with that understanding.

“You could be at any location (deployed), and despite the fact that your job is finance or services, you might be told to guard the perimeter,” said Staff Sgt. Trina L. Johnson of the 6th Air Refueling Squadron from Travis AFB, who played a role as a villager in Eagle Flag 07-3. “You can’t ever let your guard down. It doesn’t matter what rank you are, you could be an Airman at the gate and (a local citizen) might ask you for water or food.”

Each Eagle Flag exercise is physically operated out of Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst — a Navy installation adjacent to Fort Dix. If Eagle Flag students need to visit the local village, they have to get into a vehicle and drive several miles. Very little is simulated during the exercise.

The role players scenarios range from requesting food from the participants to testing the participants savvy on foreign culture to accusing participants of criminal acts.

“When we approached



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Ron Rogers

U.S. Air Force Airmen deployed as part of Air Force Exercise Eagle Flag 07-3 shake hands during a planned scenario in “Citheron” village Feb. 11, 2007, at Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst, N.J.

the gate for a scenario, I could tell the sentry watching the point was wary,” Sergeant Johnson said. “It was just her alone and 10 of us (role players). From her perspective, I would have felt bombarded and at a loss.”

For Sergeant Johnson, she said something unexpected happened to her during the exercise — she started sympathizing with the character she was playing.

“They (the villagers) lost everything in a natural disaster in the scenario we played,” Sergeant Johnson said. “They’d see the tents and water on the other side and they’d want help, so it’s frustrating on both ends even when you play a role.”

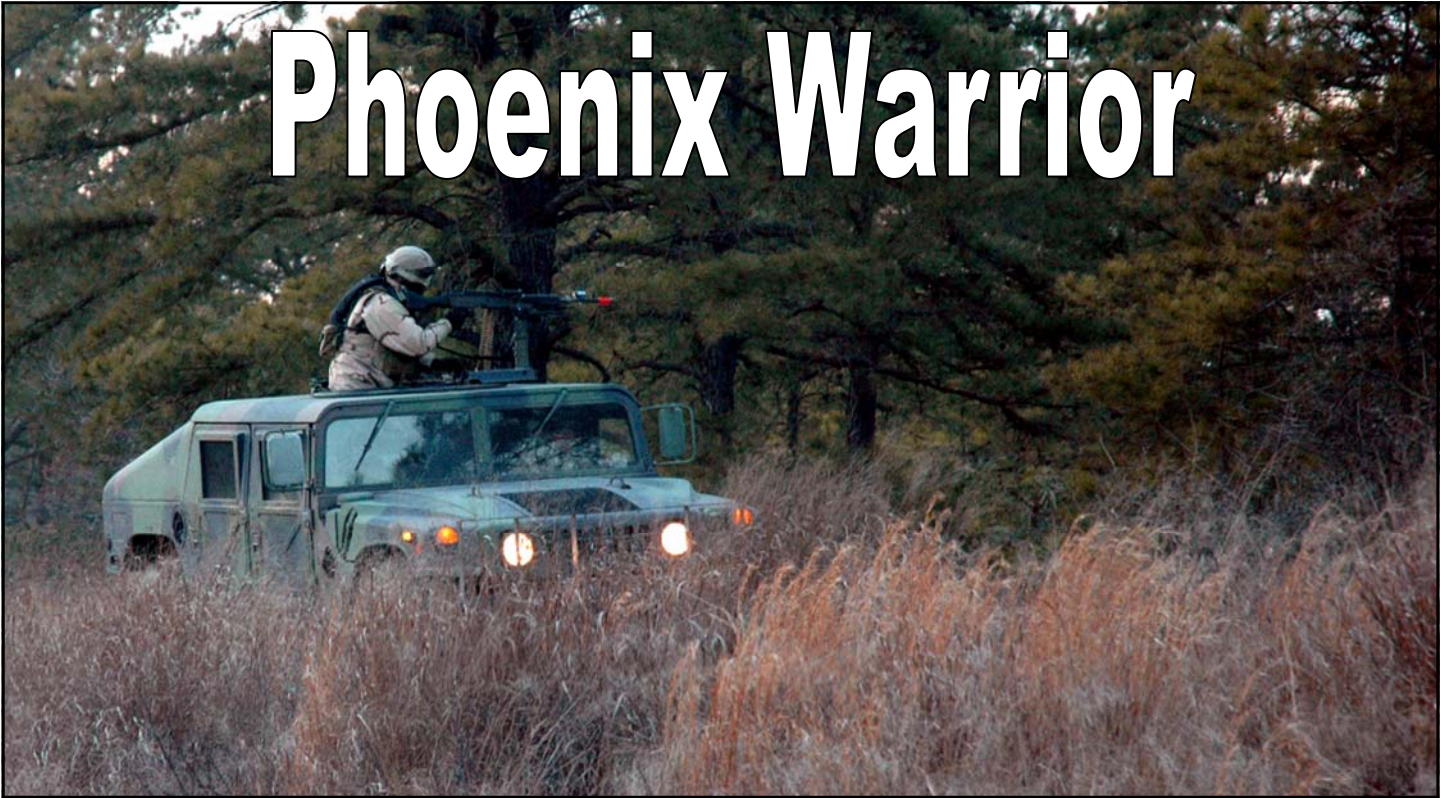
Eagle Flag also gives Airmen the opportunity to think about how they will respond to common situations before they deploy into a charged atmosphere. The exercise highlights the fact that every Airman is an ambassador once they step on foreign ground.

“Every Airman can use their experience from Eagle Flag as a stepping stone to deal with real-world situations,” Sergeant Steele said. “That’s another reason for the role playing and the opportunity for real interaction with people.”

Sergeant Gardner, who has been in the military for 19 years and said this training would have been invaluable to him before he deployed to Saudi Arabia for Operation Desert Storm.

“We are role playing to such a degree that it will give them an advantage to know what to expect,” he said.

Phoenix Warrior



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

Students in the Air Force Phoenix Warrior Course 07-3 conduct a convoy patrol near a camp for a scenario for Air Force Exercise Eagle Flag 07-3 Feb. 12 at Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst, N.J. More than 140 Phoenix Warrior students integrated into Eagle Flag operations as part of their field training exercise requirement for their course. Both Phoenix Warrior and Eagle Flag are operated by the Air Mobility Warfare Center's 421st Combat Training Squadron.



Students in the Air Force Phoenix Warrior Course 07-3 set up security near a camp for a scenario for Air Force Exercise Eagle Flag 07-3 Feb. 12 at Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst, N.J.



Tech. Sgt. Enrico Catubo, 60th Security Forces Squadron, Travis Air Force Base, Calif., radios a fellow security forces member during operations for Phoenix Warrior 07-3 Feb. 12.

Musicians rehearse different kind of performance

By Lt. Col. Jamie Goodpaster
514th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs
McGuire Air Force Base, N.J.

More at home in a concert hall, Capt. Chad Steffey crawled on his belly through mud and rain. Thirty-five pounds of combat gear clung to his woodland battle dress uniform as he peered through night-vision goggles.

Captain Steffey, commander of the Band of the Air Force Reserve, and nine other band members focused on fine-tuning their weaponry skills on lethal M-16A2 rifles rather than musical instruments March 12-24 during participation in the Air Force Advanced Contingency Skills Training Course 07-2B on Fort Dix.

In June, the captain will make history as the first Band of the Air Force Reserve officer to deploy to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. Captain Steffey and the others will stay overseas 60-90 days before returning to Robins Air Force Base, Ga., where they are based.

The band's mission is to provide professional musical support to the armed forces to benefit morale, welfare, recruiting and retention and community relations.

"This highly specialized and realistic combat training drove home the fact that each of us is an Airman first and an Air Force Reserve Band musician second," Captain Steffey said.

He said one of the most important skills the bandmen gained was the confidence in knowing they will be able to fight and survive if called upon to do so.

"All Airmen should be required to have these skills before any deployment into a hostile environment, regardless of Air Force specialty code," Captain Steffey said. "This training has provided each member of the Reserve band a true appreciation and empathy for the troops they will be entertaining and serving."

Other band members also picked up on the rhythm of a new assignment.

Senior Airman Heidi Dickinson, a traditional reserve vocalist with the band, noted that she now has a realistic idea of what to expect in the AOR and how physically and mentally challenging a combat environment really is.

The 10 band members were students in the Advanced Contingency Skills Training Course, which integrates classroom and realistic field instruction on the training ranges here. The 421st Combat Training Squadron,



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
Capt. Chad Steffey, Air Force Reserve Command Band commander, Warner-Robbins Air Force Base, Ga., participates in a convoy as part of a convoy operations class for the Air Force Advanced Contingency Skills Training Course 07-2B March 19. The course, taught by the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center's 421st Combat Training Squadron, prepared nearly 300 Airmen for upcoming deployments. Captain Steffey was one of 10 AFRC Band attending the training. It's the first time Air Force band members have received this style of combat skills training.

Expeditionary Operations School, U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center, teaches the course.

ACST gives warfighters essential skills to survive in a combat environment, according to Master Sgt. Dean Steele, a lead cadre member of the course. He noted that the class provides practical hands-on training versus two-dimensional computer-based training.

"The course is designed to be as realistic as possible and drive home skills that may one day save one life, or many," Sergeant Steele said.

His cadre has received positive feedback not only from people who went through the course but also from people who returned from the AOR where they relied on the combat skills lessons learned to keep themselves safe.

"Through ACST, Airmen know how to react and survive in a real-world combat situation," Sergeant Steele said.

ACST prepares Airmen from multiple expeditionary combat support career fields with the skills needed to operate in the CENTAF

AOR. Core classes in ACST include tactics and patrolling, convoy operations, military operations in urban terrain, combat media skills, cross-cultural communication, self-defense, combat first aid and use of night-vision goggles.

Deploying Airmen must perform not only their jobs but may be called upon to perform other radically different roles, such as driving in a convoy or operating heavy weapons on Humvee vehicles.

To prepare for deployment, ACST instructors recommend Airmen read the Army Basic Soldiering Skills manual. The ACST curriculum is based on the manual.

Master Sgt. Scott Gunn, a bagpiper with the band, said he is grateful for the ACST course.

"The combat training will be invaluable if I'm alone and need to defend myself in a hostile situation," said Sergeant Gunn.

The bagpiper will essentially be a one-man band, playing at ceremonies honoring fallen service members, among other special events. He plans to travel alone to outlying regions in the AOR where Soldiers and Airmen members typically have few entertainment choices.

The Band of the Air Force Reserve has a proud tradition of performing worldwide on tours such as the annual Operation Season Greetings where it provides holiday cheer to military people stationed overseas.

Most of the band members will deploy for 60 days, as opposed to their average three-week deployments. Throughout the deployment, the 10 band members will be joined by Air National Guard bands from Illinois and Texas.

Troop morale performances will be given at dining facilities, clubs, work facilities, rest and relaxation stations, embassies and local community groups.

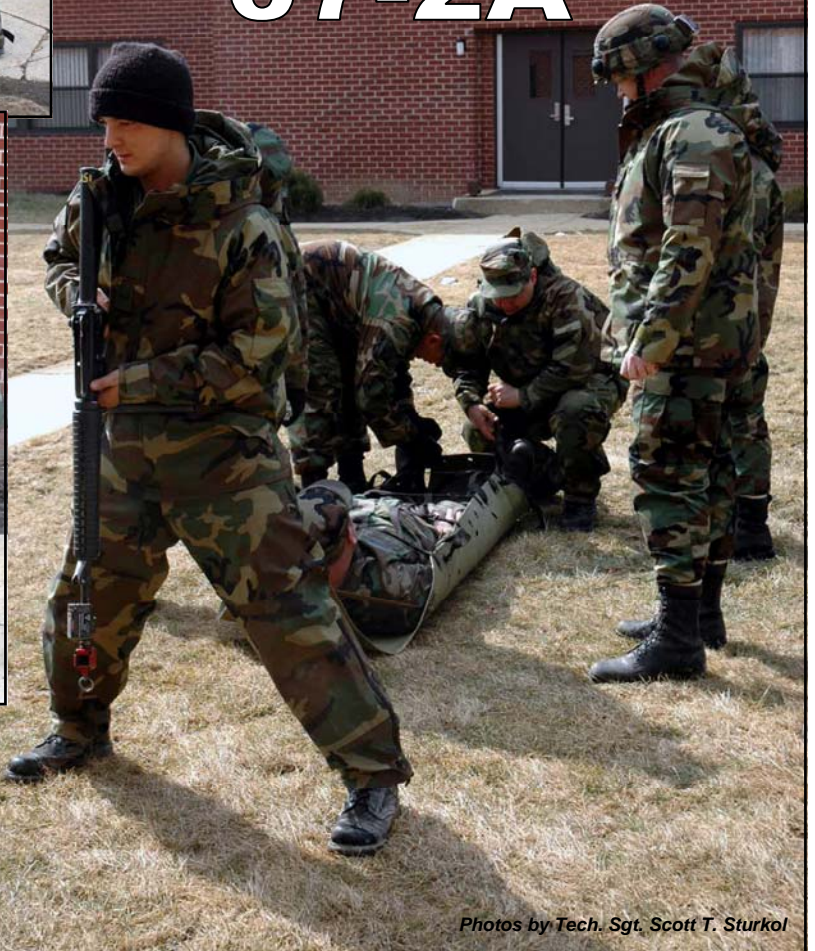
Captain Steffey said there are plans for a "CENTAF Idol" a spin-off of the popular "American Idol" television show. He expects the contest to be a boost to troop morale.

For Airman Dickinson, the mission will be an opportunity to share the universal language of music and strengthen cultural bridges.

"The band will go a step further when serving those deployed in the CENTAF AOR," said Airman Dickinson.

"Each of us will be trying to reach the warfighters and give them a sense of comfort, peace, rest and joy to rejuvenate their mind, body and spirit."

ACST Course 07-2A



(Above and right) Students in Air Force Advanced Contingency Skills Training Course 07-2A practice combat first during a class Feb. 28. (Below) Other students in the class prepare for convoy operations training March 2. The ACST course is taught by the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center's 421st Combat Training Squadron.

Photos by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol





ACST 07-2B: Tech. Sgt. Samuel Young, contingency skills training instructor, 421st Combat Training Squadron teaches squad formations as part of a tactics and patrolling class for the Advanced Contingency Skills Training Course 07-2B March 14 on a range on Fort Dix.



Master Sgt. John Smith, contingency skills training instructor, 421st Combat Training Squadron, talks to students in the Advanced Contingency Skills Training Course 07-2B during the Linear In-Fighting Neural Override Engagement (LINE) training class for the course March 16.



Staff Sgt. Kimberly Lewis, contingency skills training medical instructor, watches over students in the Advanced Contingency Skills Training Course 07-2B practice combat first aid as part of a class for the course March 17.



(Left) Tech. Sgt. Marcus Hughes and Staff Sgt. Greg Hasecuster, both 421st CTS instructors, teach M-16 familiarization during ACST March 13. (Right) Lt. Col. Kevin Krause, Expeditionary Operations School deputy commandant, teaches another one of the LINE training classes March 17.



ACST student recalls effort in Class 07-2B

By Tech. Sgt. Kevin Allen
55th Wing Public Affairs
Offut Air Force Base, Neb.

There was no hiding from my first convoy experience. Tagged as convoy commander for a five-vehicle movement through unfamiliar terrain, the lives and welfare of 19 Airmen hung on my ability to react quickly and think on my feet.



Tech. Sgt. Kevin Allen

Was I ready? What would we encounter? How many of my squad would I lose on this mission? Would I be the one not coming home? This was my reality – one of my simulated realities, that is, during my 10 days at the Air Force Expeditionary Center’s Advanced Contingency Skills Training course.

Located at Fort Dix, N.J., the Center educates and trains expeditionary combat support personnel in deployed operations. The course was taught by instructors from the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center’s 421st Combat Training Squadron, and included classes on squad tactics, convoy operations, military operations in urban terrain and self defense, to name a few. It was designed as a crash course in survival for any deployed situation... and it’s got to be the best thing for a deploying Airman since the MREs became tasty.

THE TRAINING

The training was different from anything I’ve experienced in my 16-plus years as an Airman – a welcome change considering the state of affairs in the AOR and my looming summer deployment.

As I write this, I’m wondering how I got this far into my career while logging three deployments to Southwest Asia without learning this skill set. It’s a scary thought, and I’m trying to keep it in the back of my mind.

The training was serious, as are the situations Airmen are now asked to enter – situations unlike any other in our youthful service’s history. Time and time again the

instructor cadre repeated the mantra, “We hope you never have to use this, but if you do, you’ll be prepared for what comes next.” And they were right.

Should I find myself in a combatant role while deployed, I’m definitely better off for wartime responsibilities than before I attended. I trained with deploying personnel from Air Mobility Command and Air Force-wide deployers from the Public Affairs, Chaplain, Judge Advocate General and Air Transportation career fields in the largest ACST class ever to hit the Jersey ranges. We worked hard day and night to ensure we all deploy and come home in the same condition we left. As the other 293 individuals who attended ACST Class 07-2b would probably agree, completion of the course in no way makes anyone an expert. I’m just more ready to react to a bad situation.

WHAT I LEARNED

I learned a lot. The first thing I learned was that I knew very little about surviving in a combat environment. If you want to reread the last sentence slowly, you’ll find I’m basically calling myself out for being unprepared. Is it my fault? Maybe, but sometimes you don’t know what you don’t know... and this was one of those cases. The instructors were very good, however, and the lessons built upon one another from day to day, reinforcing the old adage “Practice makes perfect.” I don’t know if I’m perfect, but I’m



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
Students practice with an M-16 rifle during the M-16 weapons familiarization class for the Advanced Contingency Skills Training Course 07-2B March 13.

about 1000 percent better than I was. I realized there’s nothing about firing an M-16 at the range that can prepare you for providing rear cover during a patrol that comes under fire, except maybe how to reload or clear a weapon jam (a task considerably more difficult when ground burst simulators and smoke grenades are going off 30 meters from your prone position.) But I learned how to work in that capacity and two weeks later I still have bruises from bumping into obstacles, trees and people while running backward to prove it.

See **Student**, Page 20



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
Students in the Air Force Advanced Contingency Skills Training Course 07-2B participating in a convoy operations class are hit with a mock attack as part of training March 19.

Student, from Page 19

I also learned there's nothing about applying a splint in a self aid and buddy care class that comes close to the reactionary first aid necessary after an attack in the field. If you're not familiar with that concept, it's when you have to pull, shove or toss a fellow fire team member on a litter and low crawl that person underneath barbed wire, or move them over a raised obstacle, in order to get your squad to safety, and then you can tend to the injuries more intently. I survived that training too, and I have the scratches, rips and aching muscles to remind me of the ordeal.

And I learned that no matter what situation you find yourself in, the ultimate decision to squeeze the trigger and put down an enemy is yours and yours alone.

There were some in the training whose idea of laying down suppressing fire toward a tree line meant squeezing off two or three rounds. I was with others who felt handing full magazines of ammunition to another team member for use was the best means of employing proactive force in a hostile environment. And then there were those like me, who figured if the Air Force finds it cost effective to give me 120 rounds per training exercise, I should be sending 120 rounds downrange.

Don't get me wrong... I know I was firing blank rounds at people wearing MILES gear, or sim rounds at opposing forces geared up like paintball warriors. But at no point in time did I feel hesitation in my role there. I yelled, fired my weapon, low crawled... yelled some more, fired some



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
Students practice squad and fire team maneuvers as part of a tactics and patrolling class for the Advanced Contingency Skills Training Course 07-2B March 14, 2007, on a range on Fort Dix.

more, jumped, climbed, fired that weapon, pushed, ran, pulled, fired the weapon until I thought the barrel was going to melt, cursed, ran, fell and throttled down when the exercise was terminated... then washed, rinsed and repeated.

All for good reason – I was training to come back home in one piece. Survival in combat is essential... let the other guy die for his country. I'm going to stay alive and help win this war one interview, story or bullet at a time.

CONVOY RESULTS

So how did this Public Affairs professional fare in his first convoy leadership experience? I was in the second Humvee, and our lead vehicle took an IED hit (simulated, of course... but those simulations are something else.)

We pulled up, moved all personnel out of the disabled

vehicle and moved on.

Proper planning led to excellent execution – we'd already determined the new lead vehicle should we run into a similar situation. Humvee Three moved into the lead as planned, we motored on and returned to base with all 19 Airmen safe and sound. I had an excellent fire team, and incredible squad and it took a complete team effort to pull off. Not too shabby for a pencil pusher and a group only working together for a few days, if I do say so myself.

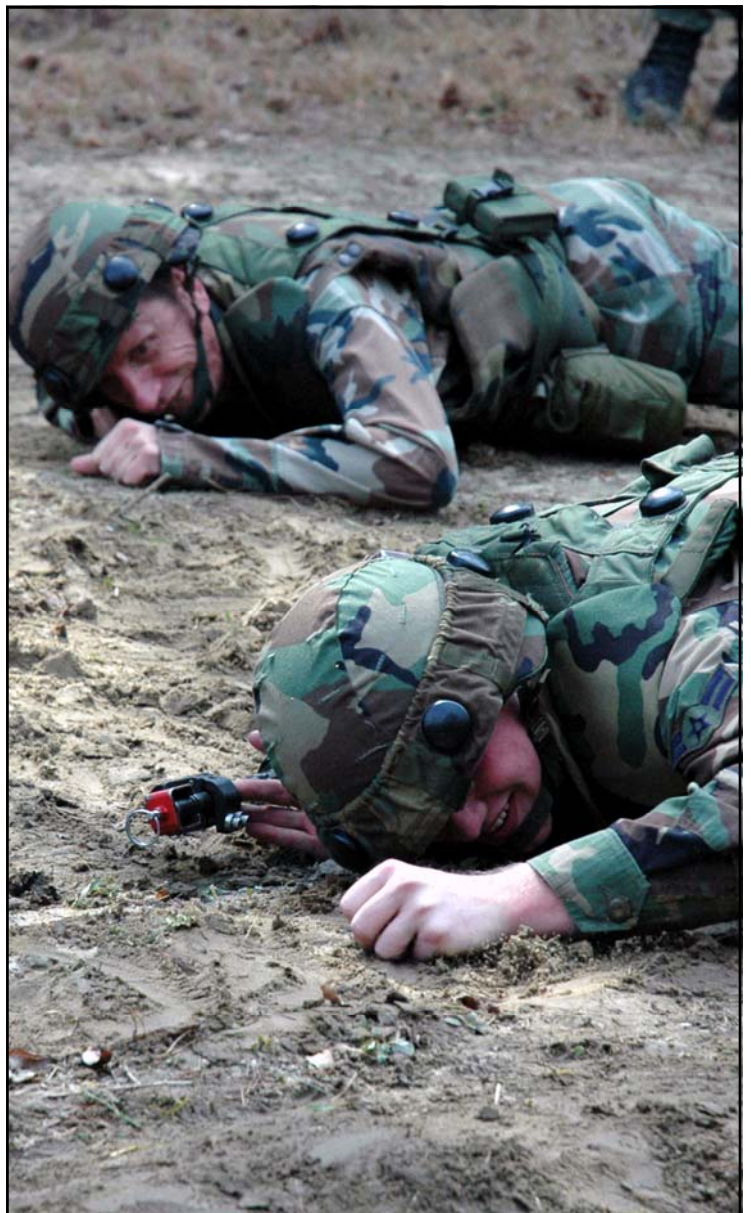
Although I went in to the training considering myself a seasoned veteran when it comes to contingency operations. I left it as a combat trained Airman.

I can't believe what I didn't know about survival in a combat zone, and I'm incredibly thankful I have some sort of grasp on what I might run into during my deployment. My utmost appreciation goes out to the staff and cadre at the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center for providing the knowledge and skills necessary to bring Airmen such as myself home safely to their families.

We can only hope the training we received never needs to be used. But if it does...



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
Students in the ACST Course 07-2B set up in a tower on a Fort Dix range as part of the "final mission" March 21.



Images from ACST Class 07-2B
(Clockwise from above) Airman 1st Class Jon Luna, Pope Air Force Base, N.C., practices squad and fire team maneuvers with other students as part of a tactics and patrolling class March 14. Students patrol their way to set up security at a camp for their “final mission” March 21. Airmen practice low crawling as part of a tactics and patrolling class March 14. Students provide medical aid to another student as part of a scenario for the “final mission” March 21.



Service: Ask yourself what it means to you

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

Imagine asking a military veteran from your hometown, "What does service mean to you?"

Chances are you'll get an earful in return.

In the Air Force, we have the core value of service before self. However, before anyone thinks this is a lecture on core values -- hold on. There's a lot more to explain.

First, have you ever left a store or a restaurant and wondered afterward, "They really could use a course in customer service!"

Chances are you were probably right, but in turn those people who treated you poorly may have in their minds what they did was provide you with good customer service.

Whose perception is right or wrong? The answer lies mostly in the opinion of the recipient, but I've always believed you should treat people how you would want to be treated. And I don't know anyone who wants to be treated poorly.

The truth is, the term "service" has many meanings, but in return I believe those meanings all blend together. To me, service is

'To me, service is about loyalty, hard work, dedication, initiative, humility and sacrifice ...'

about loyalty, hard work, dedication, initiative, humility and sacrifice (to name a few). It means sometimes putting other people's needs ahead of your own. It means truly caring about what you do, what you say, and how that affects those around you.

I remember as a teenager I'd take jobs mowing grass, raking leaves and shoveling snow. They would take hours upon hours to complete and often I'd get paid little or nothing. No problem. It was the way my parents raised me -- to think about helping your fellow human beings without asking for any-

thing in return.

I also recall more recently when I met a Vietnam veteran who lost both of his legs in the war. I talked with

him and asked him why he was still so dedicated to supporting troops and remembering the military heroes of the past. In a spirited yet soulful response, he said, "I may have lost my legs, but I still have my heart. I'm proud to have served in the Army. Now, I do whatever I can."

As another example, for the past 15 years, I've been married to a woman who has given me three children, saw me leave on a half-dozen deployments, numerous temporary

duty assignments, and work late more than once. Did she have to put up with that? Why does she stay and how come I deserve someone like her? Only my wife could answer those questions, but I will say I'm thankful for her every day.

The same idea holds true for children, parents and friends who know you, are loyal to you, and help you when you need it. What is it in your relationship with them that keeps you dedicated to them?

It's through all of this where we must understand the deeper meaning of service. It's not about what people do or where they work, it's about who they are.

I've thoroughly enjoyed my military career to this point and will continue to enjoy it until I retire some years from now.

There have been millions before me who have "served" in the military and millions more who "served" along side them in families and through many, many support functions. I've given my decade and a half of years in service to my country that I'll never get back, but am proud that I've had the opportunity to be in "the service."

Although it's meant giving up on dreams I may have had outside of the military, knowing what "service" means to me has been an important foundation block in my life.

So, if you find yourself wanting to ask that question about "service," look inside and first understand what it means to you. Only then will you understand why it's important to so many others like me and that military veteran who could give you an earful.

Waiting is worth the effort

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

FORT DIX, N.J. – It was after 5 p.m. and I was on my way home from a range on Fort Dix when I just realized I forgot to call home.

The realization came when I heard a song on the radio in my old Ford Bronco where the refrain was, "Sweetheart, I'll wait for you ..."

I imagined, as the song was playing, my wife at home wondering where I was, and, upon arriving home, giving me that "why didn't you call" look when I walked through the door. Truth is I would have deserved it for making her wait for me.

However, as the song played on, my mind wandered even further. I had just left a range where hundreds of Airmen were practicing convoy operations as part of the Advanced Contingency Skills Training Course put on by the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center's 421st Combat Training Squadron. I drove and I thought about them.

Here I was worried about being late to get home and these Airmen were in training to be away from home for a very long time where their loved ones were going to be waiting for them.

Now don't get me wrong – I've been deployed before. But to make a point, at the moment I was thinking about all this I mostly wondered how families feel about waiting for those of us in the military to go off and do what we have to do. I believe the waiting, tough as it is, is part of the effort for us all to be successful.

I remember an instance of waiting early on in my life when I was about 8 or 9 years old. It was summer and I went out to pick berries in the nearby field with some of the neighbor children in my Michigan hometown. There were probably at least six of us who wandered out to the various wild strawberry patches and we commenced to filling our empty gallon-sized ice cream buckets with berries.

After a short while, most of the children I was out with picked a few berries and headed home. I stayed behind until my bucket was

See **Waiting**, Page 23

Standards, from Page 2

to have your hands in your pockets and he said, "Yes."

I then took the two staff sergeants off to the side and asked them why they didn't say something to him. The answer I was given blew me away.

The staff sergeant said, "I work with him all the time and didn't want him to think I was a jerk." I let the SSgt's know that it was their job to correct the Airman, and if they would have done their job, I wouldn't have had to do it for them.

I could go on with other horrid tales of violations, but I think you get the point. Now let me get to my point.

When we joined the Air Force and each time we re-enlist, we recite the Oath of Enlistment. One of the lines from the oath states, "...I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice..."



So to answer the question posed in the title, can we pick and choose our standards?
The answer is NO!

It doesn't say I will obey some or just the ones I choose to obey, it says I will obey. In the Air Force, it is all of our jobs to ensure that we and everyone around us follows all standards.

The operations tempo is at the highest level ever and doesn't appear to be calming down.

We are all busy doing our Air Force specialty. However, we must not forget about all of the other things that come with being in the Air Force.

None of us have the luxury to pick and choose which standards we follow. Now more than ever we must ensure we and everyone around us follows all standards...no matter how unimportant they may think they are.

Remember, if someone violates one standard, how can you be sure they aren't violating other standards too? They may choose to violate a standard that costs someone their life.

Waiting, from Page 22

full. When I got home, my dad was just getting home from work and looked at my bucket in amazement. He knew there were others out there with me, but all he could say was, "Nice bucket of berries ... it takes a lot of patience to fill a bucket like that." Even my friends were amazed at how much I got and I eventually shared it all with them.

In essence, I waited and worked until the job was done. The fruits of my labor were obvious in this case. The same holds true for what we do in the military.

When our loved ones have to wait for us to return from a deployment or finish what we have to do at work, it's not because they like waiting because no one likes to wait. They do it, I believe, because they know that the very foundation for what we do and how we live as Americans involves some waiting.

For military families, the waiting takes a bit more patience and understanding. And thank goodness we have so many great peo-

ple supporting our families. While those of us in the military are working late preparing people to deploy, or we're off on some temporary duty assignment or deployment doing what our job calls us to do, we have the true warriors of the home front waiting for us to return.

Is waiting fair? Is it always necessary? There is no real answer to that. My belief is the answer lies in the strength of the bond you have with your loved ones and those around you. If you maintain good faith, communication, trust and patience, there's no waiting period that can break that strong bond.

I've kept my wife and children waiting for me more times than I care to count. I don't like it when it happens. However, I know they love me and I them and when we have to wait apart, we know we will always be together at least in our hearts.

That day I was driving home from the range I made it home as quick as I could. When I walked through the door, my wife

just smiled and said, "How was your day?" I couldn't help but smile back. I briefly thought about my busy day and what was done, but mostly saw that my waiting to come home was well worth the effort.

Guest editorials

Members of the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center community are welcome to send guest editorials to send for publication in this newspaper. Prospective writers are also reminded that stories submitted will be edited for content and propriety. Send submissions to scott.sturkol-02@mcguire.af.mil or christie.dragan@mcguire.af.mil. For further details call (609) 754-7013 or DSN 650-7013.

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Phoenix Raven 07-C



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

Tech. Sgt. Michael McHone, Phoenix Raven instructor for the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center's 421st Combat Training Squadron, marches with students in AF Phoenix Raven Course 07-C March 9. The course held students from the Air Force, Army and Navy.



(Left) Raven students practice moves during ASP baton training March 13 in the Center. (Above) Raven students put in some push ups as a motivator to stay on task during training. (Right) Raven instructors demonstrate correct moves during ASP training March 13.



Bronze Star Airmen say preparation key to successful OIF duty

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

When Tech. Sgt. Vandiver Hood and Staff Sgt. Michael Tesch were awarded Bronze Stars from the U.S. Army for service in Operation Iraqi Freedom Oct. 10, 2006, both said they were “just doing their job.”

Even though they say they may have just been doing their job, they also noted the importance of their preparation before they deployed. That preparation, they say, ultimately helped them with their success in Iraq and may have saved their lives.

Both Sergeants Hood and Tesch are explosive ordnance disposal, or EOD, craftsmen, as well as contingency skills training instructors for the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center’s 421st Combat Training Squadron. The preparation they are talking mostly about is training, readiness and the ability to put one’s mind in a state of preparation where even the most dangerous situations don’t circumvent the mission.

“In the situations I was in, I did not think about any danger,” said Sergeant Hood, who was deployed to Iraq from August 2005 to March 2006 as EOD team leader, 506th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron, Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq. “If I gave too much thought to something like that, I don’t know if I would have been able to do my job. When I was working on an improvised explosive device, or my team was taking small arms or rocket fire, we just continued as best we could to eliminate the hazard as quickly as possible.

“The thoughts that go through your head during that time are not to worry about what is happening, but to look for a solution, attack and push through. In those situations, I had to be mentally prepared.”

For Sergeant Tesch, who was deployed from January to June 2006 as an EOD member supporting the 447th ECES, Sather AB, Iraq, the importance of being prepared “is vital to each Airmen’s survival.”

“At times, I understand, it can feel like training before a deployment is redundant and you can feel like you’re being pulled



Courtesy photos

Tech. Sgt. Vandiver Hood (left) and Staff Sgt. Michael Tesch (right) are pictured on their deployments to Iraq in 2006. Both are explosive ordnance disposal craftsmen and instructors with the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center’s 421st Combat Training Squadron. They each received the Bronze Star for their actions in Iraq.

away from your family once again,” Sergeant Tesch said. “However, as I found out very fast in Iraq, that this was not the case. The training we receive before we fight for our country is important, as I saw how it saves lives – mine included.”

Sergeant Hood said an Airman should have to travel “outside the wire” to know how important preparation in training and knowledge can be.

“I know not everyone will be traveling ‘outside the wire,’ or even go to Iraq, but that does not mean they should not be prepared,” Sergeant Hood said.

“A lot of people are surprised when they get off the plane in a war zone and the base they are deployed to gets shelled their first night in country.

“That is when they realize this is not a joke. That’s when they also realize the importance of their preparation and train-

ing,” Sergeant Hood said.

In Iraq, Sergeant Hood and Sergeant Tesch ventured “outside the wire” hundreds of times and each time they came back. They say that is all thanks to their preparation and training.

“Receiving a Bronze Star for my OIF duty was a highlight in my life, but I was happier to have been able to do my job there and come home safely,” Sergeant Tesch said. “Be prepared, get all the training you need and more, and help your fellow Airmen be prepared.”

Sergeant Hood added, “Take your training seriously and take your responsibility for yourself and your troops seriously. Allowing someone to goof off and not be prepared is the same thing as you not being prepared. We all have a responsibility to each other to make sure everyone comes home safe.”

USAF EC 'port dawg' goes down under



Courtesy photos

(First row, left) Tech. Sgt. Michael Marthinsen, instructor from U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center's Mobility Operations School Air Transportation Branch stands with a group of fellow instructors and Australian air force students in late 2006. Sergeant Marthinsen went to Royal Australian Air Force Amberley to train Australian aerial porters on the C-17 Globemaster III. In Sergeant Marthinsen's words, here's what he did with the team: "We provided tested and proven training that has been in existence since the introduction of the C-17 to the United States Air Force. The training allows aerial porters to load and unload the C-17 aircraft without the presence of a loadmaster. By providing this training, it allowed the Royal Australian Air Force to benchmark and conduct their training to their individual Airmen. The training consisted of two weeks of academic (classroom) instruction with an end of course test and one and a half weeks of hands-on training conducted on the aircraft." The aircraft pictured above was the first C-17 bought by the RAAF.



(Left) Australian air force students receive classroom instruction for the course. (Right) Sergeant Marthinsen shows students some items to look for on a C-17 Globemaster III.



Center members aid with Habitat for Humanity

By Capt. Jess Williams
Air Mobility Battlelab, and,
Habitat for Humanity volunteer

Personnel from the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center spent Feb. 3 volunteering for Habitat for Humanity.

Fourteen volunteers from the USAF EC donated a more than 110 hours performing yard work and installing dry wall in six rooms of a home in New Jersey.

“This is my first time volunteering for HFH and I had a lot of fun,” said Senior Airman Maria Mendez of the USAF EC. “I am happy to have had a chance to help others. I feel very honored to be able to do this.”

Mendez worked on cutting and drilling dry wall in a hallway and two bedrooms.

According to the Burlington County HFH Website, <http://www.habitatbcnj.org>, some 209,000 New Jerseyans began the New Year looking for a job.

Five times as many New Jerseyans have a job, but can't afford even a two-bedroom apartment when looking for a home.

“It was hard work, but we had a great time doing it,” said Capt. Natalie Paul, another of the Center's volunteers.

Captain Paul served as a drywall hoister and also spent the day working with dry-wall corner bead.

“It was an excellent opportunity to meet other Center members while contributing towards a worthy cause,” Paull said. “It was definitely a worthwhile experience.”

HFH Burlington is one of more than 1,500 HFH affiliates in the United States. They are a non-profit organization that builds and rehabilitates houses for families in need of decent housing.

HFH houses are purchased by families at prices affordable to low-income Americans, thanks to the donated labor of Habitat volunteers, the support of partner organizations and the no-profit, no-interest terms of every Habitat for Humanity mortgage.

Since its foundation in 1976, HFH International is responsible for providing 150,000 houses for families in need.

Habitat for Humanity needs volunteers. For more information on volunteering call 2nd Lt. Jay Hart at (609)754-1375 or jay.hart@mcguire.af.mil.



Members of the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center clean the grounds of a Habitat for Humanity housing site Feb. 3. *Photos by Capt. Jessica Williams*



Tech. Sgt. Joe Jones and 1st Lt. Teri Hunter measure drywall that was installed in a master bedroom.



Members of the USAF EC volunteer team in front of a HFH house under renovation.



Master Sgts. George Blackwell and Mike Murphy measure a ceiling where drywall was installed.

USAF EC's Detachment 1 remembers Bataan during memorial march

By Master Sgt. Anne Smerekanicz
 U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center
 Mobility Operations School
 Detachment 1
 Hurlburt Field, Fla.

WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE, N.M. — “D1! DQ! Det. 1 Don’t Quit!”

That was the catchphrase for five members of the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center Mobility Operations School Detachment 1 who recently participated in the demanding Bataan Memorial Death March March 25.

The team from Hurlburt Field consisted of both military and civilian contractors to include team captain Master Sgt. Mike Steinkraus, Master Sgt. Curtis ‘Kimo’ Littlejohn, Tech. Sgt. Ray Carter, Mr. Jim McCloskey and Tim Pyeatt.

The team, a combination of active duty military and civilian contractors who instruct mobility operations for Air and Space Operations Center courses, returned to Hurlburt Field tired yet triumphant after completing the 26.2-mile trek in less than nine hours.

“Our time was a slower than we had hoped for, 8:43, but I thought that was pretty good for a first effort,” said Mr. Pyeatt, a contractor with team.

The route wound through the high New Mexican desert, with surfaces that varied from paved roads to deep sand to everything in between, and included an elevation increase from 4,100 to 5,300 feet.

The annual march, the Army’s largest and best-known memorial march, honors a special group of heroic service members who defended the islands of Luzon, Corregidor, and the harbor-defense forts of the Philippines at the onset of World War II. On April 9, 1942, tens of thousands of American and Filipino soldiers were surrendered to Japanese forces and were marched for days in scorching heat through Philippine jungles.

Thousands died and those who did survive faced death or years of hardship in prisoner-of-war camps. This memorial march honors these Soldiers who sacrificed their freedom, health and, in many cases, their very lives.

Before starting the march, survivors of the actual death march were on hand to



Courtesy photo

Members of the Detachment 1 team stop for a group photo prior to the start of the Bataan Memorial March at White Sands Missile Range, N.M., March 25.

greet and shake hands with the participants as they headed out into the pre-dawn desert.

Two roll calls were taken the previous night to recognize the survivors for their service and sacrifices and acknowledge those who had passed away since the last march.

Meeting the men who had endured and overcome immeasurable adversity inspired him through the day, Sergeant Carter said.

This year, more than 4,000 military members and civilians representing 49 states, the District of Columbia, Canada and Germany came together to participate in what has been called one of the toughest marathons in the United States.

One of the more unique participants, a Canadian marcher, carried a set of bagpipes which provided encouragement, enjoyment and distraction for all who could hear.

“This was the most physically demanding single-day even in my entire life,” Sergeant Littlejohn said, a comment echoed by all the team members.

Participants compete in individual and team categories and numerous age divisions, and may choose to go “heavy,” which means carrying a 35-pound rucksack or “light,” in which web gear and a pistol belt are worn.

Det. 1 team members trained both together and separately as they road marched various distances on Hurlburt Field to build up their stamina. Knowing that they would

encounter sandy conditions, they also completed a number of 10-mile and 15-mile marches on the scenic beaches of the Emerald Coast.

Marchers come to this memorial event for many reasons — personal challenge, the spirit of competition or to foster esprit de corps within their unit. Some march in honor of a family member or a particular veteran who was in the Bataan Death March or was taken a prisoner of war by the Japanese in the Philippines.

The Det. 1 team marched in honor of Raymond Baker, US Army Air Corp, a relative of Steinkraus, who had planned on attending the event as an honored guest, but was unable to due to health issues.

Sergeant Steinkraus said that he feels many people have forgotten our country’s history and some of the horrific events our country has endured. “I feel we owe it to the men and women who came before us to not only remember them, but honor them and make sure history does not repeat itself,” Sergeant Steinkraus said. “I only received a few blisters — some men and women never came home. I feel it was a small gesture to show respect to some of the bravest people in the United States.”

Despite the blisters, aching muscles and exhaustion, the entire team agreed that the experience was well worth all the effort.

“I would definitely do it again,” Mr. McCloskey said.

ROTC cadets visit

USAF EXPEDITIONARY CENTER



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

A group of 12 cadets and cadre from the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps, Det. 115 of the University of Connecticut—Bridgeport, visited the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center March 8. They toured and learned about each section of the Center.



Capt. John Yerger, Air Mobility Battlelab, shows the members of the tour one of the success stories of an AMB initiative. Besides Captain Yerger, other tour helpers from the Center included Master Sgt. Gerald Hutchens, and Tech. Sgts. Ryan Holmes, Sean Heraty and Edward King.

**2006 Organizational Excellence Award
– Air Mobility Warfare Center (now USAF EC)**

2006 AMC Verne Orr Award – AMWC

**2006 Air Force and Air Mobility Command
Chaplain Noncommissioned Officer of the Year
– Staff Sgt. Jennifer Rose**

**2006 AF and AMC Logistics Readiness
Instructor of the Year
– Tech. Sgt. Eric Smathers**

**2006 AMC Outstanding Judge Advocate of the Year
– Capt. Robert Jarman**

**2006 AMC Outstanding Senior NCO Paralegal of the Year
– Master Sgt. Patricia Granan**

**2006 AMC Chaplain Team
USAF EC – Lt. Col. John Ditter, Tech. Sgt. Philip Griffin,
and Staff Sgt. Jennifer Rose**

**2006 AMC Outstanding Public Affairs Noncommissioned Officer
(Numbered AF or higher)
– Tech. Sgt. Scott Sturkol**

**2006 AMC Personnel Manager of the Year Jr. NCO
– Tech. Sgt. Bridgette Falosk**

**2006 AMC Security Forces Billy Jack Carter Award
– Tech. Sgt. Michael McHone**

**2006 Brandon Hall Research "Excellence in Learning" Gold Award
for Custom Design - Mobility Operations School**

**Bronze Star Award
– Tech. Sgt. Vandiver Hood, Staff Sgt. Michael Tesch**

**Defense Meritorious Service Medal
– Tech. Sgt. Michael McHone**