

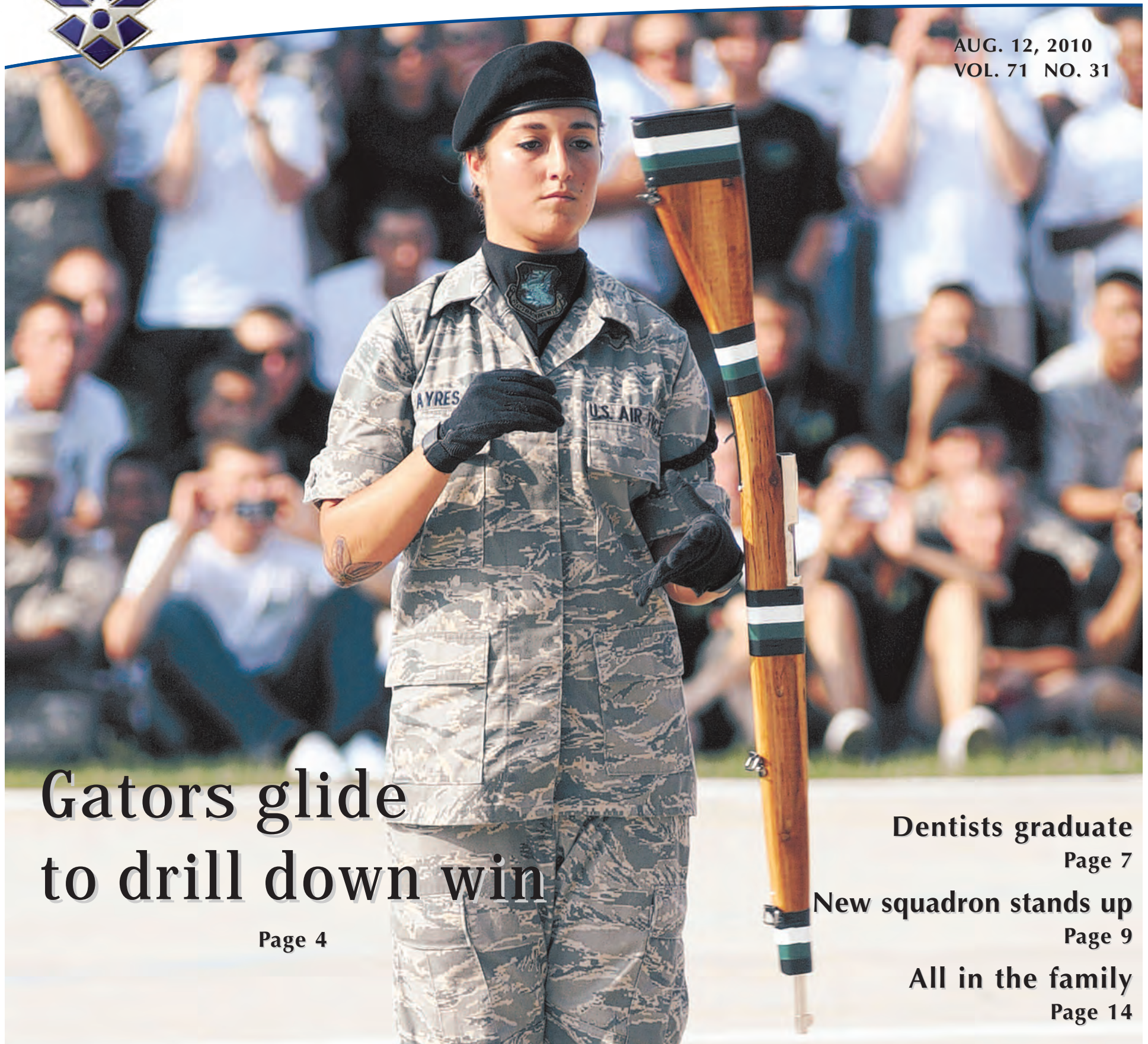


# KEESLER NEWS

KEESLER AIR FORCE BASE, BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI

Train to Fight. Train to Win.

AUG. 12, 2010  
VOL. 71 NO. 31



## Gators glide to drill down win

Page 4

Dentists graduate  
Page 7

New squadron stands up  
Page 9

All in the family  
Page 14

INSIDE

Commentary, 2-3 Training and Education, 4-7 News and Features, 8-22 Sports and Recreation, 23

[www.keesler.af.mil](http://www.keesler.af.mil)

## Thanks, Team Keesler – What a Week!

By Brig. Gen. Andrew Mueller

81st Training Wing commander

Keri and I want to sincerely thank everyone for all of your hospitality in welcoming us to Keesler. Both of us are thoroughly impressed with the base facilities and even more impressed with the wonderful people we continue to meet every day. We feel privileged to be joining such a great team!

The change-of-command ceremony on Monday was outstanding. Maj. Gen. Mary Kay Hertog, 2nd Air Force commander; Brig. Gen. Ian Dickinson, the departing wing commander, and I thank all of you who had a hand in making this a special event, particularly those who endured the heat to stand in formation. The honor guard looked sharp and the Keesler Ensemble's rendition of our National Anthem was beautiful.

While my week started with the change of command, this was far from the only highlight. That very afternoon I was pleased to join the Keesler First Sergeants Association at the monthly wing promotion ceremony. What a nice way for family, friends and supervisors to recognize Keesler's newest promotees.

Wednesday evening, I joined with our Services team to celebrate with those Airmen whose birthdays are in August. The team at the Magnolia



Photo by Kemberly Groue

General Mueller was the reviewing official at Friday's drill down competition.

Dining Facility led by Van Wilson put on a wonderful birthday dinner. I can't wait for September's birthday dinner — I'll be having the steak!

Thursday morning, I was privileged to meet retired Col. Derrel Dempsey. The Air Force's annual Air Traffic Control Manager of the Year award is named after him. He spoke at the air traffic control apprentice course graduation at which his grandson graduated.

Thursday evening, I was honored to host the annual senior noncommis-

sioned officer induction ceremony where the fifth Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Bob Gaylor, welcomed our newest senior NCOs to the "Top Three" leadership ranks. He challenged our newest senior NCOs to put their "name on the mailbox" and take ownership of what we do here at Keesler. He truly made it a special evening for all of us.

Master Sgt. Ezra Kahn did a great job orchestrating this event. Equally impressive was Carmen Steed and her

team of Services folks who juggled a variety of challenges to serve an outstanding dinner in the Roberts Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Facility. I look forward to seeing what Carmen and her team will do working out of the new Bay Breeze Events Center that opens in September.

Friday, I reviewed a top-notch competition at the 81st Training Group's drill down. What a superb display of teamwork, cooperation and competitive spirit — qualities which will serve our airmen well throughout their Air Force careers. The student drum and bugle corps, led by Airman 1st Bradley Williams, put on an equally impressive show.

While Master Sgt. Kathleen Pasquini and her team of judges determined the 334th Training Squadron to be the best this day, in my mind everyone who participated was a winner for sure.

Also on Friday, I watched Lt. Col. Craig Williams take command of the 345th Airlift Squadron. The flying mission here at Keesler is an important one, and this active-duty squadron will add tremendous capability to the 403rd Wing.

Keri and I are proud to be a part of the strong team in place here at Keesler. Thanks again for all you do — Train to Fight, Train to Win!

## Pilot learns what 'Air Force family' really means

By Maj. Joel Neeb

12th Operations Group

RANDOLPH Air Force Base, Texas — Last summer I remember hearing that this was the "Year of the Air Force Family," but it really didn't mean anything to me. Privately, I even wondered if it was just lip service paid to whitewash the toll that increased deployments were having on service members. I went on with my daily routine and pretty much forgot about it.

Then, in February, my life changed forever. I was diagnosed with stage three appendix cancer, and I needed major surgery immediately, followed by six months of chemotherapy. One day I was fighting to become a Thunderbird pilot and the next I was quite literally fighting for my life.

Unbelievably, at this same time, a dangerous quarter-sized lump was discovered in my 3-year-old son's left lung, and we were both under the knife within

weeks of each other. My worst nightmares were coming true, and I was terrified. My life was turning upside down, and I didn't know where to turn.

That's when the Air Force stepped in. When I woke up from surgery, I was surrounded by members of my squadron who came to be by my side. Within days of my diagnosis, wives of military members I had never even met before were beating down my door with meals for my family. My wing commander and operations group commander visited to find out what they could do to help. The co-workers in my office got together and split up my duties so I wouldn't be burdened with any unfinished work. My parents were flown out to be at my side. My medical travel, bills and future appointments were all taken care of by an Air Force medical liaison.

I was truly humbled by how quickly and passionately my brothers-in-arms moved to help out my family. But I realized that this was no different than how I've

seen them respond to others during stressful times in the past. I've witnessed countless meals made for parents of newborn children, help and support for families of deployed members and squadrons banding together to care for the grieving family of a loved one lost. That's just what we do in the Air Force.

I don't know if we realize how special this is. I can think of no corporation in the civilian sector where the CEO would personally visit to find out how he could help during a tragedy, as my wing commander did for me. There's no other community in the world that takes care of each other like we do. We may have to deal with long periods away from home and the stress of combat, often for less money than our civilian counterparts, but we are all in this together.

The truth is, we are a family, and I couldn't have made it through the last six months without you. I hope you never have to go through what I did, but if you do, rest assured that your Air Force family will be there.

## ON THE COVER

Airman 1st Class Katlyn Ayres, freestyle drill master for the 334th Training Squadron, twirls a rifle during Friday's 81st Training Group drill down competition. The Gators claimed first place in all three categories — freestyle drill, open ranks and regulation drill — to win the overall title for the third time this season. Story, more photos, Page 4.

Photo by Kemberly Groue



## KEESLER NEWS

**81st Training Wing  
commander**

Brig. Gen. Andrew Mueller

**Public affairs director**

Jerry Taranto

**Editor**

Susan Griggs

**Photojournalist**

Kemberly Groue

**Graphics designer**

Steve Hoffmann

**Public affairs staff**

Billy Bell

Tim Coleman

Jonathan Hicks

Staff Sgt.

Kimberly Moore

Senior Airman

Eric Summers

Joel Van Nice

1st Lt. Joost Verduyn

YoLanda Wallace

The Keesler News office is in Room 201A, Wall Studio, Building 0902. The mailing address: 81TRW/PAIN, Keesler AFB, MS 39534-2120. Phone: 377-4130, 3837, 3163 or 9966. Published Thursday. News deadline: noon Monday. Editorial content edited, prepared and provided by the 81st TRW Public Affairs Office is in compliance with Air Force journalistic standards. Photos are Air Force photos unless otherwise indicated.

The Keesler News is published by Gulf Publishing Co., a private firm in no way connected with the Air Force, under an exclusive written contract with the 81st TRW as an authorized publication for U.S. military service members. Contents aren't necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, Department of Defense or Air Force. Advertising doesn't constitute endorsement by the U.S. government, DOD, Air Force or Gulf Publishing of products or services advertised. Everything advertised shall be available without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other non-merit factor.



## DRAGON ON THE STREET

By Kemberly Groue

Keesler News photojournalist

What is  
your  
personal  
motto?



"I would rather try and struggle than to not try at all."

**Airman 1st Class Shelby Parry, 338th Training Squadron**



"I like to treat others as I would like to be treated myself."

**John Scurrah, 81st Diagnostics and Therapeutics Squadron**



"Integrity first — to be the best that I can be and serve my fellow Airmen."

**Tech. Sgt. Robert Tuggle, 403rd Maintenance Squadron**

# TRAINING AND EDUCATION



Photos by Kemberly Groue

Airman Basic Chance Walker, 335th TRS, hits the ground during the freestyle competition. His squadron placed second in that category.

## Gators grab another drill down win

By Susan Griggs

Keesler News editor

The 334th Training Squadron claimed its third overall drill down title for 2010 in Friday's 81st Training Group competition.

The 334th TRS Gators, winners of the February and April contests, took first place in all three categories — open ranks, regulation drill and freestyle drill.

The Dark Knights from the 338th TRS, who hold last year's overall drill down title and won the June contest, came in second place this time with a second in regulation drill and a third in freestyle drill.

Third place overall went to the 336th TRS Red Wolves, with third place finishes in regulation drill and open ranks.

The 332nd TRS Mad Dogs finished second in open ranks and the 335th TRS Bulls placed second in freestyle drill.

The 334th TRS fielded three separate teams for the competition, with Airman 1st Class Joe Streets as head drill master.

Airman Basic Christopher Martin was drill master for regulation drill. Team members are



From left, Airmen Basic Sherman Brooks, Airman 1st Class Shatavis Andrews, Airman Basic Jason Stamps and Airman 1st Class Brett Tucker were part of the 336th TRS team that came in third in Friday's drill down.

Airman Basic Joshua Byrd, Joseph Herndon, James Pace and Melissa Minenna; Airman Nick Falconer and Airman 1st Class Daniel Triglianios.

Airman 1st Class Kaylyn Ayres was rifles drill master for the freestyle drill team. Team members are Airmen Basic Anthony Scott and Shawna Johnson and Airmen 1st Class Samantha Gara, Devin A. John-

son, Devin M. Johnson, Matthew Lee, Colin Nelson and Lawrence Stephens.

Airman Streets led the open ranks team, which included Airman Basic Amber Acosta and Airmen Herndon, Lee, Falconer, Stephens, Gara and Shawna Johnson.

The season's final drill down is 8 a.m. Oct. 15 on the parade field.

Don't drink and drive.

Call

Airmen Against Drunk Driving,  
377-SAVE,  
for a safe ride home.

More than 200 saves so far this year

# 'Legend' speaks at grandson's graduation

By Susan Griggs

Keesler News editor

A living legend in the air traffic control field came to Keesler Aug. 5 to speak at his grandson's graduation from the 334th Training Squadron's air traffic control course.

Retired Col. Derrel Dempsey, who's recognized in the Air Force's Communications and Information Hall of Fame, is the grandfather of Airman Kiefer Luth.

Mr. Dempsey has 30 years of Air Force aviation experience as chief of air traffic control, flight inspection pilot, radar approach control and control tower officer and air traffic control staff officer at various assignments around the world.

He supervised the largest military air traffic control organization in the free world, pursued wartime aircraft surge launch and recovery procedures doubling the capability to launch and recover fighter forces during wartime and contingencies, initiated a pro-

gram to develop chemical warfare capabilities for air traffic controllers and developed air traffic control enlisted and officer career development and training programs.

During the Vietnam Conflict, he logged 1,000 combat-coded flying hours in the C-140A Jetstar and eventually earned pilot qualifications in 10 different Air Force aircraft. As chief of air traffic control and landing systems at the Air Force Communication Service from 1977 to 1979, he defended Air Force budgets of more than \$200 million to modernize tactical and fixed air traffic control and landing systems.

In his final assignment as deputy chief of staff for Air Force Communication Command's air traffic services, he deployed more than 642 combat-ready Air Force air traffic controllers to 75 Federal Aviation Administration facilities during the 1981 air traffic controller strike.

After he retired from the Air



Photo by Kemberly Groue

**Retired Chief Master Sgt. Chris Moore, left, a former air traffic controller, talks with retired Col. Derrel Dempsey as the colonel's grandson, Airman 1st Class Kiefer Luth, 334th TRS, listens and learns.**

Force in 1984, Mr. Dempsey continued to work for the modernization of air traffic control

systems as a civilian contractor for another 10 years.

The Air Force's award for

the most outstanding air traffic control officer manager of the year is named in his honor.

## Development chief selected to participate in leadership program

Keesler Public Affairs

Kim Adams, 81st Training Support Squadron, is one of 38 area business leaders selected to participate in the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Gulf Coast program for 2010-2011.

Leadership Gulf Coast is a nine-month program designed to prepare current and potential leaders for the future and help participants understand problems and opportunities in local communities and along the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Ms. Adams, chief of training development for the faculty development flight, oversees courses supporting more than 1,400 faculty and staff members in the 81st Training Group. She's been employed



Ms. Adams

at Keesler for 21 years.

Jerry Taranto, public affairs director, and Susan Griggs, Keesler News editor, contributed to this report.

Identity theft is a personal nightmare and security risk.

Shred bills, statements, letters, old journals, records, outdated application forms and any documents that contain your full name, Social Security number, duty title and job information, credit card, bank account numbers and names of family members.

If you see documents being removed from trash cans, call the 81st Security Forces Squadron law enforcement desk, 377-3040.

# Dentists complete Keesler training

By Steve Pivnick

## 81st Medical Group Public Affairs

Ten dentists were honored during an Aug. 3 graduation ceremony in the 81st Medical Group Hospital's Don Wylie auditorium.

Advanced Education in General Dentistry graduates and their new assignments are Capts. (Drs.) Joshua Breeding (Beale Air Force Base, Calif.), Cynthia Dominessy (Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, then Yokota AB, Japan), John Dusenbury (Keesler), Peter Frandsen (Hill AFB, Utah), Anthony Kasallis (Royal Air Force Lakenheath, United Kingdom), Nicholas Polczynski (Whiteman AFB, Mo.), David Schindler (Kunsan AB, Korea, then Bolling AFB, D.C.) and Paula Stepp (Incirlik AB).

General practice residency graduates and their assignment are Capts. (Drs.) Jonathan Gerik (Eielson AFB, Alaska) and Jessica Milburn (Keesler).

Lt. Col. (Dr.) Karyn Young, Air Force Dental Corps education and assimilation

officer at the Air Force Personnel Center, Randolph AFB, Texas, was guest speaker for the event. She was assigned to the 81st DS from 2006-2009 as deputy director of the AEGD-1 residency.

The AEGD-1 residency is a postgraduate educational program offering recent dental graduates advanced professional education beyond the undergraduate level. This 52-week program conforms to the standards set by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association. Col. (Dr.) Howard Roberts, 81st DS, is program director.

The general practice residency also is a 52-week program for dentists new to the Air Force. It also provides advanced training above that which was attained in dental school. The primary goal of the program is to train dentists to provide comprehensive dental care at any assignment. Unlike the AEGD program, GPR residents are required to do rotations of at least 70 hours each in anesthesia and medicine. Lt. Col. (Dr.) James Kiser, 81st DS, is program director.

Make summer time your safety time.



# AETC gearing up for 2011 Symposium

By Capt. John Severns

## AETC Public Affairs

RANDOLPH Air Force Base, Texas — Airmen who want to participate in the Air Force's premier academic and technical showcase can now put a date on their calendars for the 2011 Air Education and Training Command Symposium and AETC Ball.

The event, co-sponsored by the Alamo Chapter of the Air Force Association, will be held Jan. 20-21 at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio, according to Jim Sturch, director of AETC event planning and this year's event.

"This will be the fifth year we've held the AETC Symposium, and every year it has gotten better," Mr. Sturch

said. "The seminars and discussion forums led by our education and training experts offer Airmen a first-hand look at the cutting edge of Air Force training and education, and literally provides a window to the future of our Air Force."

The 2010 symposium featured more than 100 seminars and was attended by 3,700 Airmen from across the services, according to event organizers. Mr. Sturch said he expected similar numbers for the 2011 symposium.

For more information about the Symposium, log on to [www.aetcsymposium.com](http://www.aetcsymposium.com). Military units interested in a booth at the expo can also register at the website.

## TRAINING, EDUCATION NOTES

### Drill down, parade

**Drill down** — 8 a.m. Oct. 15.

**Parade** — 6 p.m. Sept. 16.

For more information on drill downs, call Tech. Sgt. Julie Hammond, 377-2103. For information on parades, call Staff Sgt. Gregory Washington, 377-2789.

### CCAF fall graduation

The last day to apply for the Community College of the Air Force fall graduating class is Aug. 27.

By that date, all supporting documentation must be on file at CCAF at Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base, Ala., including the nomination action request. For more information, visit the education office, Room 224, Sablich Center or call 376-8708.

### Commissioning briefings

Commissioning briefings are 10 a.m. Tuesdays in Room 224, Sablich Center.

### CCAF online

Visit the Air Force Virtual Education Center, <https://www.my.af.mil/afvecprod>, to create

MyAFVEC accounts to access online customer service tools.

People can request and track Community College of the Air Force transcripts, view degree progress reports and see if a course counts toward a CCAF degree.

### OTS boards

The Officer Training School recruiting services board schedule is:

**11OT01** — rated board; application cutoff Dec. 2; board date Jan. 24-28, estimated release date Feb. 25.

**11OT02** — nonrated board; application cutoff Feb. 24; board date April 11-15; estimated release date June 2.

**11OT03** — rated as needed; application cutoff June 23, board date Aug. 8-12, 2011; estimated release date Sept. 9, 2011.

### GI Bill benefits

Montgomery GI Bill benefits may be used in conjunction with tuition assistance.

For more information, call 376-8708.



## Former top enlisted leader visits Keesler

The fifth Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Robert Gaylor, speaks at the senior noncommissioned officer induction ceremony Aug. 5 at the Roberts Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Facility. During his whirlwind one-day visit, Chief Gaylor also spoke at Airman Leadership School, Mathies NCO Academy and an enlisted call. In addition to touring the base and meeting with senior leadership, the retired chief had breakfast with the Keesler 5/6 Council, lunch with the Top III and participated in a guard mount with the 81st Security Forces Squadron.

Photo by Kemberly Groue

## Child care fees change to maintain quality services

By Lisa Daniel

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department is adjusting its child care fees, adding categories for its highest income earners, to compensate for six years without fee range increases, Pentagon officials announced July 30.

DOD's Military and Community Family Policy Office has added three categories to the top of its fee schedule to go into effect by Sept. 30, said Barbara Thompson, director of the office of family policy, children and youth.

Each service will issue specific fee guidelines, including exceptions to the fee schedule, and adopt fees within the policy office's ranges, she said.

Cherrie Tiggeman, chief of airman and family services for the 81st Force Support Squadron, attended a nonappropriated fund human resources conference last week in Southbridge, Mass., where the new fees were discussed.

"We're gathering financial data from our parents and looking at the fee ranges," Ms. Tiggeman said. "We'll be issuing the new fees no later than Sept. 1 with a planned implementation date of Oct. 1."

The adjustment brings the number of fee categories to nine, causing some people to move into different categories, Ms. Thompson said. In the previous fee schedule, which has been in effect since 2004, everyone with a total family income of \$70,001 or more was in Category VI, the top level, and paid an average of \$124 per child per week.

Under the new schedule, families with a total family income between \$73,501 and \$85,000 will be in Category VI, and will pay between \$122 and \$130 per child per week, still under \$3 per hour for a 50-hour week, Ms. Thompson said.

Here is the new fee schedule:

**Category I** — people with incomes

of \$29,400 or below will pay between \$44-\$59 per week;

**Category II** — people with incomes from \$29,401 to \$35,700 will pay between \$60-\$74 per week;

**Category III** — people with incomes from \$35,701 to \$46,200 will pay between \$75-\$90 per week;

**Category IV** — people with incomes from \$46,201 to \$57,750 will pay between \$91-\$105 per week;

**Category V** — people with incomes from \$57,751 to \$73,500 will pay between \$106-\$121 per week;

**Category VI** — people with incomes from \$73,501 to \$85,000 will pay between \$122-\$130 per week;

**Category VII** — people with incomes from \$85,001 to \$100,000 will pay between \$131-\$133 per week;

**Category VIII** — people with incomes from \$100,001 to \$125,000 will pay between \$134-\$136 per week;

**Category IX** — people with

incomes of \$125,001 or above will pay between \$137-\$139 per week.

There's a high-cost option for installations that meet specific criteria due to the high cost of living and high staff salaries.

Military child care is known as a model for the nation, and funding is evenly split by fees and federal subsidies, Ms. Thompson said.

The increased fees are necessary to maintain high quality of care, Ms. Thompson said, noting the changes come after two years of study that found the fees weren't keeping up with inflation and family income.

"We understand that these are tough economic times for families, but we did this very deliberately after careful study," she said. "When you look at what you're getting for your child care fees, it's a wonderful opportunity in a high-quality care environment."

Susan Griggs, Keesler News editor, contributed to this report.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Ryan Labadens

Col. David Kasberg, left, 19th Airlift Wing Operations Group commander, passes the guidon to Colonel Williams at Friday's ceremony as Senior Master Sgt. Rogers Trahan, 345th AS first sergeant, looks on.

## 345th Airlift Squadron reactivated

By Tech. Sgt. Ryan Labadens

### 403rd Wing Public Affairs

In a ceremony held Friday at the Roberts Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Facility, the 345th Airlift Squadron was officially reactivated as an active associate unit to the 403rd Wing.

Reservists from the 815th AS and 403rd Maintenance Group have partnered with their active-duty counterparts from the 345th AS as part of the Air Force's total force integration initiative. The TFI initiative not only provides active-duty and reserve members with the opportunity to work and train together, but also helps reduce operational costs to the taxpayers.

The 345th AS is the first C-130J active associate unit in the Air Force and the third active associate unit to activate under its parent wing, the 19th Airlift Wing from Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark.

Within the next few months, the 345th AS will integrate 112 aircraft maintenance, operations and support personnel with the 403rd Wing.

"The active-duty operations personnel have been great to work with," said Lt. Col. Denson Tutwiler, 815th AS commander. "They understand the Citizen Airman. Some of them have backgrounds in strategic airlift, so they have worked with Reservists in the past."

The 345th AS's new commander, Lt. Col. Craig Williams, echoed the importance of the working relationship between Citizen Airmen and active-duty personnel.

"Establishing and maintaining an excellent

working relationship is paramount," Col. Williams said. "There are some areas where we both need to learn and understand the culture in which we work. Once that is accomplished, all things are possible, just like in any other unit."

Chief Master Sgt. Vincent Armata, 403rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron superintendent, stressed the importance of seamlessly integrating the active-duty and reserve members.

He said that "the bottom line with total force integration is to train together and ensure that the deployment package is manned with people who have the right skill sets to accomplish the mission."

Master Sgt. Mark Palmer, 345th AS tactical flight chief, reiterated Chief Armata's position on blending the active-duty and Reserve units.

"We're as deeply integrated as you can get. There is no split," Sergeant Palmer said. "You walk into any section down here and you're going to see active duty and reservists all working together doing the same job."

Colonel Williams noted one benefit in particular that both units can gain from total force integration: experience.

"The 345th personnel as a whole do not have extensive background on the C-130J, with a few exceptions," said Colonel Williams. "We have maintainers from a variety of backgrounds, like F-15 and F-16, and we also have C-5 and C-17 loadmasters here and inbound. They need to learn the J-model now, something they can readily pick up from the 403rd due to their experience on this airframe."

## IN THE NEWS



## 10 weeks until Unit Compliance Inspection

### Clinics closed for warrior training

#### 81st Medical Group Public Affairs

The 81st Medical Group is conducting warrior training, noon to 5 p.m. today.

Family practice, internal medicine, pediatrics and general surgery clinics each have one doctor available for urgent appointments. For urgent situations, call central appointments at 1-800-700-8603 or report to the emergency room.

Although pharmacy, radiology and laboratory services are open, they'll have reduced staffing, so patients are asked to delay visits during warrior training.

For emergency situations such as shortness of breath, chest or abdominal pain or bleeding with pregnancy, go to the nearest emergency room or call 911 for an ambulance.

### Construction closes part of I-81

A portion of the I-81 running track near the Bay Breeze Events Center is closed until Monday for construction at the entrance of the facility from the golf cart crossing on the west side of the events center to the drinking fountain next to I-81 on the east side of the facility.

Runners shouldn't detour on Ploesti Drive or the golf course.

### Force supporting oil spill cut back

The Mississippi National Guard is cutting the number of Soldiers supporting ongoing oil spill response operations by 75 percent in a multiphase reduction that began last week.

Aug. 1, there were nearly 230 National Guard soldiers activated. By Aug. 20, the count will resemble those activated early on, about 50 soldiers, said Col. Lee Smithson, commander of Joint Task Force Vigilant Horizon, which is overseeing the Mississippi National Guard's response to the oil spill impacting Mississippi.

The soldiers have been housed at Keesler. The base is designated by U.S. Northern Command as the base support installation for Department of Defense forces responding to the ongoing oil spill response operations.

### Wing calendar event-planning

The 81st Training Wing events calendar at <http://www.keesler.af.mil/events/index.asp> is designed to help organizers avoid conflicts with other events.

Once an official date is set, event planners should send details to the public affairs organizational box, 81trw.pa@keesler.af.mil. Most items are posted within one business day.

Items that must be included are the name of event, date, time, location and a point of contact.

Events should be coordinated and approved through respective chains of command and be mission-relevant to a wide audience. All inputs are subject to review and editing by the 81st Training Wing Public Affairs office.

**Dragons deployed — 298**



# PERSONNEL NOTES

## Clearing outstanding travel orders

### 81st Comptroller Squadron.

If outstanding travel orders aren't processed promptly, the 81st Training Wing could lose valuable funding at end of the fiscal year. The overall responsibility lies with the member. All official travelers are responsible for filing their travel vouchers within five days of returning from temporary duty. If your orders are revoked or canceled, members should notify the finance office as soon as they receive notification.

If your travel orders were created in the Defense Travel System, the member should file the voucher immediately upon return from temporary duty. Orders that are canceled must be canceled by the member and approving official in DTS. If an airline ticket is involved, work with the central ticketing office to receive credit for the ticket.

For travel-related inquiries, call the finance contact center, 376-8225.

## New submittal policy for finance

### 81st Comptroller Squadron.

To meet Air Force guidelines, enhance productivity and utilize electronic applications, the 81st Comptroller Squadron will no longer accept hard copy documents that can be processed through MyPay or eFinance as of Aug. 15.

The electronic applications help us ensure your documents are submitted to the Air Force Financial Services Center for processing with greater accuracy and more accountability than our current processes, thereby proving you a better quality product with less time waiting in the queue," said Lt. Col. RandolphToris, 81st CPTS commander.

Information about MyPay, eFinance and most financial questions can be found by logging into the Air Force Portal, selecting "Life and Career," then "Money-Welcome to Virtual Finance." There are links to all major financial systems, frequently asked questions and instant advice pages.

For more information, call 2nd Lt. William Kiser, 376-8189, or e-mail the financial services office at 81 CPTS/Contact Center on the Keesler global address listing.

## Classes for job hunters

Job hunters can improve their chances for success with several upcoming classes at the airman and family readiness center.

All classes are held in the center's conference room in Sablich Center. There's a limit of 10 people per class.

**Federal format resume writing** — 9:30 a.m. today and Aug. 26; 2 p.m. Sept. 16 or 30, Oct. 14, Nov. 17 and Dec. 9; and 3 p.m. Oct. 28.

**Civilian format resume writing** — 9:30 a.m. Aug. 19; 2 p.m. Sept. 9, Oct. 7 or 21, Nov. 4 and Dec. 2 or 16; and 3 p.m. Sept. 23.

**Career choices** — noon to 2:30 p.m. Aug. 26, Sept. 23 and Oct. 29.

**Interview skills and salary negotiation** — 11 a.m. Aug. 24, Sept. 28, Oct. 26, Nov. 23 and Dec. 28.

Registration is required.

For more information, call 376-8728 or e-mail lana.smith.1@us.af.mil.

## Military personnel contacts

Military personnel section phone numbers:

**Customer support** — 376-8738.

**Career development** — 376-8739.

**Force management** — 376-8740.

**Student personnel center** — 377-4111.

**Testing** — 376-4111.

## New hires now automatically enrolled in TSP

### Air Force Personnel Center

RANDOLPH Air Force Base, Texas — New legislation that called for automatic enrollment of newly hired and eligible civilian federal employees, as well as certain rehires, into the Thrift Savings Plan began Aug. 1.

This is in compliance with the June 22, 2009, TSP Enhancement Act that authorizes federal agencies to establish automatic enrollment for all eligible Federal Employees' Retirement System and Civil Service Retirement System employees. They'll have 3 percent of their base pay automatically deposited into their TSP account.

TSP is a tax-deferred retirement and savings plan for federal employees similar to 401(k) accounts in the private sector. The plan offers six different funds ranging from short-term U.S. Treasury securities to index funds comprised of domestic and international stocks.

Employees may stop their contributions during their first pay period to prevent contributions from automatically being deducted from their pay. Employees may also request a refund of automatic contributions and associated earnings within 90 days of the date TSP receives the first automatic contribution.

Rehired employees who were separated for less than 31 days will not be automatically enrolled.

Employees may change the percentage or amount of their contributions, start or stop their contributions at any time.

For employees covered by FERS, Air Force officials will match dollar-for-dollar the first 3 percent of employees' contributions from their base pay; the next 2 percent will be matched at 50 cents on the dollar.



## Program aids military voters with absentee ballot process

### **Federal Voting Assistance Program**

All 50 states, three territories and the District of Columbia hold general elections Nov. 2. Puerto Rico won't be holding an election this cycle.

All military members, their family members and citizens residing outside the U.S. who haven't registered or requested an absentee ballot this year should do so as soon as possible.

To register or request an absentee ballot, use the Federal Post Card Application. Go to [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov), follow the prompts to register and request an absentee ballot for the Nov. 2 election. Some states allow submitting the FPCA by e-mail or fax, in addition to regular mail. The instructions will tell you how to fax or email the form.

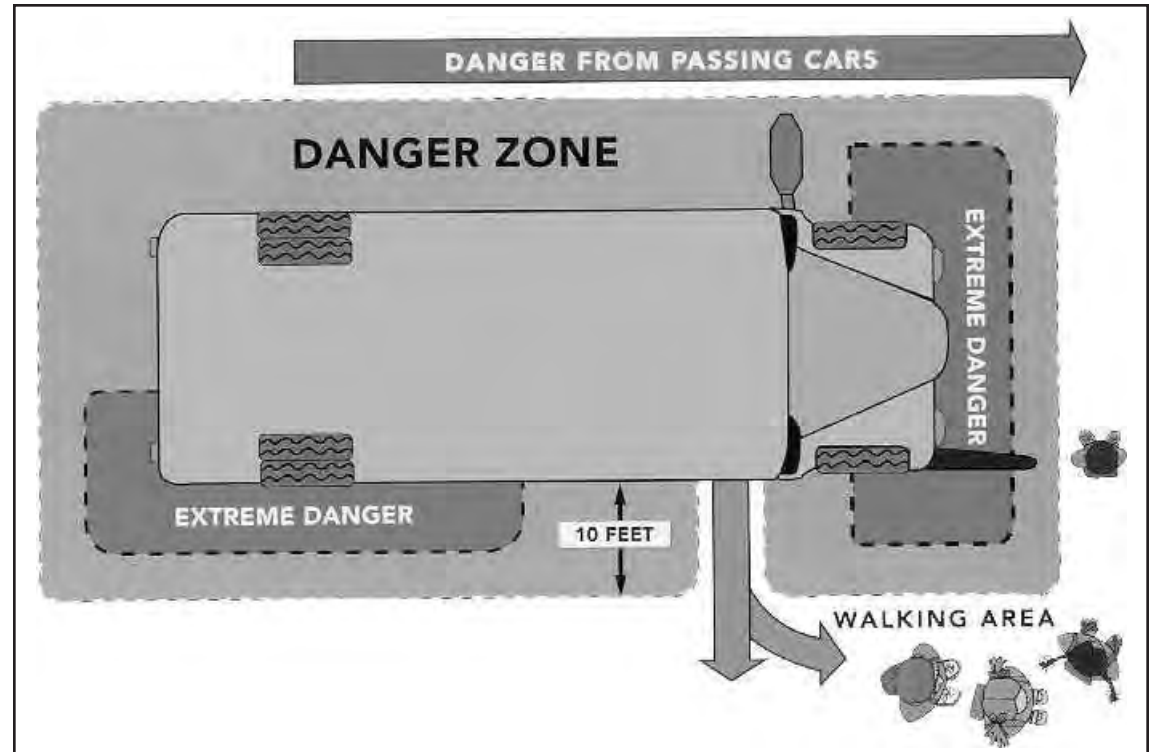
If you don't have access to the Internet to fill out the FPCA online, get a copy from your unit or installation voting assistance officer.

Keesler's installation voting officer is Terrance Owens, 377-3774, [terrance.owens@us.af.mil](mailto:terrance.owens@us.af.mil).

## **CORRECTION**

Bobby Green, a third-year law student at Loyola University in New Orleans, is the author of a "Legal Briefs" article in the Aug. 5 issue of the Keesler News. His name was listed incorrectly in the byline.

# 101 CRITICAL DAYS OF SUMMER



Certain areas around a stopped school bus hold particular danger for bus riders — there are “blind spots” for the driver, and passing cars may not see children in their path.

## Rules to live by: tips for parents to keep schoolchildren safe

### Safety office

Now that the new school year is under way, here are some tips for driving safely through school zones

**Expect the unexpected.** Children may cross the street at the wrong place or unexpectedly run or ride in front of you.

**Know what is around you.** It’s easier to anticipate that children or parents might do the unexpected if you’re aware that they’re there.

**Be courteous and patient.** Parents who are running late may need to get back into traffic after dropping their child off. Give them a break.

**Obey all laws.** Don’t travel faster than 15 miles per hour, and travel even slower if there are a number of children along the road or crossing the street. Come to a full stop at intersections.

**Be predictable.** Don’t make sudden maneuvers that others, particularly children on foot or on a bicycle, aren’t expecting.

**Don’t be distracted.** Put down the coffee, put down the cell phone and put both hands on the wheel. Avoid distractions within your vehicle, including loud music.

**Secure your children.** Ensure your children are secured in a correctly installed child restraint system.

**Yield to pedestrians.** It isn’t just courteous — it’s Mississippi law.

**Stop for the bus.** In either direction, if a school bus has its red lights flashing, you must stop. If the bus is outfitted with flashing yellow lights, anticipate it will soon stop and children may be crossing in front of you.

**Avoid traffic.** If possible, park a block away and walk your child the rest of the way to limit traffic around your child’s school.

**Follow the pattern.** If your school has implemented a traffic plan for drop off and pick up, follow it. If your school doesn’t have a plan, contact the principal and suggest that one be developed.

**Try walking.** Walk your child to school to reduce traffic congestion and improve health.

**Minimize traffic exposure.** Drop children off on the school side of the street. Avoid having them cross the street.

**Look in both directions.** Teach your child to look in all directions — left, right, behind and front — and then to walk cautiously when crossing a street.

News tips?  
Call the Keesler News, 377-4130,  
or e-mail keeslernews@us.af.mil

## All in the family

Retired Maj. Jack Jordan, left, administers the oath of office to his daughter, Maj. Amber Barker, during her July 30 promotion ceremony in the 81st Medical Group Hospital's Don Wylie Auditorium. Other members of Major Barker's family were her mother Jenny; sister Maj. Amalia DiVittorio, a nurse at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., and brother Staff Sgt. John Jordon, Barksdale AFB, La. Major and Mrs. Jordan reside in Tulsa, Okla., where he is an Air Force Junior ROTC instructor. The new major is element leader and nurse manager of the 81st Inpatient Operations Squadron's family birthing center.

Photo by Steve Pivnick



# Blood donor center saves lives one pint at a time

By Steve Hoffmann

Keesler News staff

The Keesler Blood Donor Center is one of only three Air Force blood donor centers in the U.S. and among 81 blood banks and blood donor centers worldwide. It is part of the Armed Services Blood Program, a joint health agency created to coordinate the blood programs of the Army, Navy and Air Force.

According to the ASBP, the key to its success is the ability to collect blood from donors at locations worldwide. Blood donor centers, like the one at Keesler, is responsible for collecting, processing and shipping blood products for local use and support of worldwide military operations.

Keesler's blood donor center is located in the Arnold Medical Annex, near the new post office and just off Meadows Drive. Lisa Lynn is the recruiter for the center and is responsible for making sure the center meets its quotas each week.

"Most people don't even know we exist, much less where we are. So we need to go to them," said Ms. Lynn. Through numerous blood drives at various locations on base and other military and federal installations off-base,

Ms. Lynn is able to meet her quotas.

"A pint of blood can actually save three lives," said Ms. Lynn. After blood is drawn from a donor, it is taken back to the center for processing. There it is placed in a centrifuge about the size of a large washing machine and is separated and 'expressed' into its three main components — red blood cells, plasma and platelets.

From there, blood is sent to McGuire Air Force Base, N.J., for further processing and distribution. If the blood is going to Iraq or Afghanistan, it needs to be there within five to seven days from the time it was drawn.

From cancer patients to service members injured on the battlefield, blood is needed for many reasons. And the types of blood are just as varied. Each person has a certain type of blood and is either positive or negative for the presence of the Rh antigen.

"O negs and ABs are the hard part," said Ms. Lynn as she described the challenges of collecting blood. Only 7 percent of the population is O negative. However, the other 93 percent of the population can receive O negative blood, making those with this blood type the universal



Photos by Kemberly Groue

From left, Staff Sgt. Travis Gray, Sheila Mitchell, Robert Moody and Bill Meyer prepare blood to be separated and expressed. They're assigned to the 81st Diagnostics and Therapeutics Squadron.

donor. O negative blood is used in emergency situations when there is no time to test for blood type. ABs are the rarest blood type comprising only 4 percent of the population. Those with AB positive or negative blood types are "universal plasma donors," meaning all other blood types can receive AB plasma.

Along with finding donors with rare blood types, there are a host of other challenges for blood donor centers. Anyone deployed to malaria-endemic regions in the past five years are deferred for one year. Those testing positive or at risk of exposure to HIV or hepatitis are deferred permanently. Recent donations, tattoos, women with iron deficiencies or who are pregnant are among the reasons for partial deferral. Summer and holidays are times when the numbers of donors are typically down.

Still, Ms. Lynn encourages anyone who can get on the base to stop by the donor center and give blood.

Before giving blood, a staff member will walk each donor through a quick pre-screening and registration process which determines eligibility, making



Lab technician Bill Meyer, 81 MDTs, prepares blood for separation in the centrifuge at the blood donor center. The blood is separated into its three main components — red blood cells, plasma and platelets.

sure they meet certain criteria.

Then, a technician will perform a quick physical — recording weight, temperature, pulse and blood pressure of the donor. They also perform a "finger stick" to obtain a small amount of blood to test for hemoglobin. If all measures fall within the accepted

guidelines, it's time to give blood.

"Our center is clean. Our staff is well trained and professional and we have free cookies and drinks when you're finished," said Ms. Lynn.

For more information about donating blood or scheduling blood drives, call 376-6100



From left, Airman 1st Class Andriy Odaysky collects tubes of blood as lab technician Kellie Potts draws a pint of blood from Staff Sgt. Peter Dunn, 338th Training Squadron instructor, during a blood drive at Hewes Hall Aug. 3. Airman Odaysky and Ms. Potts are from the 81st MDTs.

# Supply checklist — don't face storms without it

## Keesler Public Affairs

Now that south Mississippi has reached the midsummer peak of hurricane season, it's a good time for Keesler families to make sure they have the supplies they'll need if a storm targets the area.

This sample checklist can be especially helpful in making preparations to evacuate out of the path of an approaching hurricane. The commissary and main exchange carry all the supplies you'll need.

## Food

**Dried** and canned products, such as fruit, vegetables, milk, juice, bouillon and soup.

**Grains**, nuts, jerky, snacks, trail mix and granola and high-energy bars.

**Condiments**, herbs and spices.

**Instant** coffee, tea and hot chocolate.

**Manual** can opener.

**Paper** plates, cups, napkins and paper towels.

**Fondue** pots fueled by candles or Sterno fuel can be used indoors; propane and fuel stoves or grills can only be used outdoors.

## Safety

**Flashlights.**

**Two** radios — solar or wind-up and battery powered.

**Extra** batteries.

**Fire** extinguisher.

**Hand** tools.

**Plastic** sheeting, duct tape and towels to seal air gaps.

**Blankets.**

**Survival** manual.

**Area map** with highlighted evacuation routes.

**Waterproof** matches and lighter.

**Candles.**

**Battery-operated** lanterns.

## Water

**Store** one gallon per person per day — two quarts for drinking and two quarts for cooking and cleaning.

**Use** clean, sterilized plastic soda bottles or water containers. Date and store in cool, dark place; rotate often.

**Emergency** indoor water sources include ice cubes, reservoir tank of toilet and hot water heater (with gas or electricity off, open drain at bottom of tank, turn off water intake valve and turn on a hot water faucet. Refill tank before turning gas or electricity back on.)

**To disinfect** water, add two or three drops of household bleach per gallon. Shake well and let it set for 30 minutes before using.



Senior store associate Anna Suit replenishes the flashlight stock at the main exchange.

Photo by Kemberly Groue

## PREPARING for the storm



To view Keesler's hurricane preparation video and for the latest hurricane information, log on to <http://www.keesler.af.mil/hurricaneinfo.asp>

## Home

**Sanitation** items such as a portable toilet or 5-gallon trash can with lid and plastic liners, odorless sanitation liquid or tablets and toilet paper.

**Eating** and cooking utensils and containers.

**Needle**, thread and safety pins.

**Forty-gallon** garbage can with lid and plastic liners.

**Cash** and credit card.

**Entertainment** items, such as books, toys, games, crayons, paper, compact disks and deck of cards.

**Change** of clothing and shoes.

**Extra** set of car and house keys.

**Documents** in fireproof safe or airtight plastic container, such as birth and marriage certificates, passports, insurance policies, deeds, recent tax returns, Social Security cards, driver's license, bank accounts, credit card information, stocks, bonds, immunization records and other family information.

## Health

**First aid** kit.

**Family** or pet medications.

**Vitamins** and minerals.

**Feminine** hygiene supplies.

**Waterless** hand cleaner, pre-moistened towelettes, towels, washcloths and soap.

**Household** chlorine bleach.

**Supplies** for babies and the elderly.

**Extra** medications and prescription glasses.

## Car

**Gas tank** should be at least 3/4 full.

**Road maps.**

**Flashlights** and batteries.

**First aid** kit.

**Cell phone** or walkie-talkies.

**Flares.**

**Jumper** cables.

**Blanket.**

**Compact** tent.

**Cash**, change and credit cards.

**Pocket-size** survival manual.

**Light** jacket or rain gear, clothing, socks, shoes and hat.

**Freezer** bags, quart and gallon size.

**Portable** radio with extra batteries.

**Personal** hygiene supplies — toilet paper, feminine supplies, soap, tissues, paper towels, moist wipes, brush, comb, toothbrush, toothpaste, razor and shampoo.

**Health** supplies — multivitamins, energy bars, dried fruit, nuts, jerky, trail mix, water and bleach.

**Safety** supplies — candle lantern, whistle, waterproof matches, lighter, large piece of aluminum foil for cooking if necessary, string, compass, clothespins and pocket knife.

**Miscellaneous** supplies — pen or pencil, paper, extra batteries, glasses, scissors, sunglasses, deck of cards, needle and thread, book, metal cooking pot.

## Pets

**To shelter** at home, store low-protein food to reduce stool volume, water, bowls, puppy training pads, garbage bags for refuse, bed, blanket, familiar toys and crate.

**In case** of evacuation, obtain a pet carrier or crate, and collect identification and vaccination records, registration papers, food, water, medications, muzzle and leash.

Susan Griggs and Staff Sgt. Kimberly Moore contributed to this report.

# Mosquitoes: what's all the buzz-buzz about?

By Senior Airman  
Carlina Moreland

81st Aerospace Medicine Squadron

Mosquito bites are often thought of as annoying and irritating. People rarely correlate the possibility of contracting a potentially fatal disease with being bitten by a mosquito.

Although the panic of vector-borne diseases such as West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis has subsided, it's extremely important that people protect themselves and family members while outdoors. The Gulf Coast climate is well suited for mosquitoes to include the species capable of transmitting West Nile Virus and EEE.

Vector-borne diseases transmitted by mosquitoes occur when they feed on infected animals such as birds or horses. After an incubation period of 10 days to two

weeks, infected mosquitoes can then transmit the virus to humans and animals. Since the virus is located in the mosquito's salivary glands, the virus is then injected into the animal or human when the mosquito feeds (bites).

Currently there has been at least one confirmed case of West Nile Virus in the state of Mississippi. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has also issued an alert to the Gulf Coast region due to the recent deaths of two individuals caused by EEE.

Here are some ways people can protect themselves from mosquitoes while outdoors and ways to reduce breeding areas around the home:

**Stay indoors** at dawn, dusk, and in the early evening.

**Wear** long-sleeved shirts and pants whenever outdoors.

**Apply** insect repellent sparingly to exposed skin. An effective repellent will contain



20 to 35 percent DEET. In high concentrations (greater than 35 percent), DEET may cause side effects, particularly in children. Avoid products containing more than 35 percent DEET.

**Repellents** may irritate the eyes and mouth, so avoid applying repellent to the hands of children. Insect repellents

should not be applied to children younger than 3 years old.

**Spray** clothing with repellents containing permethrin or DEET, as mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing.

**Whenever** using an insecticide or insect repellent, be sure to read and follow the manufacturer's directions for use printed on the product.

**Remove** standing water around the home. Pay special attention to any containers that may collect water such as buckets or flower pots and store them in a manner that would not allow water to accumulate in them.

**Install and use** yellow "bug" lights at exterior door entrances, including garage and carport areas. Yellow "bug" lights attract fewer mosquitoes and other flying insects to the door, reducing the number of uninvited guests in the home.

**Vitamin B**, ultrasonic devices and "bug zappers" aren't effective in preventing mosquito bites or controlling mosquitoes.

For more information, call public health, 376-3163, or log on to the Mississippi Department of Health website, [www.healthmys.com](http://www.healthmys.com), or the Centers for Disease Control website, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

# Pets on the go

## Military relocation requires careful advance planning

By Jonathan Hicks

### Keesler Public Affairs

Pets are a very important part of a family's daily life and relocating with them can be a major concern. When it comes to military relocation, there are several things pet owners should know.

Department of Defense regulations define pets as dogs and cats only. DOD regulations limit pet shipments to passengers in permanent change of station status only, with two pets allowed per family.

For pet safety, soft-sided or collapsible kennels aren't accepted for transportation in the cargo area of the aircraft. All kennels must provide adequate ventilation and be large enough for a pet to stand up, turn around and lie down with normal posture and body movements.

Pets must also have a current health certificate provided by a veterinarian.

Time is another key factor to avoid travel complications or separation from your pet. Miles Burton, 81st Logistic Readiness Squadron passenger travel manager, strongly suggests contacting the transportation office as soon as possible when preparing to PCS with pets.

"The sooner members talk to me about making arrangements for their pets when they PCS the better," Mr. Burton said. "I think 90 days is a good rule of thumb. That way we can reserve their pet a space and have the necessary time to



**Due to safety concerns, soft-sided or collapsible kennels aren't accepted for transportation in the aircraft's cargo area.**

overcome any obstacles that may arise.

"Because I also own pets, I can relate to how Airmen feel about theirs," he continued. "They're like a part of our family. I grew up in a military household where I had to leave behind several pets, so I try to make sure that kind of thing doesn't happen to our Airmen here."

Currently, there's a heat embargo for all pet travel on commercial flights. However, Air Mobility Command does not impose seasonal hot/cold embargoes on pet shipments. Therefore, other travel arrangements may be neces-

sary to reach the AMC departure terminal.

"Members don't have to wait until they have orders in hand to make arrangements for their pets," according to Tech. Sgt. Jesus Gelacio, noncommissioned officer in charge of personal property. "They can still contact us to make the necessary reservations and travel plans for their pets. Because of the limited space available for pets, it's best to make reservations as soon as possible.

"Also remember there is a fee for each pet," Sergeant Gelacio added.

For more information, call the travel office, 376-8520.

## ENERGY AWARENESS

The Air Force is committed to energy efficiency. Everyone -- servicemembers, civilians and family members -- can help save energy and work toward a cleaner future. Here are some "Energy Facts" to think about:

- Each winter, the equivalent of all the oil in the Alaskan oil pipeline is lost as heat through American windows
- "Energy Star" makes a difference. Energy Star tagged appliances typically use 50 percent less energy than their older counterparts
- Every time an oven door is opened, 25-50 degrees of temperature is lost
- Each ton of recycled paper saves the energy equivalent of 380 barrels of oil
- Ceiling fans cost about \$2.40 a month to run 10 hours a day; they can reduce energy bills by \$10
- Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a television for three hours

**Base construction sites  
are off-limits  
without authorization.**

**For lost and found items,  
call the 81st Security Forces Squadron  
investigations office,  
377-4500,  
7 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.**





Photos by Kemberly Groue

Master Sgt. Patrick Key, left, 81st Logistics Readiness Squadron, is getting his hands dirty with his dad, Albert Key, who's on vacation from Canton, Miss. They're restoring a 1962 Ford Galaxy in one of the covered storage units behind the shop.

## Keesler's auto hobby shop services automotive passions and problems

By Steve Hoffmann

Keesler News staff

Where can customers go to get their oil changed, tires rotated and balanced and air conditioner charged and at the end, the mechanic only charges them a few dollars?

These are only a few of the services offered at the base's auto shop. The only stipulation is that the customer does all the work.

"We don't do the work for you. We show you how," said Maria Uele, one of the staff members.

The auto hobby shop, located off Meadows Drive near the post office, has eight service bays, each equipped with a tool box that will allow anyone to do almost anything they might need to repair or maintain their car. Standing by is a mechanic with more than 30 years of experience ready to show the customer how to do it, free of charge.

"Most people are very surprised when they see this place," said Ms. Uele. "They had no idea all these services were available to them."

Service bays are available for \$3.50 per hour. For \$1.50 more per hour, a lift can be used. If a car is being restored, customers can rent a storage unit for \$1 per day. There's also a welding bay and engine cages for the more robust maintenance and repair operations.

Upon entering the shop, customers fill out a service agreement form and tell the shop attendant what they want to do and a service bay is assigned according to their needs.

"We're on a first-name basis with many of the regulars who come in here every 3,000 miles," said Ms. Uele. "We get a lot of 'week-enders' too who say they are just trying to stay out of trouble. They get here before we do."



Hobby shop employee Maria Uele helps a customer recharge an air conditioner, a popular request as recent temperatures have risen to near 100 degrees.

Springtime, when the weather is cooler, is the most popular season for the shop.

"We're getting a lot of A/C requests right now," said Ms. Uele as the recent temperatures have been near 100 degrees.

The auto hobby shop has been serving customers' automotive passions and problems since the early 1980s. Their current location is in a structure that was built just before Hurricane Katrina in 2005. It's fully operational and squeaky clean.

The auto hobby shop is closed Mondays, Tuesdays and holidays.

For more information, call 377-3872.

# Squadron leader recounts year in Afghanistan

By Steve Pivnick

## 81st Medical Group Public Affairs

Col. Susan Bassett's year in Afghanistan may have seemed like a trip back in time.

Colonel Bassett, who assumed command of the 81st Inpatient Operations Squadron July 1, served in the southern Afghanistan province of Kandahar from January-December 2008, assigned to an embedded medical hospital mentoring team for the newly-opened Afghan Army hospital. The then-lieutenant colonel was there to mentor the facility's chief nurse. As the only nurse outside the operating room, she found she had "little choice but to become a mentor to all 30 of the Afghan nurses assigned to the facility."

The U.S. Air Force medical mentoring presence in Afghanistan comes under the umbrella of the Combined Security Transition Command. The command surgeon general's goals are to develop better trained and resourced medical personnel in the Afghan Army Medical Service.

The U.S. Air Force team consisted of 15 medics, each an expert in a specific section of the hospital. They were housed in a small American compound adjacent to the Afghan 205th Headquarters base.

Although Afghan men had cultural customs regarding women, Colonel Bassett observed, "The Afghans treated the two younger (enlisted) gals like favored little sisters, bringing them gifts and small treats. My situation was a little different because I talked a lot about my husband, children and grandchildren. The Afghan men saw me in a more matriarchal light. Furthermore, the Afghan Army's chief nurse in Kabul was a woman so the men were accustomed to having a strong woman in lead nursing roles. The mentoring role just fit for me and I felt very respected." She did note, however, that several Afghan patients questioned how someone carrying a weapon (they noticed the ever-present sidearm in her



**Colonel Bassett holds a baby during the weekly women's clinic. She explained, "We had one Afghan midwife, an Afghan Army major, who was brought secretly from her home to help see the female patients. Only female staff members were permitted to see women and their children."**

holster) could possibly be a woman."

The Kandahar hospital opened its doors in December 2007. The hospital, built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, was a 50-bed facility with four, eight-bed wards. There were two operating rooms and a three-stretcher emergency room. There are plans for all of the four regional Afghan Army hospitals to add additional beds; this is moving forward very quickly in the Kandahar region due to dire necessity.

The colonel continued, "When I first saw the facility, to me it looked like a community hospital you would see in an American small town." However, (Afghan) President (Hamid) Karzai proudly called it the 'Shining Star Trauma Center of Afghanistan.' The Afghan medical personnel provided service 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily, except from noon Thursday through Saturday morning when they closed for the Friday religious day.

As the spring and summer progressed so did the fighting

and so did the Afghan casualties in and around Kandahar and Helmund provinces.

"We actually did do more trauma care than Kabul's 400-bed Afghan Army hospital," Colonel Bassett commented. "One day I was standing at the door to one of the eight-patient rooms. (Among those eight patients) I saw 11 new amputations and five patients with sealed-suction treatment for chest wounds. At that point, I said to myself 'this obviously is no normal American community hospital!'"

Having spent 14 years working in Veterans Affairs hospitals before entering the Air Force, the colonel saw the need for lift equipment to get patients out of bed and proper wheelchairs to care for the severely-immobilized patients. Colonel Bassett related that physical therapy in the hospital was a whole new concept for the Afghans. Even getting patients out of bed was frowned upon.

Discussing the actual nursing issues she encountered, Colonel Bassett said, "The



Courtesy photos

**Colonel Bassett teaches defibrillation to the emergency room staff. The automated external defibrillators spoke CPR response directions in Dari, the variety of Persian spoken in Afghanistan, where it's one of the two official languages.**

nursing practice was of a 1940's style. They organized under a functional model — one nurse gave all meds, one nurse did transports, one nurse did wound care, etc. Although there were female nurses in the community, it just wasn't safe in that region of the country for women to attempt to work outside the home."

She noted, "The Afghan nurses' training averaged about nine months. They did not learn anatomy and physiology. They did not learn about diseases; that was 'doctor business.' They did not learn about drugs; that was 'pharmacy business.' And they did not have patient contact during training. So what did they learn? They learned to do procedures the doctor might request, to start an IV or do an EKG or bandage a wound."

The colonel continued, "Regarding medication administration, basically all meds were left at the patient's bedside, marked with hash marks to tell him how many pills to take each day. It was not the nurses' job to give the patient medication, only to deliver it to him and explain what the doctor had ordered.

"So who cared for the patients? The housekeepers, of course. These guys, for \$10

per week, were pretty awesome. They cleaned (a bit), they did the laundry (except for stains), they gardened, they ran errands and when it was meal time, the housekeepers cooked and served the food to both patients and staff."

The embedded training team was there to help the Afghans understand the new-style machines and procedures in the new hospital, the colonel explained, "so our medical technician, Tech. Sgt. Tony Garcia, and I started with adult-learning, on-the-job teaching. However, it immediately became apparent these nurses simply did not have the basic knowledge to understand what they were doing or why. And they certainly did not have assessment skills enough to support any real decision-making."

Just six weeks into the deployment, the violence spiked and casualties started rolling in. Feb. 17, a car bombing at a dog fight downtown resulted in 70 killed and 70 more wounded.

Colonel Bassett said, "Our 50-bed hospital received 48 patients in 90 minutes — and not one was 'walking wounded.' A mass-casualty

# Afghanistan,

from Page 20

with no one speaking English is pretty close to a nightmare. But we all pitched in — Afghans, our team, U.S. Army Special Forces medics and even British and Canadian mentors in the area. We all just did our best to save lives.”

The violence continued throughout the summer with many improvised explosive device blast victims, rocket-propelled grenade attacks, shootings and vehicle accidents. The hospital saw about 90 percent surgical/orthopedic patients.

“Our team was very proud of the medevac missions. Early on, we built a landing pad on the Afghan compound. By July we had our very first Afghan helicopter (an old Russian Mi17), piloted by Afghan pilots, bringing Afghan soldiers straight from the battlefield to be transported in their ambulances to their hospital for care by an Afghan staff. This truly was a very proud day for all of us mentors,” the colonel recalled.

However, the basic problem remained. The nurses, mostly very close to illiterate themselves, remained vastly undereducated for the tasks put before them. With the help of staff from the “schoolhouse” at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, Colonel Bassett launched a 36-module basic nursing course. Each module was 20 minutes long and contained 10-12 slides, mostly pictures. Every word or bullet had to be fully translated into Dari, the local dialect.

Colonel Bassett commented, “These guys had never experienced our kind of classroom education. They put their bare feet up on the table, they interrupted to ask how much longer I would be talking, they were quick to grab for the papers and pens that I handed out (a sign of a highly-respected “educated man” in their society) whether they could read and write or not!”

The colonel continued, “I had very good attendance, more people than I had on the nursing staff, probably because I employed elementary school techniques of bribes for attendance. On suction- module day I handed out suckers and on unit-dose day I handed out Tootsie Rolls.”

The 36-module basic nursing education was adopted across the country and subsequent mentors have continued to work on developing performance checklists and reference materials for all the Afghan military nurses.

The Afghan hospital commander wanted his more senior nurses to get involved in teaching.

Colonel Bassett recalled, “At first I was pretty reluctant to think they would be teaching each other. But they were so proud when I trusted them to teach! I asked Lt. Col. Manan, my ‘peer’ lieutenant colonel, to teach on infection control. Once he completed the class, he said, ‘I will be teaching about fractures next ... and you can make up one of those fancy American PowerPoint shows to go along with my talk.’ I was so proud, and so was he!”

She continued, “The Canadians were responsible for the NATO health care in this



Courtesy photo  
**Colonel Bassett watches and mentors a nurse who is drawing medication for an injection.**

region, but the staff volunteered on their days off to come and help me interact with the Afghans and demonstrate that lots of different educated nurses live by the wild and crazy things (like charting and infection control) that ‘Mama Bassett’ was introducing!

“‘Ma ma’ in Dari is the word for a favored elderly uncle so it was easy for the guys to say and there was no better way to grab my attention than to call out ‘Mama,’” she added.

Statistics for the mentoring team showed 654 hours of basic nurse training classes, 500 hours of didactic medical lectures and labs, 300 hours of medical terminology classes, 200+ hours of ancillary training, pharmacology, radiology, etc., and untold hours of hands-on supervision. Some of the clinical accomplishments realized in those 12 months included the hospital staff seeing 14,744 outpatients and 748 inpatients, 24 mass casualties resulting in 168 multiple-trauma patients and 193 emergency surgeries. They also supported 44 medevac missions involving 89 patients.

In spite of the cultural differences, Colonel Bassett developed a close relationship with the 70+ Afghan professional staff.

“I knew them all by name and they would talk to me — but not to each other — about their wives and children. I grew to care a lot about them all,” she recalled.

The colonel mentioned that cultural differences could be frustrating. One evening she and the team physician went to the nearby home of an Afghan doctor. The doctor was immediately shuffled into a gathering of male doctors while Colonel Bassett was escorted to the kitchen with the host’s wife and children. The only time the women were evident was when they served the food. The wife sat on the kitchen floor cooking over a single-burner propane tank “stove” and the colonel sat rocking the babies to sleep while the men had dinner out front.

Overall, Colonel Bassett looks back fondly on her experience, saying, “I believe I was put in the exact place I needed to be. What a privilege to be able to make such a difference!”

## Root canal treatment

The Keesler Dental Clinic is seeking patients who require root canal treatment.

All authorized beneficiaries, including military retirees and dependents of active duty and retired, are eligible for care.

Patients accepted for treatment are treated by either the endodontic specialty program residents or the residents in the general dentistry program.

Referral from a dentist for root canal treatment is needed.

For more information, call the endodontics department, 376-5227.

## Job opportunities

People interested in applying for nonappropriated fund positions may submit an application in person or on line.

Hours for the NAF personnel office, Room 211, Sablich Center, are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays.

To apply online, log on to <https://nafjobs.afsv.net>.

For current job openings, call the 24-hour job line, 377-9055, or log on to [www.keeslerservices.us](http://www.keeslerservices.us).

## Thrift shop closed

Due to an impending move, the Thrift Shop is temporarily closed.

For donations during the summer or if you have no way to get them to the thrift shop, call 377-3217 to schedule a drop off or pick up time.

## Speakers bureau

The public affairs office is looking for people who enjoy public speaking to tell the Air Force story.

The Keesler Speakers Bureau is a community relations program developed as a public service and information vehicle. It's comprised of military and civilian Air Force employees who volunteer their time and information to speak to community groups.

Speakers come from a variety of experiences and back-

## Tuesday's seminar highlights 'Commitment to End Violence'

The sexual assault prevention and response office is sponsoring a "Commitment to End Violence" seminar Tuesday in the Sablich Center auditorium.

There are morning and afternoon sessions, and participants may register for either or both by calling 377-8635.

From 8 a.m. to noon, the session focuses on emergency department care for sexual assault victims.

From 1-5 p.m., domestic violence and sexual assault training takes place.

grounds that offer a variety of presentations. Topics include aircraft maintenance, aviation, computer operations, communication skills, health, military life, military law, combat experience, financial management, child development, Air Force history and more.

For more information, call YoLanda Wallace, 377-1179.

## Visitor center hours

The Keesler Visitor Center is open 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and closed on weekends.

## Supply issues

For supply issues, contact the CSC supply customer service element, Room 126, Taylor Logistics Center, Building 4002; call Michael Cashion, 377-8891, or e-mail [michael.cashion.2.ctr@us.af.mil](mailto:michael.cashion.2.ctr@us.af.mil).

## Supply classes

Quarterly supply classes are held in Room 109, Taylor Logistics Building .

**Block I** basic supply class is 9 a.m. Sept. 22 and Dec. 15.

All newly-assigned supply custodians and resource managers are required to attend.

For more information, contact Patrick Governale, 377-5998 or [patrick.governale.ctr@us.af.mil](mailto:patrick.governale.ctr@us.af.mil), or Paulette Powell, 377-2270, [paulette.powell.1.ctr@us.af.mil](mailto:paulette.powell.1.ctr@us.af.mil).

**Block IIA-Bench Stock** is 9-9:30 a.m. Sept 9 and Dec 9. To schedule an appointment, call Crystal Simpson, 377-9955.

**Block IIB-Repair Cycle** is 10-11 a.m. Sept. 9 and Dec 9. To schedule an appointment, call Nathaniel Parks, 377-2310.

**Block III** training is 1 p.m. Sept. 22 and Dec. 15. All newly-assigned supply equipment custodians are required to attend as well as all other custodians annually.

For more information, contact Willie McDonald, 377-2660 or [willie.mcdonald.1.ctr@us.af.mil](mailto:willie.mcdonald.1.ctr@us.af.mil) or Paulette Powell, 377-2270, [paulette.powell.1.ctr@us.af.mil](mailto:paulette.powell.1.ctr@us.af.mil)

## Mini-triathlon set for Aug. 20

### 81st Medical Group Public Affairs

Services and the health and wellness center sponsor a free mini-triathlon, 8 a.m. Aug. 20.

Participants 18 and older swim 200 yards, bike 8 miles and run 2 miles. Events start and finish at the Triangle pool.

Individual categories are separated by gender and age: 18-29, 30-39, 40-49, and 50+. There are separate categories for Clydesdale (men weighing more than 200 pounds) and Athena (women weighing more than 150 pounds).

Relay teams consist of three participants, and one must be female.

New this year is an Elite category open to those who can complete the event in 45 minutes for men and 50 minutes for women.

Trophies are awarded for overall male and female and top three in each category and overall male and female.

Preregistration is required by noon Tuesday at the HAWC or Blake Fitness Center. Unit sports representatives also have sign-up sheets. Sign in is 6:30-7:45 a.m. Aug. 20. No sign-ups are accepted on the event day.

T-shirts and refreshments are provided to all participants.

Commander's Cup points are awarded for the top three relay teams consisting of members from the same squadron.

For more information, call 376-3170.

## Dog day relay



Photo by Kemberly Groue

**Cody Spitler, protocol office, takes his turn around the Triangle Track during Saturday's Dog Day Baton Relay. Six four-member teams ran the 20-mile race in 1/4-mile segments. The winning team included Spitler and Guillermo Hernandez, Mark Bautista and Dominic Ancona from the 81st Medical Operations Squadron.**



## Steamy soccer

Omar Moreno, left, passes the ball to a 336th Training Squadron-A teammate, as Damion Rowe, 338th TRS-B, moves in to attempt a block during an Aug. 4 intramural contest. The 336th TRS-A won the match, 5-1, to maintain its 5-0 lead in the 11-member league as of Friday. The 338th TRS-B drops to 2-3 with the loss.

Photo by Kemberly Groue