



KEESLER NEWS

KEESLER AIR FORCE BASE, BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI

Train to Fight. Train to Win.

NOV. 17, 2011 VOL. 72 NO. 44

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COMMENTARY

Veterans share special bond that transcends time

By Col. George Farfour

90th Missile Wing vice commander

F.E. WARREN AIR FORCE BASE, Wyo. — Those of us wearing the uniform have a special bond with those who have worn the uniform — our veterans. We share an identity that transcends any differences we may have. We unite in a duty to serve and sacrifice for our great nation, to ensure liberty and freedom continues to have a solid foundation in America as the beacon of hope for the world. I submit for your consideration this story that occurred earlier in my career. Remembering this story helps frame for me, on a personal level, our obligation to our veterans. I hope it does for you as well.

After an uneventful visit to the base barber shop, I thought I would kill some time in what had promised to be an uneventful day. I decided to visit the clothing sales store — not to buy anything, but just to browse around.

Upon entering, I circled around toward the book section to see what was new. As I picked up a copy of some book, I noticed out of the corner of my eye an older gentleman, perhaps 70, struggling to pick

out some merchandise. I paid closer attention and saw he was having trouble reading the tags.

Not wanting to appear patronizing, I just watched a while, not offering any assistance. As time progressed and he made no headway in his search, I felt something inside tell me to help. Maybe it was the small Purple Heart pin on his hat that motivated me — I really don't know. Slowly, I moved toward him and asked if I could help him find something.

I was relieved when he turned and pleasantly said, "Yes, I can't seem to find the American Defense Service Medal ribbon." Immediately, I noticed a sheet of paper organized in lists in one hand and ribbons in the other. He was obviously reconstructing his old ribbons and medals for display or wear.

We worked through the list together, talking as we went. He told me how he was finally going to get all of his medals together and put them in a shadow box on the wall for his grandchildren. He had recently received word that he was awarded several medals and decorations from World War II that had been forgotten, as he was a medic assigned to another unit. The list outlined awards and decorations from World War II and Korea.

As we double-checked the list, he explained what each attachment meant. "This arrowhead means an amphibious assault landing — went in on the first wave at Normandy. This Combat Infantryman's Badge means I was in continuous combat with the enemy for 30 days in a row. We got this one and the Combat Medic's Badge. This is a new one, the Prisoner of War Medal. Didn't have that one when I was a POW. This one here, we all got for going to defend South Korea in 1950."

He didn't brag, he just stated matter-of-factly what they all meant.

In the course of our conversation, he learned I was an Air Force officer. From then on, he addressed me as "Sir."

He acted glad that I'd helped, and was even more appreciative when I asked the clerk to run a copy of the "order of precedence" ribbon chart for him to take home. As he walked to the counter to pay for his ribbons and badges, I told him I was honored to help him. He replied, "Thank you, sir." I thought it was odd for a man of 70 to be calling

Please see **Veterans**, Page 3

Impact Aid is vital to our local public schools

By Gerry Cross

School liaison officer

As a retired Air Force member with three children who've completed the public education system, I've filled out my share of Impact Aid cards. In fact, I just filled one out on my remaining school-aged child three weeks ago. I never really knew the reason for filling out the cards, but I know the schools were always persistent in getting them back, sending notes and making phone calls reminding me of my delinquency. Like many military parents, I assumed the schools were getting additional funding solely because we were military members.

Recently, I was referred to as the "Impact Aid expert" because of my job position as Keesler's school liaison officer. I've spent many hours researching this subject, but I'm no expert, and frankly, I haven't come across anyone who is. This is a very complex federal government program. I still have quite a bit to learn before I can claim the "expert" title, but I'll share what I've learned so far.

The Impact Aid program was

passed into law by Congress in 1950. It's designed to assist local school districts that have lost property tax revenue due to the presence of tax-exempt federal property or that have experienced increased expenditures due to the enrollment of federally-connected children, including children living on Indian lands.

School taxes come from two sources: taxation on property of private individuals (such as homes, autos, boats and other personal property) and taxation of real or personal property used for business purposes. A large federal installation, while adding a great deal to the economic growth of a state, has a tremendous impact on a local community. It means that a great deal of property and activity is removed from the local tax rolls that support public education.

For example, the estimated appraised value of Keesler base houses ranges from \$170,000 to \$315,000. If I use the millage rate, the tax that goes to schools per house, on the low end price of \$170,000, which is about \$650, and multiply that by the 1,028

privatized houses on base, the amount is \$668,200. That amount is not going to Biloxi School District because the base houses are on federal land — housing privatization doesn't affect Impact Aid. The intent of Impact Aid is to totally match the local tax effort for military parents living on a federal installation. According to federal government sources, the Biloxi School District received nearly \$473,519 in 2011 for Impact Aid. For a student with military parents who don't live on the federal property, local students receive 20 percent of the "on-base" military child rate.

Impact Aid was last fully funded in 1970. Since then, it's taken drastic cuts and is currently funded at only 60 percent nationally as defined by law. In 2011, the Mississippi was appropriated \$9.4 million dollars in Impact Aid, but received only \$1.5 million.

In order for a school district to receive Impact Aid, it must have 400 federal students in its average daily attendance, or at least 3 percent of all children in the district ADA be federally connected.

Five Gulf Coast school districts meet this criteria — Biloxi, Harrison County, Ocean Springs, Gulfport and Long Beach. School districts conduct a "first count" student survey each year to identify the number of federally-connected students. School districts submit the results to the U.S. Department of Education by Jan. 31. The Biloxi School District sent out Impact Aid cards Nov. 8 — all other districts have different dates.

Regardless of the date, it's vitally important to get the cards filled out and returned to the schools as soon as possible.

Payments to the school districts are always in arrears, usually two to three years behind, and come in multiple payments throughout the year. The payments go directly into school district accounts by electronic fund transfer. These funds go into the general fund of a school district and may be used in whatever manner the district chooses in accordance with local and state requirements.

Information for this commentary came from the base housing office, the Harrison County tax assessor's office and the U.S. Department of Education.

Train, Care, Innovate ... Developing Combat Power for Air, Space and Cyberspace

ON THE COVER

Chief Master Sgt. Curtis Jennings, 81st Mission Support Group superintendent, salutes as the flag passes the reviewing stand Saturday during the 11th annual Gulf Coast Veterans Day Parade in D'Iberville. Keesler leaders, students, 50-flag team and drum and bugle corps participated. Also in honor of Veterans Day, the 81st Training Wing held a formal retreat Nov. 9 in front of wing headquarters. Speakers representing Keesler also participated at several Veterans Day events at local school programs and civic events. More photos, Page 14.

Photo by Kemberly Groue



Veterans,

from Page 2

me sir, but I guess that's just the type of man he is.

As I walked toward my car, my thoughts turned to the hundreds of injured soldiers he must have helped, the faces he must have looked into and reassured as bombs fell around them and bullets whizzed by, the helplessness he must have felt as he watched someone's son, husband, father and brother die in his arms. The great exhilarations of battle, the fear of death he faced each day, all swirled in my head. Each time his country called, he was there, ready to do what had to be done. I owe him — we all owe him, and all those like him — for what we have today.

“Everyone always talks about the heroic dead — well damn it, there's a lot of heroic alive ones out there, too!”

— Patton

This world is not perfect, but it is closer due to their sacrifice.

From the beaches of Normandy to the hills of Korea, he served his country with pride and, from the number of awards, with great distinction. There are many veterans out there with a similar story. Whether it is the jungles of New Guinea, the deserts of Africa, Kuwait or Iraq that their stories highlight, the frigid cold of a Korea or Afghanistan winter or the rainy season in the Mekong Delta, they all have done this country

a great service. When we think of war, we tend to think most often of the dead. Gen. George S. Patton said it best in a post-World War II speech, “Everyone always talks about the heroic dead — well damn it, there's a lot of heroic alive ones out there, too!”

We see those “heroic alive ones” every day. Perhaps it's a Veterans of Foreign Wars cap, a sticker on a car, a pin on a suit, a Purple Heart license plate, an American Legion shirt, or maybe it's your dad, grandpa, brother,

sister, uncle or just a close friend. If you see one of these “heroic alive ones,” go over and shake their hand just to say, “Thank you.” It's a small gesture, but a meaningful one. Their greatest pleasure is the freedom we still have, due in large part to their sacrifice and example.

I met a hero. And though I haven't been asked to do what he did, I'm ready, when my country needs me. Meeting him, seeing his example and accomplishments, strengthened my resolve and boosted my pride. Some people say there are no heroes left — our kids can't look up to anyone. Well, I say they're blind. Heroes are everywhere ... you just have to look.

I met one in clothing sales.

KEESLER NEWS

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TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Navy instructor receives by giving to students

By Airman 1st Class
Heather Heiney

Keesler Public Affairs

While turning 35 is an event that some people may dread, one Keesler instructor spent that birthday beginning a life journey — Day One of Navy boot camp.

Petty Officer 1st Class Cynthia Burton, Keesler Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training Unit instructor, said that when she decided to enlist in March 1993, people told her she was too old and too set in her ways to make it. While her experience has had its challenges, she said that her greatest accomplishment has been to make it work.

Later that year, Burton attended the aerographer's mate course at Keesler and is currently teaching the same course at her original schoolhouse.

The students begin their weather training in a joint environment with Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps students. After 36 training days, the students separate into service specific portions of instruction. Burton teaches between four and 10 Navy students at a time for an additional four blocks over 25 training days.

"Every day is different," Burton said. "It's not unusual for a day to be 11-12 hours long."

Physical training, paperwork, classroom instruction, one-on-one mentoring and collateral duties can make for a long workday, and that doesn't include the days she has to stand duty at the dorms for 24 hours.

"Her students excel from her impeccable instructional techniques and they go on to pass those treasures on to others in the fleet. Her students know her, follow her, and most of all they respect her," Senior Chief Petty Officer James Green, Burton's department head, said.

Some of Burton's collateral duties include command community service coordinator, First Class Petty Officers' Association officer, command diversity team member, command assessment team member, assistant anti-terrorism and force protection officer, sexual assault victim advocate and command morale, welfare and recreation committee officer.

"The students make it the best duty you can pull in the Navy," Burton said.

She said that her students have always been eager to help out with volunteer projects around the base and in the community. She said that all she has to do is mention there's a need and the students want to be right there with her making a difference.

"Her influence has made a clear and lasting difference in the way our young Sailors and Marines choose to invest their off-duty time and embrace future volunteerism and civic responsibility," said Cmdr. Angie Walker, CNATTU commanding officer.

Burton said that she was



Photo by Kemberly Groue
Seaman Recruit Robert Thompson, Keesler Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training Unit, receives help from Burton during Aerographer's Mate-A School at the weather training building. Burton received the 2011 Thomas V. Fredian Community Leadership Award from the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce.

humbled when she was named 2011 Thomas V. Fredian Community Leadership Excellence Award winner at Salute to the Military, Oct. 25.

"I had been able to talk to the nominees and was amazed by their accomplishments and for my name to be called out — wow," Burton said.

"I have lived my life as my family taught me — to give is better than to receive — and I have tried to pass this on to those with whom I serve."



From left, Lance Cpl. Cesar Reynaga, Pfc. Jack Gladish and Virgil Enos and Lance Cpl. William Fifer showcase the historical uniforms of the Marine Corps at the Keesler Marine Corps Detachment's Marine Corps Ball, Nov. 10 at the Mississippi Coast Coliseum in Biloxi. The annual event marks the creation of the Marine Corps on Nov. 10, 1775.



Celebrating 236 years of Marine Corps heritage

Capt. Jason Taylor, MARDET executive officer, reads a birthday message from Gen. John Lejeune, 13th commandant of the Marine Corps. His words from 1921 are read each year at all balls across the Marine Corps.



Pfc. Jordan Fleet, left, receives a piece of birthday cake from Maj. Nieves Villasenor, MARDET's commanding officer, as Lance Cpl. Adam Bouwman looks on. Villasenor was the oldest Marine attending the ball and Fleet was the youngest.

Photos by Kemberly Groue

Don't drink and drive.

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

TRAINING, EDUCATION NOTES

Hap Arnold grants

The Air Force Aid Society provides \$2,000 grants for undergraduate studies through the Gen. Henry H. Arnold educational grant program.

The application deadline is March 9. Visit the AFAS website at www.afas.org for information and to access the online application.

Grants are available to selected sons and daughters of active duty, Title 10 active Guard/Reserve members on extended active duty, Title 32 AGR performing full-time active duty, retired, retired Reservists with 20+ qualifying years of service, and deceased Air Force members; spouses (residing stateside) of active duty and Title 10 AGR/Reservists on extended active duty; and surviving spouses of deceased.

MGCCC winter term

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College's Keesler Center offers a winter term Nov. 14 through Feb. 17.

For more information, call 376-8477 or visit the MGCCC office, Room 221, Sablich Center.

OTS boards

Officer Training School recruiting service board dates:

Rated — Dec. 1 application cutoff for Jan. 23; June 21, 2012, cutoff for Aug. 13, 2012.

Non-rated — March 1 cutoff for April 16.

Academy applications

The deadline to submit applications to the Air Force Academy is Jan. 1.

For more information, call 376-8472.

Manager certification

The Community College of the Air Force awards professional manager certification that recognizes an individual's advanced level of education and experience in leadership and management, as well as professional accomplishments.

For more information, log on to <http://www.au.af.mil/au/ccaf/certifications.asp> or call 376-8708 or 8710.

NEWS AND FEATURES

SECAF reviewing disciplinary actions at mortuary

Air Force News Service

WASHINGTON — Air Force Secretary Michael Donley reaffirmed a commitment to ensure that appropriate disciplinary action was taken in regard to the management and procedures at the Dover Air Force Base, Del., Mortuary.

Nov. 10, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta asked Secretary Donley to review the Air Force's disciplinary measures and ensure they are adequate.

"There is no question the Air Force is accountable to our joint teammates and the families of the fallen for this critical and sacred mission," Donley said. "The lapses in our standards at Dover, which we strongly regret, are our responsibility to fix. I take very seriously to Secretary Panetta's charge to ensure that appropriate disciplinary action was taken in regards to the Dover mortuary. Our review will be exceedingly thorough and rigorous, as our fallen and the families they leave behind deserve nothing less. Throughout the process, I want to reassure our military family that our fallen are being treated, and will continue to be treated, with the utmost reverence, dignity and respect."

Earlier last week, the Air Force made public a year-long investigation of the Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations at Dover, the point of entry for U.S. service members who are killed or die overseas. The service implemented extensive corrective measures and improvements, and took action regarding three senior mortuary officials responsible for operations at AFMAO after employees complained about the handling of cases there.

The Air Force Inspector General began its investigation in June 2010. The investigation focused primarily on the handling of remains of four service members. The Air Force Inspector General's investigation was conducted in coordi-

nation with other federal offices and included nearly 50 interviews and an extensive review of mortuary operating procedures. Investigators found no evidence anyone intentionally mishandled remains, but concluded the mortuary staff failed to maintain accountability while processing portions of remains for three service members. While it is likely that disposition of remains was by an appropriate method, it could not be shown that it was in accordance with the families' directions.

Each family received remains of their service member for interment; the staff, however, was not able to ensure additional portions of remains were handled in a manner consistent with the families' instructions.

The Air Force determined senior AFMAO officials failed to provide proper management and corrective actions when they did not respond appropriately to indications that procedures were inadequate to prevent problems related to the tracking of portions of human remains.

Additionally, the Air Force investigation determined the mortuary staff could have communicated more clearly with the representatives of a sister service about restorative actions taken to prepare the remains of a service member, killed by an improvised explosive device, whose family requested to have their Marine dressed in his uniform. In addition, the investigation found that there were deficiencies in administrative procedures, documentation, and electronic recordkeeping. The public's health was not endangered.

"The investigation concluded that the mission was always conducted with reverence, dignity, honor and respect for all served through the facility," said Gen. Norton Schwartz, Air Force chief of staff.

"However, the standard is

100-percent accountability in every instance of this important mission. We can, and will, do better and as a result of the allegations and investigation; our ability to care for our fallen warriors is now stronger," Schwartz said. "Throughout the past year new processes have been put in place to ensure the exacting standards are met every time."

Air Force officials have contacted family designated representatives of the four families directly affected, and others requested by those representatives, and discussed these matters with them personally. Each family team was headed by a general officer who, on behalf of the secretary and chief of staff of the Air Force, expressed their apologies to the families for the additional grief this has caused.

Recently, it was reported that from 2003 to 2008, ashes of disassociated portions of remains were cremated and provided to medical disposition contractors who, after incineration, delivered them to landfills. This occurred when family representatives elected for the portions not to be returned to the family and authorized the mortuary to make disposition of them. In 2008, the Dover Port Mortuary adopted a better practice of retiring the portions at sea after cremation.

"The old practice was unacceptable and we recognized that and fixed it. We deeply regret concerns this may have caused families of the fallen," Schwartz said.

Air Force officials have requested, and the secretary of defense has directed, a separate independent assessment of the current overall operations of the Port Mortuary. The panel of the Defense Health Board will evaluate current operations.

Dover's mortuary staff consists of members of all

branches of the military, including civilians and reservists. The staff includes mortuary affairs specialists, morticians and other technical experts. The staff operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and regularly responds

to the trauma of war as staff members prepare the remains of fallen warriors under often-difficult circumstances. Since 2003, the mortuary center has prepared more than 6,300 deceased individuals for return to their loved ones.

IN THE NEWS

3 selected for promotion

Three enlisted members were on the November supplemental promotion list:

To staff sergeant — Senior Airmen Stephen McClellan, 85th Engineering Installation Squadron, and John Wright, 81st Force Support Squadron.

To master sergeant — Tech. Sgt. David Rife, 335th Training Squadron.

Immigration assistance

From 8 a.m. to noon today, a representative from the U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is in the legal office to meet with military members, their families, retirees and their dependents to answer questions about the immigration application process and how being a military member helps the immigration process.

Appointments are recommended, but walk-ins are seen as time allows.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call the legal office, 376-8601.

Early Keesler News deadline

The Keesler News will be published Wednesday, one day earlier than usual, because of the Thanksgiving Day federal holiday, Nov. 24.

The early submission deadline is noon today.

New medical center dedicated

American Forces Press Service

BETHESDA, Md. — Nov. 10, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta cut the ribbon of the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. The hospital is the result of the merging of the now-closed Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., and the Bethesda National Naval Medical Center.

The hospital honors Army Maj. Walter Reed, a pioneering bacteriologist and one of the men who found that mosquitoes were the disease vector for yellow fever. It also continues the world-class care that the Bethesda Naval facility has provided since it was founded during World War II.

The 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Act mandated the merging of the hospitals. The facility in Bethesda is a tri-service facility staffed by Army, Navy and Air Force personnel commanded by Navy Rear Adm. (Dr.) Alton Stocks.

Dragons deployed — 247

AAFES' family game night prizes include gift cards

AAFES Public Affairs

DALLAS – The Army and Air Force Exchange Service is offering more than \$6,000 in “Family Game Night” prizes.

To enter, exchange shoppers compose a 150 words or less description of their favorite family game night. First prize is a \$3,000 exchange gift card, second place is a \$2,000 gift card, third place entry is a \$1,000 gift card and 10 fourth place winners receive \$100 in Hasbro games.

Rules and entry information are available at www.shopmyexchange.com/patriot_family. Contest entries are judged on originality and humor.

The entry deadline is Dec. 9. Winning entries are selected on or about Dec. 16.

PERSONNEL NOTES

Mexico travel restrictions

Air Education and Training Command has announced a general order pertaining to Mexico travel restrictions that supercedes the previous order dated July 5, 2011.

Personnel planning cruises that make port calls to any states placed off-limits may continue with their travel plans if approved by their wing commander or equivalents, but are prohibited from leaving the cruise ship while docked for the port call.

Exceptions are documented by completing the Air Forces Northern (1st Air Force) Exception to Travel Approval Form. The required form may be obtained from wing or major command antiterrorism officers.

For more information, call 377-3062.

White House career opportunities

Recruiters from the White House Communications Agency visit Keesler Nov. 30 to give briefings on opportunities for enlisted members and officers.

There are two briefings at Welch Auditorium — a 9:30 a.m. briefing for any interested members and a 3 p.m. session for students and instructors.

For more information, log on to <http://www.disa.mil/Careers/WHCA/How-to-Apply/Airmen>.

Health benefits open season

81st Force Support Squadron

The Federal Employees Health Benefits Program open season continues through Dec. 12.

During open season, federal employees can enroll or change plans in the Employee Benefits Information System at <https://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil> or by calling 1-800-525-0102.

For more information, visit Room 214, Sablich Center, or call 376-8326.

Transition assistance classes

81st Force Support Squadron

The airman and family readiness center plans the following classes for 2011 at the Sablich Center.

For more information or to preregister, call 376-8728.

Mandatory pre-separation briefings — 9 a.m. Tuesdays for those separating with honorable discharges and 1 p.m. for retirees, Room 110. Bring one copy of separation or retirement orders. This appointment is required by law, and must be accomplished 90 calendar days before the separation or retirement date. For short-notice separations or retirements, the briefing should be done as soon as possible. Medical separation must receive a one-on-one briefing.

Federal-style resume writing for government agency jobs — 9 a.m. to noon Nov. 29.

Transition assistance program workshops — 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Dec. 12-14, Room 108A. Dress is business casual; no jeans, T-shirts or uniforms.

Veterans benefits briefing — 8-11 a.m. today and Dec. 15, Room 108A.

Retirement briefings — 1-3:30 p.m. today and Dec. 15, Room 108A; for members with less than a year until retirement.

Executive transition assistance workshop — Dec. 6-9 for colonels and chief master sergeants to organize their search for a second career in the private, nonprofit and government sector. Air Education and Training Command headquarters facilitates this workshop. For more information, call Robert Bertels, DSN 487-2669.

Worship schedule

Roman Catholic

Daily Mass, 11:15 a.m., Monday through Friday, Triangle Chapel.

Sunday Mass, 9 a.m., Triangle Chapel.

Protestant

Traditional service, 8:30 a.m. Sunday, Larcher Chapel.

Contemporary service, 10:30 a.m. Sunday, Triangle Chapel.

Gospel service, noon Sunday, Triangle Chapel.

Jewish

Services take place at 8 p.m. Fridays at Congregation Beth Israel, 12277 Three Rivers Road, Gulfport.

For more information, call 377-4050, 207-2196, 539-1655 or 1-405-740-9077.

Greek Orthodox

Sunday Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m. at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, 255 Beauvoir Road, Biloxi. For more information, call 388-6138:

Islamic

Prayer is five times daily; Salaat ul-Jummah congregational prayer, noon on Friday, Building 2003.. For more information, call 377-2520.

Latter-Day Saints

Student group service, 2 p.m. Sunday, Triangle Chapel. For more information, call 396-5274 or 1-616-881-1994.

This week's movies at Welch Auditorium

Friday — 6:30 p.m., Moneyball (PG-13).

Saturday — 2 p.m., 50/50 (R); 6:30 p.m., Real Steel (PG-13).

Sunday — 1 p.m., The Ides of March (R).

Deployed Keesler medic shares love of music

By Tech. Sgt. Tammie Moore

376th Air Expeditionary Wing
Public Affairs

TRANSIT CENTER AT MANAS, Kyrgyzstan — Musicians deployed to the Transit Center at Manas visited the Kurenkeyev College of Music for a musical information exchange in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, Oct. 26.

The Airmen and Kurenkeyev students showcased their musical talents and then discussed music.

“These exchanges are important because they underpin (our) mission to build and strengthen strategic partnerships with our host nation,” said Capt. Kay Stern, theater security cooperation social cultural branch chief.

“There’s a natural curiosity about who we are and what we do at the transit center. So we look for opportunities to interact with Kyrgyz people, to share our mission and showcase our folks, and ultimately dispel some of the myths about what we do at the transit center.”

An email went out to the base populace to find musicians interested in taking part in the exchange.

“The email explained what we were attempting to do and asked musicians to audition before the event, so we wanted to ensure we had a balance of skills,” said Stern, deployed from Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M. “We wouldn’t want five drummers and no one to play keyboards.”

Senior Airman Zachary Merryman, who began playing the guitar in high school, performed for the Kurenkeyev students with his band “Transit Authority.”

“My band and I just got together about a month ago,” said Merryman, a 376th Expeditionary Medical Group radiology technician deployed from the 81st Diagnostics and Therapeutics Squadron at Keesler. “I thought this would be a great opportunity for us to get out there and have some fun. It was a great experience; we were welcomed

very nicely by the students. You could tell they were excited to see us and happy for us to be there.”

Merryman, a native of Huntington, Ind., is not the only Airman from the Transit Center who enjoyed the opportunity. After the performances, the Airmen were able to interact with the students, several of whom gathered around Airman 1st Class Darrin Zabinski’s keyboard and asked him to play a song. The students sang as he played a John Mayer song.

“It was really cool; a song that is famous in America can bring everybody together across the world,” said Zabinski, a 376th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron cargo movement traffic manager deployed from Minot AFB, N.D.

Zabinski has been playing the piano since he was 3 years old and about four years ago he learned how to play the drums.

“The best part of this experience was being able to just share our talents with each other and show that everybody at least has music in common,” said Zabinski, a native of Blaine, Minn. “I feel like music is a world lan-



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Tammie Moore

Capt. Rebecca Gallegos and Merryman sing during a “Transit Authority” performance. Gallegos is the 376th Air Expeditionary Wing sexual assault response coordinator deployed from Andersen Air Force Base, Guam.

guage. People everywhere can relate to it, so it’s basically something that can bring us all together.”

The Airmen at the transit center hope to continue these musical exchanges.

“I hope those who participated in the exchange learned (those at the transit center are) just a hodgepodge of people from different places, with varying backgrounds and

experiences, but we have commonalities with each other and with the Kyrgyz people too,” said Stern, a native of New Orleans.

“Though we may differ in a lot of ways, we’re similar in just as many. Some things are universal — and music is definitely one of those things.”



Zabinski plays the keyboard as students at the Kurenkeyev College of Music sing during a music exchange Oct. 26.

A 3 to 5 minute steady tone on the base siren is a tornado warning — take cover.

Mental health flight offers ways to de-stress

By Steve Hoffmann

Keesler News staff

Everybody already knows there are bad witches. But from The Wizard of Oz, we learn that there are good witches too. When Glinda, the Good Witch of the North, shows up on the scene in her big bubble, she brings the party to Munchkinland. Why? Because Dorothy's house has just landed on the Wicked Witch of the East, thereby bringing an end to years of Munchkin slavery. Ding Dong, the wicked witch is dead!

According to Staff Sgt. Abbey Brown, noncommissioned officer in charge of the 81st Medical Operations Squadron's mental health flight, this scene is not unlike what people experience with stress. There's bad stress and good stress and ways to manage both.

"Stress can be a good thing — it's not all bad," said Brown. "It's known as eustress and it can help motivate us. But when it becomes distress, that's bad."

According to Brown, distress can manifest itself in numerous ways. Hives, achy joints and muscles, insomnia and physical illness are some of the more common ways bad stress can rear its wickedness. Fortunately, Keesler's mental health flight offers some help.

They currently offer two group classes for those seeking to find ways to drop the house on the wicked witch of stress. The anger management class meets on Tuesdays for four weeks. The healthy thinking class is a hybrid of both stress management and depression management.

"Healthy thinking is a 'glass half full' class," explained Brown. "Many people, depending on their current circumstances or the environment in which they were raised, have trouble seeing the glass as half full. They can't see their problem or sit-

uation in a different light. The healthy thinking class teaches ways to find the best in a situation, in other people and ourselves."

Group classes are available to anyone who has access to the base. One-on-one therapy and counseling is available to active-duty members only.

Additionally, the mental health element has been getting a lot of requests from various units and squadrons to go out and do stress management briefings.

"The Air Force's big push these days has been resiliency," noted Brown. "Anytime you can tell someone that the things they're feeling are normal, this is what's going on in their life and these are some of the things they can do to feel better, you're helping them be a better person."

Brown reports that their efforts are starting to have an impact, particularly with the air traffic control career field, where there's been a tendency towards higher washout rates.

"If you tell someone up front what to expect, areas where they might encounter stress, and how it might affect them, there's a good chance it'll have less of an impact on them," said Brown.

As a result, the mental health clinic at the Triangle has seen an increase in walk-ins from students seeking one-on-one counseling and therapy.

Brown also notes that with the holidays approaching, homesickness is more frequent. She encourages students to seek help.

"So much of stress management is knowing yourself and knowing how much is too much," said Brown. "You can never guess what's going to stress somebody out. The trick is to try and see things from their perspective, meet them where they are and help walk them out of it."

For more information on stress management, call the mental health flight, 376-0385.



Second Air Force and 81st Training Wing leaders precede the flag team during the 11th annual Gulf Coast Veterans Day Parade in D'Iberville Saturday.

Honoring all who served

Navy and Air Force veteran Jack Oxford, a resident of the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Gulfport, views the marching units.

Photos by Kemberly Groue



Military training leaders from the 81st Training Group conduct a flag folding ceremony during a formal retreat in front of wing headquarters Nov. 9.

Fire department provides cooking safety tips

Base fire department

Cooking fires are the No. 1 cause of home fires and home fire injuries.

Every year hundreds of Americans die, thousands more are injured and roughly \$500 million in property damage result from cooking fires. Two thirds of home cooking fires started with ignition of food or other cooking materials, according to the National Fire Prevention Association.

Frying poses the greatest risk of fire. About 90 percent of all kitchen fires are due to unattended cooking, so stay in the kitchen when cooking, and if you must leave, even for a short time, turn the stove off.

Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires. In event of a fire in your home while cooking, the base fire department recommends these actions:

Put a lid on it. The easiest way to extinguish a small pan fire is with a pan lid. Turn off the burner to remove the heat source, and from the side, carefully slide a pan lid over the pan. The lid will smother the fire. Don't move the pan until the fire is com-



Photo by Kemberly Groue
Fire inspector David Tijerina instructs Kendall Diaz, an Air Force retiree from Gulfport, on how to put out a grease fire during a Fire Prevention Week demonstration at the base exchange Oct. 11.

pletely extinguished and the pan is cool. If you don't have a lid, use a baking sheet or pizza pan.

Never throw water on a pan fire.

Putting water on a grease fire can splatter the fire and make it worse.

Never use flour to extinguish a fire; flour will explode.

Don't use baking soda on grease fires; it's not effective.

Use an ABC dry chemical fire extinguisher to extinguish the fire if you don't have a lid.

For an oven fire, keep the door shut and turn off the heat. Don't open the door — fresh air will make the fire larger.

Turn handles of pots and pans in and away from hot burners.

Use thick, dry, flame-resistant potholders when handling lids and pans.

Wear short, close-fitting or tightly-rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle onto burners and catch fire.

Keep cooking area clean and clear of combustibles such as potholders, towels, rags, drapes and food packaging.

When deep frying a turkey, stay in the area at all times and ensure that you have a safe location to cook.

Don't deep fry turkeys indoors, under overhangs or on a combustible surface.

Don't overfill the cooking container with oil. Follow instructions on the proper method to fill the cooking container and heat oil only to the recommended cooking temperature.

Have fire extinguisher and cooking container lid handy. If oil catches fire, put on an oven mitt and cover the cooking container with lid. Shut off the burner and allow the container to cool down.

Use a fire extinguisher to put out any fire outside the container. Don't stand too close to the container while discharging the fire extinguisher or oil can splatter, spreading fire and causing injuries.

Never attempt to put out an oil fire with water.

In the event of any fire or emergency, dial 911 immediately. All fires are reportable — small, large and even extinguished.

For more information, call the fire prevention section of the base fire department, 377-3330 or 3333.

Annual toy drive runs through Dec. 12

By Susan Griggs

Keesler News editor

The Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots drive starts this week and runs through Dec. 12.

Organizer Cheryl Moore, 81st Communications Squadron, said the goal is to have a volunteer in every building on base to collect toys or donations for needy children in the local area.

This is the 11th and final year for Moore to chair the drive, since she's retiring at the end of the year. Vivian Kinman, 336th Training Squadron, assists her this year and takes charge of the campaign next year.

"I'm proud to say that as of last year, Keesler has collected 20,448 toys and \$3,264 over the past decade for this worthwhile cause," Moore said. "I know this has contributed greatly toward giving local children a Merry Christmas. I'll miss sponsoring Toys for

Tots — I wish I had started sooner, but better late than never."

For more information, call 377-3900.



More news, videos,
information and photos
on the Web at
<http://www.keesler.af.mil>

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Jobs initiatives for veterans announced

By Donna Miles

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Nov. 7, President Barack Obama announced executive orders to give tax credits to employers who hire post-9/11 veterans and wounded warriors, as well as enhanced career counseling and related services for veterans.

The president expressed concern that unemployment continues to increase among post-9/11 veterans, despite the skills and attributes they have to offer.

Today's 9/11 generation has performed heroically in some of the world's most dangerous places, he said, and "done everything that we've asked of them."

"We ask our men and women in uniform to leave their families and their jobs, and risk their lives to fight for our country," he said. "And the last thing they should have to do is fight for a job when they come home.

"And that's why we're here today," Obama continued, "to do everything in our power to see to it that America's veterans have the opportunities that they deserve and that they have earned."

To provide incentives to employers, the president announced a new Returning Heroes Tax Credit that will provide companies up to \$5,600 in credits for each unemployed veteran they hire. Similarly, a new Wounded Warriors Tax Credit offers employers up to \$9,600 for each veteran with service-connected disabilities they hire.

Obama also announced new initiatives designed to make it easier for veterans to find jobs.

Post-9/11 veterans can download a Veteran Gold Card that entitles them to six months of personalized case management, assessments and counseling services at roughly

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3,000 One-Stop Career Centers nationwide. This service could benefit more than 200,000 post-9/11 veterans, White House officials said.

In addition, the Labor Department launched an online tool Nov. 7, My Next Move for Veterans, where veterans can enter information about their military experience and skills to identify civilian careers that put that experience to use, the president explained. The site also offers information about salaries, apprenticeships, and other related education and training programs, officials said.

Meanwhile, a new job bank that also took effect Nov. 7 will help connect unemployed veterans to job openings at companies seeking to hire veterans, Obama said.

Developed in partnership with leading job search companies, the registry enables employers to tag job postings for veterans. Obama noted that more than 500,000 job openings already have been tagged.

Meanwhile, the president urged Congress to move forward with his jobs bill that he said will further increase employment opportunities for veterans.

Obama recognized the leadership capabilities and specialized skills veterans bring to the workplace at a time when the nation needs those capabilities to stay competitive.

“Connecting our veterans to the jobs they deserve isn’t just the right thing to do for our veterans, it’s the right thing to do for America,” he said.

“As commander in chief, I want all our veterans to know that we are forever grateful for your service and for your sacrifice,” Obama said. “And just as you fought for us, we’re going to keep fighting for you: for more jobs, for more security, for the opportunity to keep your families strong and to keep America competitive in the 21st century.”

Help keep classified business classified.
Don't discuss information off base.

For lost and found items, call 377-4500.

Local clergy members visit Keesler



Photo by Kemberly Groue

From left, Pastor Levi Helmuth of Peace Baptist Church in Gulfport, 81st Training Wing Chaplain (Maj.) Mitchell Zygadlo and Deacon Bartosz Kunat of the Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Biloxi listen as Keesler Chaplain (Col.) Clifton Perry explains how the base chapels are converted for use by various religious services Nov. 3 at Triangle Chapel. The clergy members also visited Larcher Chapel and the Fishbowl Student Ministry Center, had a windshield tour of the base and ate lunch at the Bay Breeze Event Center.

Daughter of medics is homecoming queen

By Susan Griggs

Keesler News editor

Jessica Sanders, 17, is this year's homecoming queen at Vancleave High School.

Her parents are Maj. Scott Sanders, 81st Surgical Operations Squadron anesthesia department, and Jill Sanders, a magnetic resonance imaging technician in the 81st Diagnostics and Therapeutics Squadron.

Jessica has been a student council member for four years and currently serves as president. She's on the Fellowship of Christian Student Athletes

leadership team, has been a school cheerleader since eighth grade and is a member of a competitive cheer squad in Ocean Springs.

She is representing her school in the Daughters of the American Revolution scholarship competition and was Vancleave's Hugh O'Brian youth leadership ambassador last year. She's also active in her church's youth ministry program.

She plans to attend college and major in biomedical engineering and hopes to improve prosthetics to help veterans and other people who have lost limbs.



Sanders

Volunteer — get connected.

Parking spots must be marked on both sides by a white diagonal or horizontal line or a white "T" in accordance with Keesler Instruction 31-204.

Parking on seeded areas, on troop walks and at the student dormitories in the Triangle are prohibited. It's also illegal to park with the driver's side nearest the curb, instead of the passenger's side.

eight days a week

Airman and family readiness center

Editor's note: Registration is required. All briefings take place in Room 108, Sablich Center, unless otherwise noted.

Today — 8-11 a.m., Veterans Affairs benefits briefing. 9 a.m. to noon, Bundles for Babies. Open to all expecting military and dependents at Keesler. Receive a layette gift valued at \$75 upon completion of the class. 1-4 p.m., retirement benefits briefing. 5:30-7:30 p.m., adoption options workshop. Open to anyone interested in learning more about the adoption process.

Wednesday — 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., separate rations briefing. Open to nonprior service students with dependents stationed at Keesler for 20+ weeks wanting to reside outside the dorms during training. To register, call 377-0155.

Arts and crafts center

Editor's note: Registration is required. For more information or to register, call 377-2821.

Friday — 6 p.m., ladies night. Games, snacks, nonalcoholic drinks and buy one get one half off ceramics special. \$5 admission.

Saturday — 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., holiday craft bazaar in the Bay Breeze Event Center ballroom. Over 25 local and national arts and crafts vendors. Free admission and free parking.

Bay Breeze Collocated Club

Editor's note: For more information, call 377-2334. Federal endorsement of sponsors not intended.

Nov. 24 — 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Thanksgiving brunch in the ballroom. \$17.95 Air Force Club members, \$22.95 for nonmembers; ages 4-10 half-price, ages 3 and younger free. Live entertainment. Reservations required.

Mondays — 6 p.m., \$100 weekly giveaway in the lounge. Air Force Club members present have a chance to win cash.

Weekdays — food and drink specials in the lounge. Taco Tuesdays, wings and things Wednesdays and ladies night Thursdays.

Saturdays and Sundays — 11 a.m., lounge opens; noon, grill opens. ESPN College GamePlan Saturdays; NFL Sunday Ticket Sundays.

Bay Breeze Community Center

Editor's note: For more information, call 377-2509.

Today — last day to register for the colossal cookie challenge, Nov. 19. Four cookie categories. Free to participate; sign up at the youth center, community center or McBride Library. Visit www.keesler81fss.us for more information.

Bay Breeze Golf Course

Editor's note: For more information or to register, call 377-3832.

Saturday — 8 a.m., hard time turkey shoot golf tournament. Two person best ball with handicap. Prices vary. Fee includes greens, cart, food and beverages. Winners for each flight get a free turkey.

Wednesday — 4-5 p.m., free golf clinic for company grade officers. Space limited.

Nov. 24 — free golf all day. Golf carts and

rental clubs not available.

Daily — 6-11 a.m., breakfast platters less than \$4 at snack bar.

Fitness centers

Editor's note: For more information or to register, call 377-4385 or 3056.

Saturday — 10 a.m., grand rowing regatta at Blake Fitness Center. Prizes awarded to top male and female in each age group with the fastest 5000 meter rowing time. 11 a.m., women's varsity and 1 p.m., men's varsity basketball games, Keesler Dragons versus Moody Flying Tigers at Blake Fitness Center.

Gaudé Lanes

Editor's note: For more information, call 377-2817.

Saturday — 6 p.m., turkey shootout. Bowl three strikes in a row and win a free turkey. \$15 entry fee. Limit one turkey per person.

Saturday-Sunday — 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday and noon to 6 p.m., Sunday, pizza and pins special. Two hours of bowling, shoes, large pizza and a pitcher of soda or tea, \$35.

Sundays — noon to 6 p.m., November special. Bowl three games including shoes; \$6 for adults, \$3 for youth.

Weekdays — 6:30-9 a.m., fast \$5 breakfast served at 11th Frame Café.

Vandenberg Community Center

Editor's note: Friday and Saturday night activities are part of the late night dances, \$3 admission; non-prior service students only. For more information, call 377-3308 or 5576.

Friday — 8 p.m. to 2 a.m., country western night. Pie eating contest, scarecrow fashion show and more.

Saturday — 8 p.m. to 2 a.m., techno night. Dance to electronic beats.

Wednesdays — 5 p.m., free movie night; popcorn provided.

Youth center

Editor's note: For more information or to register, call 377-4116. Drop-ins accepted on space-available basis.

Friday — 6:30-9:30 p.m., Friday night fun, ages 6-12. Games, skating, movies and more. \$10 for first child, \$5 each additional. Air Force Club members get 10 percent off first child's fee.

Saturday — 6-10 p.m., teen open recreation. Operation Night Hoops basketball, music and games. \$5 admission.

Monday-Wednesday — Thanksgiving camp for ages 6-12. Teen camp available. Full-day rate applies. Registration required.

Through Dec. 1 — winter soccer registration, ages 3-14. \$50 for first child, \$25 each additional. Season begins in January. Volunteer coaches needed.

Dragon Wagon

Friday-Sunday — All new route and schedule. Air Force Club members ride free; \$1 for nonmembers. For new route and schedule, visit <http://www.keesler81fss.us>.

KEESLER NOTES

Adoption options

A program for military families thinking about adoption or already in the adoption process is 5:30-8 p.m. today in Room 108A, Sablich Center.

Presenters include the base legal office, military personnel flight, Catholic Social and Community Services, Mississippi Division of Family and Children Services and private adoption services.

To register, call 376-8728.

Holiday craft bazaar

The arts and crafts center's holiday craft bazaar is 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday at the Bay Breeze Event Center.

Admission is free.

More than 25 local and national vendors offer jewelry, clothing, candles, fall decorations, wood products, paintings, ceramics and other hand-crafted items.

Airman's Attic

Airman's Attic, at the corner of Meadows Drive and 1st

Street, assists junior enlisted members with obtaining free basic household items.

Donations are needed such as furniture, area rugs, cutlery, dishware, infant wear and maternity clothes that are clean and in good condition.

Hours are 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 4-6 p.m. Wednesday and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. the last Saturday of the month.

Airman's Attic is closed on federal holidays.

For more information, call 209-1390 or 377-3814.

Keesler Thrift Shop

The Keesler Thrift Shop, operated by the Keesler Spouses Club, is at the corner of Meadows Drive and First Street.

Profits benefit base and area charities and provide scholarships.

Hours are 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. Consignments are accepted 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Mondays.

Log on to www.keesler spousesclub.com for more

information and a list of preferred donations. Pickup is available for bulk donations.

For more information, call 377-3217.

Air Force Aid

Air Force active-duty members and spouses, retirees and surviving spouses of deceased active duty members can apply for Air Force Aid Society assistance online.

Log on to <https://my.afas.org/memberportal/Login/Login.aspx>. The client completes and submits the application to the airman and family readiness center at the selected base. The applicant receives an e-mail and is instructed to call the center, 376-8728, to schedule an appointment.

Air Force Aid assistance

Air Force Aid Society assistance, including Falcon Loans, is provided by appointment only. Emergency travel aid is still provided on a walk-in basis.

For an appointment, call 376-8728.

Supply classes

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

Block I supply indoctrination class is 9-10 a.m. Dec. 15. All newly-assigned supply custodians and resource managers are required to attend. For more information or to sign up, call 377-5998.

Precious Metals Recovery Program is 10-11 a.m. Dec 15. All newly-assigned PMRP monitors are required to attend, and refresher training is required annually. For more information or to sign up, call 377-5998.

Block IIA bench stock training is 9-10 a.m. Dec. 20. For more information or to sign up, call 377-2005.

Block IIB repair cycle training is 10-11 a.m. Dec. 20. For more information or to sign up, call 377-4191.

Block III equipment custodian refresher training is 1-2 p.m. Dec. 15. All newly-assigned supply equipment custodians are required to attend, as well as all other custodians annually. For more information or to sign up, call 377-2270.

For information on all supply classes, call 377-4480.

SPORTS AND RECREATION

Flag football title game depends on Mother Nature

By Susan Griggs

Keesler News editor

Forecasted rainy weather earlier this week could delay today's scheduled 7 p.m. intramural flag football championship game.

"If inclement weather delays any games, we may end up playing the title game Monday night," intramural sports director Sam Miller said Monday as the Keesler News was going to press.

All teams have an opportunity to participate in the postseason tournament, Miller said. Regular season standings have no bearing on placement and matchups were randomly seeded.

The winner of the postseason tournament represents Keesler in an early December matchup with the Naval Construction Battalion Center in Gulfport to decide the Golden Eagle Award.

National Conference playoffs began Nov. 8 and were scheduled to wind up Tuesday, with the conference winner scheduled to be decided tonight at 7 p.m.

Playoffs in the American Conference started Monday and were supposed to wind up Wednesday.

In National Conference regular season standings, the 81st Logistics Readiness Squadron, 81st Diagnostics and Therapeutics Squadron and the 335th Training Squadron all ended the season with 8-2 records.

The undefeated 81st Medical Group team topped the American Conference regular season standings with 10 wins, with the 334th TRS and 81st Security Forces Squadron at 7-3.

For more information on the playoffs, call 377-2444.

Register through Wednesday for holiday walking program

By Steve Pivnick

81st Medical Group Public Affairs

The health and wellness center wants to know how many steps members of the Keesler community can take between Nov. 25 and Jan. 2 during "Walk Your Way through the Holidays."

"We had a large number of participants last year," said Terri Jordan, HAWC health promotion manager. "We hope the program helps people increase their physical activity during the holidays, since studies suggest this period is responsible for a large amount of weight gain. We encourage participation in the program and invite everyone to attend the 11 a.m. Jan. 10 walk and awards ceremony at the Crotwell Track.

"We request participants track their daily and total steps in the log book we provide and

turn it in at the end of the program from Jan. 3-5," she added.

Medals are awarded to those who complete the program and return their log books:

Gold — average 12,000-14,000 steps per day.

Silver — average 10,000-12,000 steps per day.

Bronze — average 8,000-10,000 steps per day.

In addition, all who complete the six-week program and attend the awards ceremony and walk receive a T-shirt.

Register at the HAWC through Wednesday.

The HAWC also is offering group walk and run sessions at the Crotwell Track, 4-5 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays from Nov. 28 through Dec. 28.

For more information, call 376-3170.

Thursday intramural bowling

Week 10 of 34

Team	Won	Lost
335th TRS-A	56.0	24.0
81st FSS	52.0	28.0
81st TRSS-PMEL	50.0	30.0
403rd AMXS	48.0	32.0
334th TRS	46.0	34.0
ECS Strikers	46.0	34.0
81st CS	40.0	40.0
338th TRS	38.0	42.0
81st LRS-B	38.0	42.0
336th TRS	38.0	42.0
81st LRS-A	34.0	46.0
2nd Air Force	34.0	46.0
81st TRSS-A	32.0	48.0
335th TRS-B	32.0	48.0
81st WSA	28.0	52.0
Seabees	28.0	52.0

Season high scores

Team game — 335th TRS, 997.

Team series — 81st FSS, 2,733.

Game/men — Garo Watson, 267.

Series/men — Jeff Miracle, 734.

Game/women — Tangelia Spencer, 195.

Series/women — Sabra Miracle, 529.

Average/men — Garo Watson, 208.92.

Average/women — Micki Vandermeer, 156.58.

Most improved — Robert Dickinson, 8.47; Debi Holloway, 3.40.

