



KEESLER NEWS

KEESLER AIR FORCE BASE, BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI

Train. Fight. Win.

OCT. 11, 2012 VOL. 73 NO. 39

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KEESLER NEWS

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ON THE COVER

Airman 1st Class Chad Byrne, 81st Security Forces Squadron, salutes an officer as he enters one of the gates at Keesler, Oct. 4. Keesler is the only base in Air Education and Training Command to adopt an elite gate guard program. The program increases pride and discipline within the 81st SFS while creating a positive, lasting impression in the local community.

Photo by Kemberly Groue



MISSION & VISION

Mission

Train Airmen across the spectrum of warfighting skills and deliver overwhelming combat power for the Air Force!

Vision: The World's Best Airmen – Training, Fighting, Winning!

Motto: Combat – Dragons!

Priorities

Training: Keesler's primary mission

Warfighting: Expeditionary training for Airmen to meet AEF taskings

Infrastructure: Ensure our historical base remains a world-class installation

Quality of Life: Balance mission and off-duty time for Airmen and their families

Strategic Communication: Inform our audience – Keesler Airmen, community partners and the Air Force

Roles

Premier Training Center – Warfighting Platform – Community Partner – Economic Engine

Climate

Respect

Empowerment

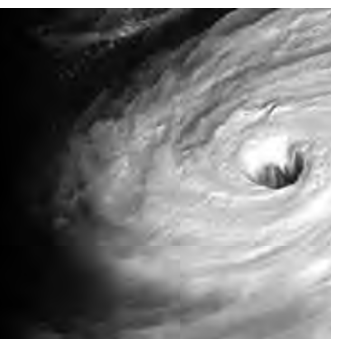
Optimism

Fitness



HURRICANE SEASON

runs from June 1 - Nov. 30. For more information and preparations tips, visit www.keesler.af.mil/hurricaneinfo.asp



Teal ropes to spotlight sexual assault response



By 1st Lt. Tina Tissot

Sexual assault prevention and response office

Among the core of our force at Keesler are our technical training students who, no doubt, enter the military with an array of stories. Although they come from all walks of life — service, sacrifice and commitment are some of the same threads that weave their stories together, but what happens when an incident of sexual assault, whether it occurred before entering military service or after, threatens individual and unit mission readiness?

The introduction of Keesler's unique teal rope program will address issues surrounding sexual assault through student involvement. A comprehensive effort is required as part of the solution to effectively address sexual assault issues. The teal rope program will be managed by the sexual assault prevention and response office in coordination with the 81st Training Group. Keesler developed the program with the goal of increasing prevention and awareness within the student community and providing outreach events that challenge the beliefs and behaviors that enable sexual violence among peers.

Starting Oct. 15, selected Airmen will begin wearing teal ropes (symbolizing sexual assault awareness and support) within the student population. Teal rope members receive specialized training by the SAPRO staff and serve as a link between non-prior service students and SAPRO for information and referral support.

Involvement in the program is open to students who have a minimum of two months left in their training. Students must be recommended by their military training leader, pass a background check and maintain an 80 percent grade point average to be accepted into the program. Teal rope members are expected to model the Air Force core values, uphold the highest standards of professionalism as representatives of the SAPRO and be an approachable, listening ear for their wingmen in times of need.

"This program is so important because it helps raise awareness among our newest Airmen, and they will carry that knowledge throughout their careers. This is an opportunity for Airmen to be leaders and help regulate their fellow Airmen on an important issue," said Chief Master Sgt. Angelica Johnson, 81st Training Wing command chief. "It's also a chance for Airmen to

go to a peer they may be more comfortable with, which assists the overall prevention efforts across the base."

All Airmen deserve an environment that is free from sexual harassment and sexual assault and a culture where they can be treated with dignity and respect.

Shortly after being sworn in as the 20th Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Mark Welsh addressed us all by saying, "Every Airmen has a story... you are what makes our Air Force the best the world has ever known!"

Welsh, whose confirmation was delayed amid a sexual and unprofessional relationship scandal at Lackland Air Force Base, understands the devastation the impact of sexual assault on just one Airman can have on the entire mission, "[Sexual assault] has the potential to rip the fabric of your force apart. I think it is doing that to a certain extent now," Welsh said in an interview.

Whether student or permanent party, we can all be part of the solution to end sexual assault and continue to develop the 81st Training Wing vision, "The World's Best Airmen - Training, Fighting, Winning!"

For more information call 228-377-8635 or email 81trw.cvk@keesler.af.mil.

Donating blood vitally important, saves lives

By Lisa Lynn

Armed Services Blood Program blood recruiter

Blood donors are everyday heroes whose donations save and enhance the lives of patients in need.

Donating blood is a simple process that saves about 4.5 million American lives each year.

Blood donations are needed every three seconds. One out of 10 hospital patients need a transfusion. Blood is always needed for treatment of accident victims, cancer patients, hemo-

philiacs and surgery patients. There is no substitute for blood.

Every pint of whole blood donated is separated into three components — plasma, red cells and platelets.

Fresh plasma is used to treat accident victims, patients with bleeding disorders and burn victims. Platelets are used to treat cancer patients and patients who have had bone marrow transplants. Red cells are used to treat patients who have lost blood because of trauma or surgery. It also is used to treat patients with anemia.

Blood transfusions are a critical part of everyday medicine. Patients receiving organ transplants, cancer therapies and support for sickle cell anemia depend on lifesaving transfusions. Blood is also critical to the survival of some premature babies and some patients undergoing heart or joint replacement surgery.

To make sure blood is available for patients who need it, please donate regularly. You can donate blood once every eight weeks.

This precious fluid has a short shelf life. Platelets last only five days. Red

cells last for 42 days. Someone you know and love could be next in line for a life-saving transfusion. It's up to all of us to ensure that this treatment is available when needed.

To learn more about the Armed Services Blood Program or to schedule an appointment, visit us online: www.militaryblood.dod.mil. To interact directly with some of our staff, see more photos or to get the latest news, visit us here: www.facebook.com/militaryblood, www.flickr.com/militaryblood and www.twitter.com/militaryblood.

81st SFS members get OC spray training



Officer Michael Goodman, 81st Security Forces Squadron, receives a spray of oleoresin capsaicin during OC spray training Oct. 3, at Keesler. The training is a required one-time exposure of the OC spray for all 81st SFS members.

Photos by Kemberly Groue



Senior Airman Brian Heiney, 81st Security Forces Squadron, reacts after being exposed with oleoresin capsaicin spray.



Capt. Chris Porta, 81st Security Forces Squadron operations officer, is assisted by Staff Sgt. Hayden Granger, 81st SFS, with washing his eyes out after being sprayed.

Fire Prevention week



Photo by Kemberly Groue

Keesler kicks off fire prevention week with Sparky the Fire Dog visiting Brig. Gen. Brad Spacy, 81st Training Wing commander, in his office Oct. 9. Fire prevention week features various visits throughout the base by the Keesler Fire Department in which fire drills will be conducted followed by visits from Sparky, fire truck displays, bunker and equipment demonstrations and literature hand outs. The event will end with a base fire department open house Saturday where there will be games for children, hot dogs and popcorn and give aways.



Local leaders convene for 'Morning Call'

Col. Mark Vivians, 81st Mission Support Group commander, socializes with Michael Janus, D'Iberville city manager, while going through the breakfast buffet line at the Bay Breeze Event Center during the Biloxi Chamber of Commerce Morning Call Oct. 4 hosted by Keesler.

Photos by Kemberly Groue



Brig. Gen. Brad Spacy, 81st Training Wing commander, delivers remarks about Keesler and its role in the community.

Don McCormick, Keesler Federal Credit Union director emeritus, Col. Cathy Nelson, 81st Medical Group deputy commander, and John Goff, KFCU CEO, socialize following the Biloxi Chamber of Commerce Morning Call.

Political do's, don'ts for DOD employees

By Capt. Brendan Carbonell
81st Training Wing legal office

As election season reaches its zenith in the next few weeks, it's important to once again take note of the restrictions placed upon military and Department of Defense civilian political activity. While there are several laws that lay out the political dos and don'ts (including DOD Directive 1344.10 and Air Force Instruction 51-902), it is important for all DOD employees to understand the Hatch Act, a law applying to DOD civilian personnel and all federal civilian employees.

The Hatch Act prohibits political activity by federal civilian employees while on duty, while wearing an official uniform or insignia, while using a government vehicle, or while in any Federal workplace. What counts as a federal workplace for purposes of the Hatch Act? Some buildings are obviously federal workplaces. For example, there is no doubt that the Sablich Center is a federal workplace because people conduct federal business there daily. But other Federal workplaces are less obvious to spot such as the Base Exchange, commissary and Bay Breeze Event Center.

According to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel, for purposes of the Hatch Act, a federal workplace is any federally owned space or federally leased space in which federal employees perform official duties on a regular basis. For example, the employees of the Bay Breeze are federal employees and they perform their official duties on a regular basis in the Bay Breeze facility. As a result, the Bay Breeze Event Center counts as a federal workplace. That means that if a federal civilian employee were to engage in prohibited political activities in the Bay Breeze Event Center that would be a violation of the Hatch Act. What is more, it would still be a violation even if that federal civilian employee did not personally work at the Bay Breeze. This ex-

ample shows that you have to consider the definition of federal workplace and determine whether a particular building fits the description before making any decision to engage in political activities there.

Again, the Hatch Act not only prohibits political activity by federal civilian employees in any federal workplace, but also while federal civilian employees are on duty, wearing an official uniform or insignia or using a government vehicle. So, now that it's clear what counts as a federal workplace, what counts as a political activity?

According to the Hatch Act, political activities may include the following:

- Distributing campaign materials or items.
- Wearing partisan political buttons, t-shirts or other items.
- Displaying campaign materials or items.
- Performing campaign-related chores.
- Making political contributions to a political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group.
- Posting a comment to a blog or social media site, such as Facebook or Twitter that advocates for or against a political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group.
- Using any e-mail account to distribute, send or forward content that advocates for or against a political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group.

For more information about the Hatch Act, visit the U.S. Office of Special Counsel's website at <http://www.osc.gov/hatchact.htm> or contact Keesler's legal office. It's very important to be familiar with the Hatch Act's rules. Indeed, penalties for violating the Hatch act can be severe, including a 30-day suspension without pay and even removal from one's position. As America gets ready to head to the polls, make sure that you know what restrictions apply to you regarding political activities.

Academic ace



Photo by Kemberly Groue

Airman 1st Class James Bobbitt, 335th Training Squadron, works on the aircraft connector/wiring trainer during class Oct. 3, at Dolan Hall. Bobbitt graduated with a perfect score from avionics fundamentals course. He is a native of Louisville, Ky., is now assigned to the F-16 integrated avionic systems apprentice course at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas.



Photo by Kemberly Groue

Senior Airman Anthony Wilson, 81st Security Forces Squadron, checks a visitor's identification card using the Defense Biometric Identification System while Airman 1st Class Chad Byrne, 81st SFS, stands guard at a gate on Keesler, Oct. 4. Keesler is the only base in Air Education and Training Command to adopt an elite gate guard program. The program increases pride and discipline within the 81st SFS while creating a positive, lasting impression in the local community.

Gate guards give 'elite' first impression of Keesler

By Senior Airman Heather Heiney

Keesler News co-editor

On the surface being a gate guard may seem like nothing more than checking IDs and waving people through the gate. But there is so much more to it than that, especially now that the 81st Security Forces Squadron has implemented an elite gate guard program.

The elite gate guards are not only Keesler's first line of defense, but they are also the face of the Air Force and are expected to leave a positive first impression with members of the local community.

"I am proud that Keesler's

Defenders are presenting a sharp image in every sense of the word," said Brig. Gen. Brad Spacy, 81st Training Wing commander. "Their appearance, their knowledge and their skill provide a positive, lasting impression to the Keesler community while showing any adversary that we have a professional and trained defense force. It is really great!"

To be chosen as an elite gate guard, Airmen must have good records within the security forces squadron, maintain fitness standards and pass an interview for the position.

And according to Maj. Matthew Pignataro, 81st Security Forces Squadron commander,

there are far more applicants than positions, making selection a truly competitive process.

Once accepted, the elite gate guards are expected to know and execute Air Force instruction 31-113 – Installation Perimeter Access Control, maintain a professional attitude and excel at dress and appearance and customs and courtesies.

"Our professionalism is higher because we are on display," said Airman 1st Class Chad Byrne, a member of the new program. "It sets the tone for the base."

The easiest way to distinguish an elite gate guard is by their uniform.

According to Air Force

Manual 31-201, Volume 1 – Security Forces History and Organization, "The distinctive uniform, specifically the beret with the Defensor Fortis flash, identifies SF members as an elite group of Airmen charged with the primary responsibility of protecting the Air Force worldwide. The uniform presents a strong visible symbol of a force protection commitment to the Air Force and the general public. Established appearance standards instill in the public a confidence in SF abilities. A failure to maintain appearance standards or failing to properly wear the beret or Security Forces shield erodes the public's confidence in SF abilities and

cannot be tolerated."

In addition to their beret and shield, elite gate guards wear the blue service uniform with a white ascot, bloused black boots with white laces and black nylon web gear and duty belt.

Pignataro said that since security forces as a career field hasn't worn the black nylon gear regularly since 2009, he didn't have enough gear at first. But instead of buying all new gear, he saved the Air Force money by requesting leftover gear from other security forces squadron commanders across AETC. Three bases were able to send their excess gear to Keesler.

"They look great," said Maj.



The 81st Security Forces Squadron elite gate guards wear black boots with white shoe strings as a part of their elite uniforms.

Gen. Leonard Patrick, 2nd Air Force commander. "But it's more than just looking great; it's about pride, discipline and deterrence. Not only are these elite guards honoring the history and tradition of our Air Force, they're also motivating our current and future leaders who pass through our gates each day."

It's not just Keesler leaders who have taken notice of the outstanding Airmen who make up the elite gate guard program. "Installation entry controllers have one of the toughest jobs our Air Force offers: working in all weather conditions as the base's force protection 'tip of the spear,' while at the same time serving as the first ambassador

to greet thousands of employees, families and visitors to the base. Kudos to Keesler's Defenders for successfully doing exactly that while also looking impeccably sharp!" said "top cop," Brig. Gen. Allen Jamerson, director of security forces and deputy chief of staff for logistics, installations and mission support.

Pignataro said security forces members and their predecessors have been protecting U.S. assets and wearing uniforms similar to those of the elite gate guards since before there was an Air Force.

"It's a tradition of honor and I get to interact with the public a lot more," said Staff Sgt. Kurt Rodriguez, elite gate guard member. "I just love my job."



Byrne stands guard at the White Avenue Gate

KEESLER NOTES

Retiree appreciation

Retiree appreciation day is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. Friday at the Roberts Consolidated Maintenance Facility. The event includes free lunch for retirees, door prizes, a drill down presentation and more than 30 informational booths.

Keesler Airman's Attic

The Keesler Airman's Attic provides free donated items to enlisted members of any branch, E-5 and below with the expectation that when the person is done, they will return the item for another's use. The facility is located at the corner of Meadows Drive and First Street and is open Mondays, Wednesdays and every non-training Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The last Saturday of the month is an "all ranks" day from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information call (228) 377-3814.

Dorm block party

A dorm block party is

scheduled for noon to 6 p.m. Oct. 12 at the field between the Shaw House and BX. All Airmen senior airman or below are invited whether or not they live in the dormitories. Events include music, sumo suits, an obstacle course, a dance competition, carnival games, ring toss and free food.

Hispanic heritage 5K

The Keesler Latin American club is scheduled to host a Hispanic Heritage month 5K run/walk 8 a.m. Oct. 19 at the Blake Fitness Center. Registration begins at 7 a.m. and there is a \$5 fee to enter. For more information call 228-376-0418 or 228-376-4393.

Postal center new hours

The Keesler Postal Center's new hours of operation effective Oct. 1 are:

Official mail center — 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and training Fridays.

Postal service center one

— 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays.

Postal service center two — noon to 6:30 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays.

United States Postal Service: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mondays through Fridays (Closed for lunch 1:15-2:15 p.m.)

Retraction

In the Sept. 27 issue of the Keesler news Cruisin' Keesler was referred to as the Keesler Motorsports Fest but they were two separate events.

Tent sale

There is a tent sale scheduled for 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oct. 18-19 in the BX Express gas station parking lot.

USM counselor

A University of Southern Mississippi admissions counselor and academic advisor will be in the Blake Fitness Center 2-4 p.m. Oct. 31 to explain what USM has to offer for Spring 2013.

Keesler Events Calendar

Today

1 p.m. — Airman and family readiness center post deployment briefing at the Sablich Center Room 108.

5 p.m. — Auto maintenance 101 clas at the auto hobby shop.

6 p.m. — Ceramic painting class at the arts and crafts center.

6 p.m. — Karaoke at the Bay Breeze collocated lounge.

Friday

10:30 a.m. — Ceramic mold pouring class at the arts and crafts center.

11:30 a.m. — Breast cancer awareness 5K run/walk at the Blake Fitness Center.

3 p.m. — Japanese braiding class, Kumihimo I, at the arts and crafts center.

6 p.m. — Beer Fest outside the Bay Breeze Event Center.

— Cocktails and canvas at the arts and crafts center.

— Japanese braiding class, Kumihimo II at the arts and

crafts center.

Saturday

9 a.m. — Kids fall fishing rodeo at the marina.

— Operation Hero on the grass field between 2nd Street and Meadows Avenue.

10 a.m. — Glass painting class at the arts and crafts center.

— Open house at Keesler's fire department.

10:30 a.m. — Pottery hand-building class at the arts and crafts center

Tuesday

9 a.m. — Pre-separation counseling at the Sablich Center Room 110.

— Airman and family readiness center post deployment briefing at the Sablich Center Room 108.

1 p.m. — Retirees pre-separation counseling at the Sablich Center Room 110.

Wednesday

8 a.m. — Newcomer's Orientation at the Sablich

Center Room 108B.

Oct. 18

8 a.m. — Veterans' benefits briefing at the Sablich Center Room 108A.

1 p.m. — Airman and family readiness center post deployment briefing at the Sablich Center Room 108.

— Retirement benefits briefing at the Sablich Center Room 108A.

Oct. 19

6 p.m. — Nite-crawlers 9-hole golf scramble at the Bay Breeze Golf Course.

Oct. 23

9 a.m. — Pre-separation counseling at the Sablich Center Room 110.

— Airman and family readiness center post deployment briefing at the Sablich Center Room 108.

1 p.m. — Retirees pre-separation counseling at the Sablich Center Room 110.

New lodging rates announced

By Debbie Gildea

Air Force Personnel Center
Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, Texas — After four years without a rate increase Air Force Personnel Center Officials announced that Air Force lodging rates would increase beginning Oct. 1.

The increase is necessary to ensure Air Force Lodging rates cover current operating and capital improvement costs, said Maj. Gen. A.J. Stewart, AFPC commander.

As an example, the current \$39 nightly room rate for a visiting quarters room will be \$53.25 and temporary lodging facilities will go from \$43 to \$55 per night. Increased rates will fund costs for operations, room renovations and construction, Stewart said.

The new rates are as follows:

Visiting officer quarter or visiting quarters, \$53.25.

Visiting Airman quarters, \$42.

Temporary lodging facilities, \$55.

Large TLFs, \$78.75.

Distinguished VOQ/VQ,

\$66.75.

Distinguished VAQs, \$54.
Large distinguished
VOQs, \$83.50.

As the Air Force works to improve business processes, implement efficiencies and maintain lodging operations in a constrained budget environment, other adjustments may be necessary, according to Col. Thomas Joyce, director, AFPC Services Directorate.

"We are committed to keeping room rates as low as possible while providing clean, comfortable, quality facilities," he said. "This is part of our commitment to caring for Airmen and we take that obligation very seriously. However, we must be realistic as well."

Even with the rate increase, Air Force rates are lower than comparable commercial rates outside Air Force installations, the director said.

"Coupled with quality service, clean facilities and reasonably priced room rates, Air Force lodging facilities are still a great choice for Airmen, whether they're on temporary duty orders, retired and traveling, or just passing through," Stewart said.

Walk-in mammograms Oct. 26

By Steve Pivnick

81st MDG Public Affairs

Keesler's mammography clinic will be offering a walk-in day — their first "Mammo-thon" — Oct. 26 from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. as part of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Mammography technologist Kerry Hudson, 81st Diagnostics and Therapeutics Squadron, said the program is for active duty, retirees and their dependents. "If you are 40 years old or older and due for your annual mammogram, just walk in. All beneficiaries are welcome and no appointment is necessary."

She stated, "If a patient sees an off-base doctor they can bring an order from the provider and we'll honor it. Patients over age 65 believe they can't receive a mammogram here. That's not true; we just need an order from their provider."

Hudson said patients who stop by but are not due for their annual mammogram will be accommodated on a case-by-case basis.

The clinic staff plans to offer the "Mammo-thon" every October.

The Mammography Clinic is located on the 81st Medical Group Room 1A219, near the A tower entrance.



Photo by Kemberly Groue

Capt. Eric Metzger, 335th Training Squadron and 81st Training Group combined unit inspection preparation lead, edits group level brag books Oct. 5 at Matero Hall.

Instructor to have weather paper published

By Steve Hoffmann

Keesler News co-editor

When most of us look at clouds in the sky we can pick out funny shapes, animals, faces, Charlton Heston parting the Red Sea. But when Capt. Eric Metzger looks at clouds, he picks out research papers and has them published in the American Meteorological Society's Journal of Weather and Forecasting.

Metzger is an instructor supervisor for the advanced weather courses in the 335th Training Squadron. He is currently engaged in leading the 81st Training Group's effort in preparing for the consolidated unit inspection later this month. Once the inspection is over he will return to the

schoolhouse to teach students about weather, a passion he's held his whole life.

"Weather has always been very fascinating to me. I grew up in western Kansas where the weather was never the same for more than a couple of days," Metzger noted. "Sometimes it would change so rapidly that it could be 80 degrees at lunchtime and by dinner-time it would be 20 degrees."

Metzger began his career in weather over 22 years ago after he graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the early 90's. He gained 10 years of valuable experience doing meteorological work before entering the Air Force.

"You get to certain point when you can walk outside and take a deep breath and say

oh it's going to be a nice day or oh this is going to get ugly," said Metzger. "You learn how the atmosphere feels when it's not going to be a good day. It just comes from experience, something you can't teach."

But when Metzger entered the Air Force, it provided him opportunities for more responsibility and management that just wasn't available as a civilian.

Metzger then entered the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif. which culminated with his thesis paper being accepted for publication.

"What I found in my master's thesis is what I didn't expect to find," Metzger noted.

The gist of the findings in Metzger's paper is how a cloud's lightning characteristics can hint at what it's going

to do with wind, hail and possibly tornadic activity a good five to six minutes before radar.

According to Metzger's research, when a cloud's lighting switches rapidly from mostly in-cloud lightning to mostly cloud-to-ground lightning it means the fundamental structure of the cloud has also changed. Operational forecasters can use this to predict what a storm is going to do and get warnings out sooner than they would if they were just using radar.

"The paper's intent is to give operational forecasters tools to understand what lightning character means in order to predict what a storm is going to do," Metzger said.

Metzger is hoping to pursue a PhD through the Air

Force Institute of Technology and focus his dissertation his findings in his thesis paper.

My dissertation will allow me to bring in more data, expand the scope of research and will bring me closer to being able to definitively say yes this is true or no it's not," added Metzger. "Predicting tornadic activity would be the 'Rosetta Stone'. Because if you can get a jump on it by six minutes — that's what I'm after. If I can get that definitive yes or no then that's what I'm going for. That would extremely useful to the Air Force. It could change the way we do things."

Metzger's paper is currently undergoing peer review and copy editing and is scheduled to be published in December or February.

Tuskegee Airman speaks to ALS, NCOA students

By Staff Sgt. Eric Summers Jr.
Keesler Public Affairs

Airmen Leadership School and NCO Academy classes are usually filled with course work and lectures structured to help Airmen become better leaders. But both classes received a different type of lecture when a living part of history, a member of the Tuskegee Airmen, spoke to the classes Oct. 4.

Retired Chief Master Sgt. Walter Richardson, one of 1,500 African-American Airmen selected to integrate into the Air Force in 1949, recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal and 1972 Air Force Outstanding Airman of the Year, shared words of encouragement and wisdom with students at the Mathies NCO Academy and Keesler's ALS.

"I'm really pleased to be here and to address you who are standing to be the future leaders of the Air Force," Richardson said. "It allows me to tell my story in a real way about my willingness to reach the highest level of (enlisted) leadership."

During Richardson's time

with the classes he talked about his journey to become a Tuskegee Airman.

"I became a Tuskegee Airman as a senior," Richardson began "The Tuskegee Airmen were the first group of military people to put together a show like (today's) Tops in Blue, it was the first military show organized to entertain. The name of the show was Operation Happiness."

"I was in basic training in 1949. When they came to Lackland Air Force Base...General Chappie James, mentioned that auditions would be held tomorrow," Richardson said. "One way or another I somehow made it to that audition."

"They didn't have a piano player, they didn't have any sheet music, you just got up and you sang" Richardson continued. "And I did. They selected me. So when they selected the 1,500 they made specific instructions for fully-qualified suitable, African-Americans to go into a (previously) all white unit."

The group was disbanded in September of 1949 when Lockbourne Army Air Base



Photos by Staff Sgt. Eric Summers Jr.

Students and instructors stand and applaud retired Chief Master Sgt. Walter Richardson after he shares the story of his career Oct. 4, at the Mathies NCO Academy. Richardson, a Tuskegee Airman with 332 Fighter Wing, was one of 1,500 African-American Airmen selected to being racial integration in the Air Force in 1949. Tuskegee 2- Charles Bowers and retired Chief Master Sgt. Curtis Jennings, watch retired Chief Master Sgt. Walter Richardson, a Tuskegee Airman and Congressional Gold Medal recipient, as he speaks to students Oct. 4 at the Mathies Noncommissioned Officer Academy. Richardson shared with the students his experience as one of 1,500 African-American Airmen selected to integrate the Air Force in 1949.

was deactivated, the same year that integration began in the Air Force

"No one wanted a singer, but I was found suitable to go into an all white unit so I was

selected. I didn't know I was an original Tuskegee," Richardson explained. "None of us that were in that theatre were aware that we were making history. We just knew what Bill Davis said that we had a right like every other American to fight for our country, we knew that and that was a part of us"

Richardson, not realizing the impact that their actions would one day have on the Air Force, said that he carried forward based on three pillars he has known since childhood.

"The only thing that I had was hope," said Richardson. "I built my life, not just my Air Force career, on three pillars of faith, hope and love."

"It didn't matter about the turbulence of the time or the color of skin God put me in," he continued "I had the foundation upon which I wanted to build my life."

His motivation and foundation helped him achieve his first of many goals to be promoted to the rank of technical sergeant in six years.

After being chosen to begin integration into the Air Force

Richardson was then assigned to Okinawa, Japan.

"Deep down in my mind I figured I had the foundation of the faith, hope and love, the education and had been selected to do this process," he said. "There was no turning back, just pressing forward."

Richardson credits the many successes of his career and rising to the top enlisted rank not only to the three pillars of faith, hope, and love but also to his wife Helen to whom he has been married for 58 years.

Before departing the class, Richardson gave the students one last piece of advice.

"You must take advantage of the instruction you get here while attending the leadership school. Every moment is important, every lesson contains very important guidelines tried and proven to develop your skills to become truly outstanding leaders. I feel confident that you would take this seriously and use it to continue the work we started in 1949."



Charles Bowers and retired Chief Master Sgt. Curtis Jennings, watch retired Chief Master Sgt. Walter Richardson, a Tuskegee Airman and Congressional Gold Medal recipient, as he speaks to students.



Photo by Scott Ash

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh III makes remarks at the Caring for People Forum at Joint Base Andrews, Md., on Sept. 26. This is the fourth annual forum which provides strategies for commanders, leaders and care professionals to help Airmen and their families.

Forum addresses issues affecting Airmen, family

11th Wing and 81st Training Wing Public Affairs

The Air Force's 2012 Caring for People Forum concluded Sept. 27 at Joint Base Andrews, Md., with a presentation of initiatives to members of the Air Force's Community Action Information Board and Integrated Delivery System.

Jackie Pope, 81st Force Support Squadron airman and family readiness center section chief, represented Keesler at the conference.

Since 2009, the Caring for People Forum has evolved into a two-day seminar during which forum attendees divide into working groups at the beginning and develop initiatives to fix Air Force issues that af-

fect Airmen and their families.

More than 140 active-duty, Guard, Reserve and civilian Air Force members participated in the forum, each contributing their unique total force perspective on the issues discussed during the working group meetings.

"It was an amazing experience," said Pope, who chairs the Keesler Integrated Resource Team. "Those that attended tackled the 45 issues that were elevated through their respective major commands. As part of the 25-member military support working group, I helped to review, discuss and vote on the four issues we felt like would benefit the most people."

The issues that came out of the four working groups were collectively submitted to Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley and Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. Larry Spencer during a briefing.

"These issues all relate to how the Air Force takes care of its Airmen and their families," said Carl Buchanan, Caring for People Forum manager. "Without the participants' input, we can't achieve the forum's ultimate goal — making the Air Force better."

During their presentations, group leaders spoke on why initiatives were chosen and how CAIB and IDS members could potentially resolve each

concern. Twelve issues were briefed, with top initiatives revolving around similar subject matters.

Some of the discussed initiatives include the Air Force's Exceptional Family Member Program, housing options for single Airmen, and immigration and naturalization assistance programs.

Donley, who spoke at the conclusion of the forum, told the participants there's nothing more important to the Air Force than its Airmen and their families.

"By attending this forum, you have provided leadership with a glimpse into how we can enhance the lives of our

most important asset," Donley said. "By attending, you not only help them but have taken steps to actively improve the whole force."

"Seeing the potential for change happen without tons of red tape was really awesome," Pope pointed out. "Knowing that it starts local at each installation's annual Caring for People Forum is really gratifying."

Air Force CAIB and IDS members meet in October to discuss the initiatives and decide upon courses of action to address the concerns.

Senior Airman Lindsey A. Porter, 11th Wing Public Affairs, and Susan Griggs, 81st Training Wing Public Affairs, contributed to this report.



Exceptional day for exceptional members

Tonya Maddie and Tech. Sgt. Stephen Cooper, 336th Training Squadron, pet therapeutic horses from Fearless Filly Farm at the exceptional family member program family fun day at the Lynn Meadows Discovery Center Sept. 22. The EFMP is in place to help Air Force family members with special needs. For more information call (228) 376-8728.

Photo by Rebecca Stanley



'Operation Hero' is Saturday

Eathen Bunce, son of Master Sgt. James and Tech. Sgt. Caroline Bunce, 81st Dental Squadron, gets close and personal with an M240 Bravo weapon with the assistance of Staff Sgt. Richard Gibbs, 81st Security Forces Squadron, during the April Operation Hero event.

Spots are still available for the last Operation Hero Deployment Fair of 2012. Operation Hero is held twice a year and helps children understand deployments through special activities such as K-9, triage and chemical gear demonstrations. Children will also receive a set of dog tags and t-shirts. The free event will be held from 9-11 a.m. Oct. 13 on the grass field between 2nd Street and Meadows Avenue and is open to children ages 5-17. Afterward, participants are welcome to tour Keesler's fire department for the fire prevention week open house. For more information and to register call 228-376-8501.

Photo by Kemberly Groue



81st SFS defeats 81st TRSS in intramural football

Stephen Johnson, 81st Training Support Squadron, leaps through the air to catch the ball during an intramural flag football game at Keesler. The 81st Security Forces Squadron defeated the 81st TRSS, 21-7.

Photo by Kemberly Groue

General Spacy tosses coin at high school football game

Brig. Gen. Brad Spacy, 81st Training Wing commander, displays a wing coin that he prepares to flip to the referee staff and head coaches prior to the Biloxi High School football game against Ocean Springs High School Oct. 5 at the Biloxi football stadium.

Photo by Kemberly Groue

