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McChord Air Force Base, Wash.

Connecting Team McChord with the Combat Airlift Mission

February 22, 2008

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McChord honors Black History Month

By
Tyler Hemstreet
Staff writer

Airmen gathered Tuesday at the McChord Clubs and Community Center as part of a luncheon to honor Black History Month.

The guest speaker for the event was Brig. Gen. Shelia Baxter, commander of Madigan Army Medical Center at Fort Lewis.

General Baxter's speech focused on celebrating black women in history that have made valuable contributions to society over the years.

Her presentation touched on black women who've made history in the fields of medicine, religion and education, as well as poets, authors and women who have made an impact in the military.

Among those highlighted in the presentation were Cathay Williams, the first African-American to enlist in the Army, and Air Force Maj. Gen. Marcelite Harris, who was the first female deputy commander for maintenance and one of the first two female

air officers commanding at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

General Baxter said she hoped her presentation gave people some inspiration to dream and pursue their passions, similar in fashion to the women she spoke about.

"It's important to expose to all Americans what we [black women] have offered this culture over the years," she said.

The luncheon committee chose to invite General Baxter to speak at the luncheon because as part of Black History Month it wanted to illustrate the contributions of not only black men but also women who have contributed to the success of the country, said committee member Chief Master Sgt. Alvin Thomas, 62nd Airlift Wing.

"It's not everyday you see a black female general, and she was gracious enough to come speak," Chief Thomas said.

General Baxter's many awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal and the Army Achievement Medal.



Photo by Tyler Hemstreet

Brig. Gen. Shelia Baxter, commander of Madigan Army Medical Center at Fort Lewis, speaks to Airmen Tuesday at the McChord Clubs and Community Center as part of a luncheon to honor Black History Month. General Baxter's speech focused on celebrating black women in history that have made valuable contributions to society over the years.



Photo by Tyler Hemstreet

Interview with an Airman

Airman 1st Class Raul Rojas, 62nd Operations Support Squadron, asks Carter Lake Elementary fourth grader Cassandra LaRoche questions about her science project Wednesday morning at the school. Sixty-three Airmen from different squadrons showed up to help judge the fourth and fifth graders' science projects.

New Web-based assignment application debuts Monday

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — The power to apply for your next home-basing and follow-on assignment will soon be literally at your fingertips.

Starting Monday, all active-duty enlisted members and officers, lieutenant colonel and below, who are slated to serve an unaccompanied tour of 15 months or less will have the ability to submit Web-based applications from any location worldwide, 24/7.

The new self-service application process is part of Air Force leadership's ongoing commitment to Personnel Services Delivery Transformation.

"This change will help streamline the application process by eliminating paperwork and unnecessary trips to the military personnel element," said Letty Inabinet, chief of the assignment programs and procedures branch at the Air Force Personnel Center here. "Starting Monday, an Airman will be able to fill out the application online, and if eligible, the system will validate it on the spot and send it to AFPC for consideration."

Even though the HB/FO assignment program will be Web-based, the benefits remain the same.

"The program continues to be a win-win for the Air Force," Ms. Inabinet said.

"It helps reduce stress among our Airmen who don't know where their next duty station will be after they serve the unaccompanied tour, and it provides stability for our Air Force families."

Home-basing assignments offer Airmen an assignment back to the same continental U.S. location, or long-tour location in Alaska or Hawaii, from where they left. Follow-on assignments offer Airmen assignment consideration to a preferred CONUS location or the overseas long-tour location of their choice. Airmen can choose up to eight CONUS locations and up to eight overseas choices.

For convenience and accessibility, the application will be made available March 3 at the Virtual Military Personnel Flight. The program's guidelines are outlined in Air Force Instruction 36-2110, Assignments. Applicants are encouraged to thoroughly read the sections on entitlements and restrictions before submitting their application.

For more information about the program, visit AFPC's "Ask" Web site and search for "Follow On." The 24-hour Air Force Contact Center (toll free 1-800-616-3775, DSN 665-5000) is also available to answer questions.

Weekend Weather

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Hi: 50 Low: 38	Hi: 49 Low: 37	Hi: 46 Low: 34

Forecast generated at 7 a.m. Thursday
Courtesy of the 62nd Operations Support Squadron

Mission accomplished

Total McChord sorties	1,952
Total flying hours	6,239.7
Cargo moved (tons)	15,198.1
Departure reliability rate	95.0%
Mission capable rate	85.4%
Personnel currently deployed	453
Reservists currently activated	141
(Jan. 1 to Wednesday. Numbers updated Wednesday.)	

Don't miss it ...

Dining Facility new hours

Starting March 1, the Olympic Dining Facility's new hours everyday Monday through Sunday are as follows: breakfast is from 6 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.; lunch is from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.; dinner is from 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. and midnight meal is from 10:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

Pride in mission unites Team McChord

By

Col. Jeffrey Stephenson
62nd Airlift Wing commander

With the sun making a welcomed and unexpected visit during this past President's Day weekend, I like many, took advantage of the weather and headed out to see what the members of Team McChord did during their "down time".

Of many experiences, I had the pleasure of seeing two retirees walking along a perimeter road, in conversation, pausing every few moments to enjoy the view. I also saw a young Airman on an afternoon run take a few moments to revel in the beauty of the sights offered here at McChord before continuing on his way. Even I enjoyed the opportunity to explore the beauty of McChord during this extended weekend. Admittedly, there

are few sights more powerful than the view of a C-17 Globemaster III green tail flash standing ready on the ramp with Mount Rainer posed stoically as a backdrop. That awesome vista stirred intense emotions within me, which promptly shifted my thoughts to our Team McChord family.

Watching the men and women here at McChord, I tried to identify the driving factor that prompts Team McChord to such notable levels of professionalism. What is the one common trait that defines the character of Team McChord members?

Given only one word to sum the character of Team McChord I would, without hesitation, offer "pride".

Pride defined is self-respect, pleasure or satisfaction taken in an achievement, possession or association. In this instance, I'm referring to achievement and association with the Team McChord family. The men and

women of Team McChord do great things every day in part because they share the common denominator of pride in a job well done.

We take pride in our efforts because we know McChord is synonymous with not only combat airlift but also with world-class standards and an unflappable work ethic. We show pride in the way we care for, protect and utilize our resources and facilities. Additionally, we show pride for the manner in which we conduct our daily lives.

As I've said before, we are a part of the world's greatest Air Force providing combat airlift around the globe. Each of us plays a vital part in the success of Team McChord. Every group, every squadron, every Airman and every civilian has an equal stake in our overall success. I'm proud of each and every member of our McChord family.



Col. Jeffrey Stephenson, 62nd Airlift Wing commander.

Airman's Roll Call highlights tax assistance available to Airmen

Editor's note: *Airman's Roll Call is designed for supervisors at all levels to help keep Airmen informed on current issues, clear up confusion, dispel rumors, and provide additional face-to-face communication between supervisors and their teams.*

April 15 will be here before you know it, and all citizens are required to file their taxes by that date. As responsible citizens, all Airmen and their families must complete this important financial task.

The Air Force offers free tax advice, assistance, preparation and electronic filing through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program. Base legal offices team up with the IRS and volunteers from the military community to provide this service. Volunteers prepare forms, including child and education credits, but if your income includes profitability or investments outside your military entitlements, you may be ineligible to use the program.

The steps to prepare for an appointment can vary, so call for specifics on what forms and documents to take. Some paperwork to bring to a tax appointment should include items such as last year's tax returns, Social Security numbers for the whole family, documentation of income and receipts for business and education expenses. Other important information to know is listed below.

Special pay is excluded from taxable income, as are basic allowance for housing and basic allowance for subsistence. Military members stationed abroad may also get a two-month extension if they expect a refund; however, any taxes paid after April 15 will accrue interest from the original due date. Servicemembers deployed to combat zones before the due date will have 180 days after their return to file. These guidelines are detailed in IRS publication 54, tax guide for U.S. citizens and resident aliens abroad.

For next year, make sure you save receipts for charitable contributions. Receipts are especially

important for military members or if you plan to itemize deductions.

And if you married within the last year and changed your name, make sure the IRS has coordinated the changes to match your Social Security number. With the right amount of preparation and by using the resources available, filing taxes should be a smooth process.

Military personnel can also get help online with their taxes. The IRS provides a free file service on its Web site, which lists several tax preparation services, many of which provide free service to military members. The Web Site Military OneSource also provides free tax assistance to military members.

(Commentary courtesy Air Force Print News.)

Need tax help?

Contact your squadron's tax representative volunteer for assistance in doing taxes, or call 982-6857 for a list of tax volunteers within each squadron.

Professionals of the week

62nd Maintenance Squadron

Staff Sgt. Orville Millett

Duty title:

Precision measurement equipment laboratory craftsman

Duty section:

Quality assurance section

Hometown:

Antigua

Why he's tops:

Sergeant Millett's experience and expertise earned him the duty of quality assurance evaluator, a position designed for the top seven-levels in the career field. He performed more than 250 complex quality inspections, identifying 16 critical and 13 non-critical nonconformities. His superior Root Cause Analysis led to 22 process improvements and a 95 percent quality pass rate, five percent higher than the Air Force average. Additionally, Sergeant Millett perfectly managed five major laboratory programs, all of which are crucial to laboratory recertification during the AF Metrology and Calibration Program inspections.



Airman 1st Class Michael Wright

Duty title:

Aerospace ground equipment apprentice

Duty section:

AGE inspection and repair section

Hometown:

Hamilton, Ga.

Why he's super:

Airman Wright is an outstanding Airman who is an inspiration both on- and off-duty. He has completed 156 maintenance actions, 193 inspections and dispatched more than 2,000 pieces of equipment while maintaining a 100 percent quality assurance pass rate. He excelled during the recent Logistics Standardization and Evaluation Program inspection and was recognized as an "Outstanding Performer" by the 62nd MXS commander. Furthermore, his dedication to the local community is second to none; he's participated in Paint Tacoma Beautiful, Feed Tacoma and is a mentor for a 10-year-old child at Mann Elementary School.



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Base gate entry procedures change



File photo by Abner Guzman

Staff Sgt. Douglas Olsen, 62nd Communications Squadron, pauses at the front gate while U.S. Protect contractor Erica Green scans his ID before allowing access on base in June. The use of the hand-held scanner defense identification system here was recently suspended in compliance with a request from the Office of the Secretary of Defense that all uniformed services utilizing Mobilisa take it offline until further notice.

By

Staff Sgt. Eric Burks
62nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

The use of the hand-held scanner defense identification system at McChord was recently suspended in compliance with a request from the Office of the Secretary of Defense that all uniformed services utilizing Mobilisa take it offline until further notice.

One hundred percent ID checks are still being performed and IDs are required for all vehicle occupants ages 16 and up, according to the 62nd Security Forces Squadron.

Currently all escorted and unescorted visitors must obtain a visitor's pass from either the Visitor Control Center at the main gate or the Pass and Identification office in the customer service mall in Building 100.

The scanners, which had been in use since June, ran the bar codes of common access cards and state-issued driver's licenses against national law enforcement databases and McChord's personnel-exclusion roster.

"Hopefully, we will be able to use the system again in the near future," said Maj. David Lederer, 62nd SFS.

At other local installations, gate guards are also keeping an eye out for current base decals. While drivers no longer need a decal, known as DD Form 2220, to pass through McChord's gates, it is still highly recommended to have one, Major Lederer said. Although displaying the decal is optional here, it is still a requirement at other local installations such as Fort Lewis.

Decals are available here at the Visitor Control Center and the Pass and Identification office.



Preventative measures, flu vaccine best defense in flu season

By

Capt. Bethany Druckenmiller
62nd Medical Operations Squadron

This year's flu season is underway, and across the country many communities are beginning to feel the effects. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, from October through early January, the United States experienced low levels of flu activity.

Beginning in January, influenza activity began increasing. By the week ending Feb. 2, 31 states were reporting widespread influenza activity.

Flu seasons are unpredictable and their severity depends on a number of factors, such as what influenza viruses are circulating and how well viruses in the vaccine match circulating influenza viruses. The CDC estimates that each year, 5 to 20 percent of the population

gets the flu, resulting in more than 200,000 hospitalizations and nearly 36,000 deaths.

According to McChord Public Health, which conducts daily disease surveillance, the 62nd Medical Group has seen an increase in respiratory illness in all patient populations, but most are due to bronchitis, the common cold and other influenza-like illnesses. Very few patients have experienced an actual flu illness. This is largely due to the flu vaccine, which is the best way to prevent this illness.

Influenza virus is spread primarily by breathing airborne virus particles in infected droplets, usually from coughing or sneezing. This type of spread predominates among crowded populations in enclosed spaces such as school buses.

Transmission may also occur by direct contact with infected objects since the influenza virus may persist for hours, particularly in the cold and in low humidity condi-

tions. Some people, such as older people, young children and people with certain health conditions, are at high risk for serious flu complications.

People begin to show symptoms one to three days after they are infected with the influenza virus. Symptoms usually begin abruptly with a fever of between 102 and 104 degrees Fahrenheit. Chills, severe headache and muscle aches also occur. Victims often have a dry cough with severe chest pain. Influenza patients generally do not have runny noses or nasal congestion, which may distinguish the disease from the common cold or sinusitis.

Other measures to prevent the spread of disease are frequent hand washing with hot, soapy water, covering coughing and sneezing with disposable tissues, disinfecting common-use items in the workplace (such as copiers and fax machines), eating right and getting

plenty of rest.

It is also important to stay home when ill to prevent giving it to others. Those infected are able to pass the disease along during the first three to five days from the onset of symptoms. Viral spreading ends once the member's temperature returns to normal without the use of medications.

These preventive measures are also effective in preventing other communicable diseases and illnesses.

It is not too late to get a flu vaccine. The 62nd MDG immunizations clinic continues to offer the flu vaccine throughout the flu season. It is offered to all beneficiaries on a walk-in basis from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The clinic also offers informational brochures and pamphlets on the flu and how to protect oneself. For more information on influenza, contact Public Health or visit the CDC Web site at www.cdc.gov.

Do you have a story idea?

Spread the news in *The NW Airlifter*!

Call Public Affairs at 982-5637 or

e-mail us at northwestairlifter@mcchord.af.mil



McChord Airmen

AROUND THE WORLD

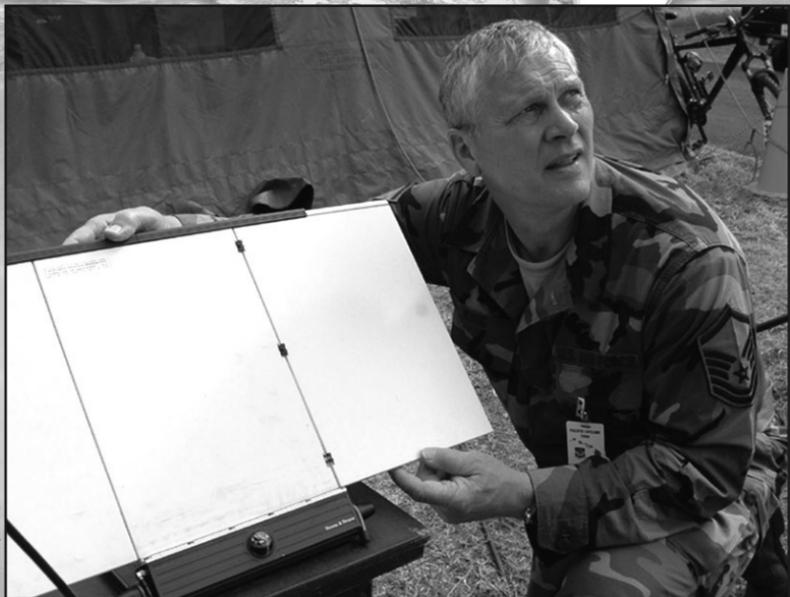
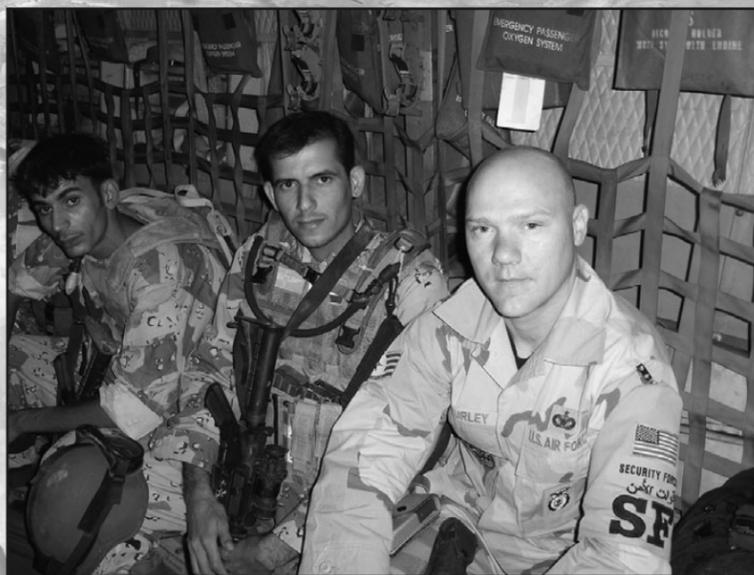


Photo by Capt. Jennifer Gerhardt

HICKAM AIR FORCE BASE, Hawaii — Master Sgt. Kevin King, 446th Airlift Control Flight, adjusts an inmersat antenna during Pacific Lifeline recently. Pacific Lifeline was a humanitarian assistance disaster response exercise that took place over three Hawaiian Islands Jan. 26 to Feb. 9.



Courtesy photo

IRAQ — Staff Sgt. Laurence Turley, 62nd Security Forces Squadron, assists with a transport of Iraqi soldiers from Baghdad to Basarah during a recent deployment. The soldiers are taking over full-time security of the base from the British Allied Forces.



Saving lives with science

Bacteria research could protect Airmen from radiation

By

Maria Callier

Air Force Office of Scientific Research Public Affairs

ARLINGTON, Va. — An Air Force Office of Scientific Research-funded scientist has identified manganese complexes in the bacterium *Deinococcus radiodurans* that resists the damaging effects of radiation.

The goal of the research is to investigate biomaterials that offer protection to Airmen from various environmental hazards, such as military personnel who are exposed to radiation in the course of their duties.

According to Maj. Jennifer Gresham, AFOSR program manager, most biomaterials break down and are not suited for extreme environments.

“Only a few organisms have figured out how to survive and even thrive in harsh environments, and we like to understand these mechanisms to provide long-term stability in a variety of conditions,” the major said.

According to Dr. Michael Daly, a professor of

pathology at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Md., “Death by DNA damage is the conventionally held view of why cells die after exposure to extreme dryness or radiation. This work supports the idea that the mutual nature of extreme dryness and radiation resistance resides in the ability of cells to prevent protein damage.”

Doctor Daly is pursuing practical applications of *Deinococcus manganese* complexes in radiation sickness protection, fuel cells and sensor systems.

Major Gresham noted that in order to take advantage of the unique properties of biological organisms in Air Force systems, Doctor Daly and other scientists must find ways to make such material more robust.

“One can imagine fuel cells whose enzymatic properties can be turned on and off for storage, and biomaterials that can operate in the harsh environment of space,” the major said.

She added that extremeophiles offer exciting insights into the fundamental concepts of macromolecule stability and cell survivability. An

extremeophile is an organism adapted to living in physically or geochemically extreme conditions. Most known extremophiles are microbes.

“The emphasis in extremeophile research is to discover the mechanisms for survival with emphasis on Air Force relevant environments, to include hot, cold, extreme dryness, radiation, solvents, and methods for exporting these protective strategies outside of the host,” Major Gresham said.

“What is so exciting about this research is that Doctor Daly has overturned the conventional wisdom on radiation resistance,” she continued.

Having demonstrated the potent ability of the bacterium’s complexes to protect proteins during harsh exposure to stress caused by oxidation, Doctor Daly’s next objective is to test their effectiveness in simple living cells and in fuel cells.

By funding research programs like Doctor Daly’s, AFOSR continues to support the warfighting effort and expand the horizon of scientific knowledge. AFOSR is part of Air Force Materiel Command’s Air Force Research Laboratory.



CMSAF outlines AF priorities to Dover Airmen

By

Tech. Sgt. Kevin Wallace
436th AW Public Affairs

DOVER AIR FORCE BASE, Del. — The chief master sergeant of the Air Force outlined the Air Force's primary concerns to Dover Air Force Base Airmen recently.

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley told base Airmen that the service's top three priorities are winning the war on terrorism, taking care of Airmen and families, and recapitalizing the aging fleet of Air Force aircraft.

Shortly after Chief McKinley's opening remarks, Airman 1st Class April Hallman of the 436th Aerial Port Squadron was invited to the front of the base theater and recited the Airman's Creed. As Airman Hallman finished each phrase of the creed, every Airman in attendance repeated in unison, until the creed was recited by all.

"Every Airman needs to learn the Airman's Creed," Chief McKinley said, as he described how each Airman memorizes the creed in Basic Military Training. "The professionals at Lackland (AFB, Texas) are doing a fantastic job of instilling warrior ethos in every Airman they graduate.

"The warrior mindset is important," Chief McKinley said. "The right mix of go-get-it attitude and technical competence in their jobs make our Airmen paramount to our nation winning the war on terrorism."

Another point to consider is the aging fleet of Air Force aircraft, Chief McKinley said.

"The Air Force flies daily operations in the oldest planes we've ever had," Chief McKinley said. "With an average age of 24 years old, and some being more than 50 years old, our aircraft are in need of recapitalization. Dover is very lucky to have a fleet of all-modified C-5 (Galaxies) and brand new C-17 (Globemaster IIIs)."

Another extremely important point to consider is taking care of Airmen



Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley listens to members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs during a hearing on military quality of life Feb. 7 in Washington, D.C. The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs held the hearing to discuss military quality of life issues. Chief McKinley also recently lauded Basic Military Training, technical schools and FTAC for generating first-rate Airmen during a visit to Dover Air Force Base, Del., and expressed the necessity for peer Airmen and supervisors to continue in the mentorship of new Airmen.

and their families, Chief McKinley said. Airmen are traditionally great wingmen, and the Air Force is currently looking at many new initiatives to improve the lives of its warfighters and their families.

"As we relocate from base to base and state to state, a lot of times our children end up having to pay out-of-state college tuition, which is very expensive," Chief McKinley said as he described one initiative he recently testified on before Congress. "We owe it to our warfighters and their families to make quality-of-life improvements for them whenever an opportunity presents itself. They deserve

nothing less."

Chief McKinley toured Dover AFB and met many young Airmen.

"I just came from the First Term Airman Center where I got the opportunity to speak with a handful of brand-new Airmen," the chief said. "These warriors were fresh from technical training, motivated and ready to hit the ground running."

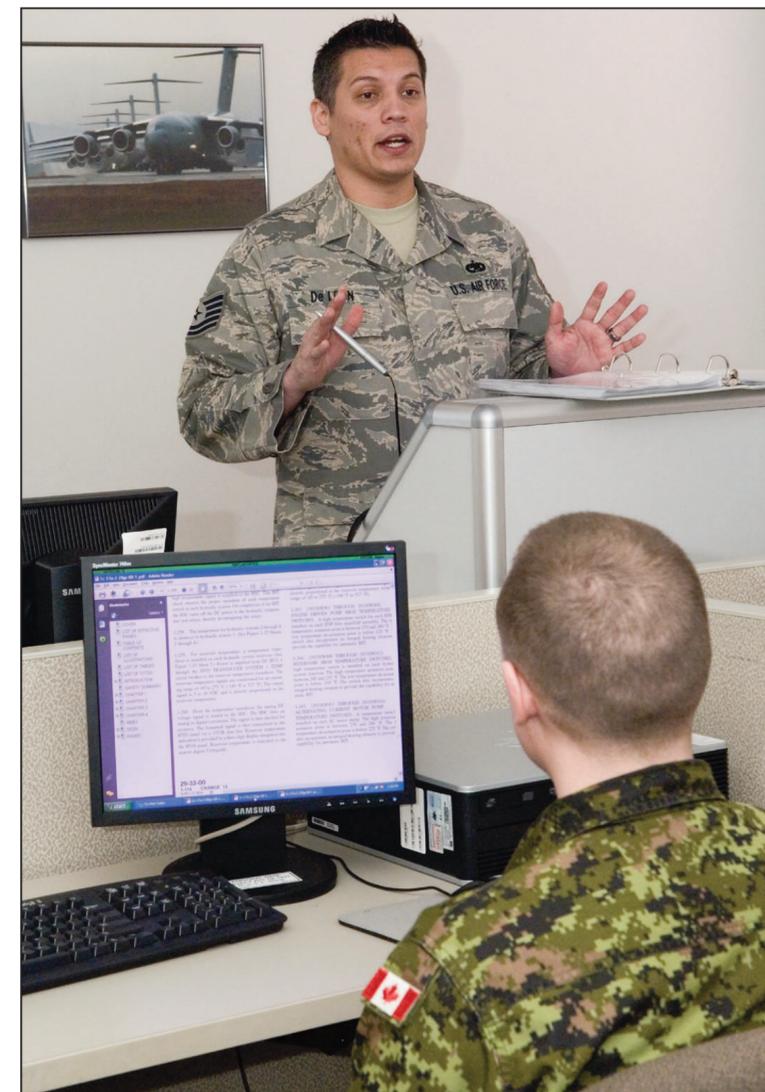
The type of Airmen they become hinges on the attitude and quality of their peers and supervisors, he said.

"When the Airmen arrive here, we need every first-line supervisor to continue to instill them with disci-

pline and core values," Chief McKinley said. "We are engaged in a global war because we have terrorists all over the world who spend every resource available to them and every last drop of energy they have to disrupt and change our way of life. We need all our Airmen capable and proficient at all times to counteract this threat.

"We have fantastic Airmen joining our ranks each day," Chief McKinley said. "Let us set them on a path to success the moment we receive them into our units. It's the right thing to do for our Airmen; it's right for our units and it's right for the nation."

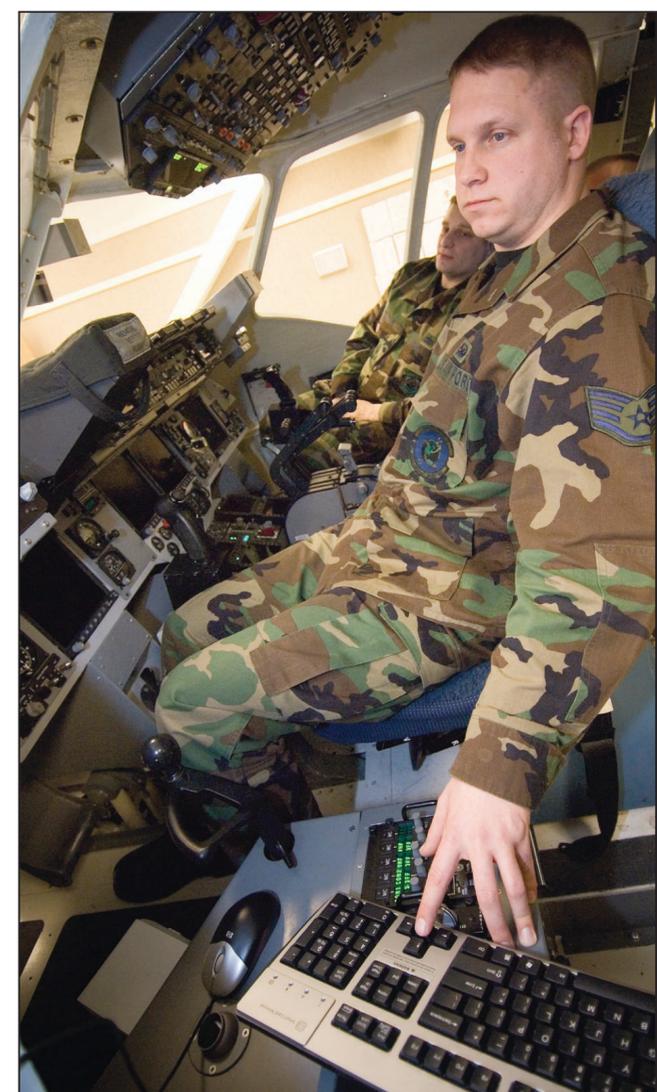




Tech. Sgt. Ed Deleon, 373rd Training Squadron, Detachment 12, lectures Canadian air force maintainers on the C-17 Globemaster III's secondary flight controls during a recent hydraulics class.



Pipeline students, from left to right, Airman Major Grace, Airman Basic Chris Polanco, Airman 1st Class Rickey Martin and Airman 1st Class Erik Silva review a technical order index binder prior to checking out equipment from the 62nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron's consolidated tool kit shop.



Staff Sgt. Brian Durbin, 446th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, uses a digital technical order system to apply external power to a C-17 Globemaster III Trainer Evaluation Performance Aircraft Training Set during a recent class. The TEPATIS is used to train flight deck operation and maintenance, avionics, communications and flight controls.

Class in session

McChord's 373rd Training Squadron, Detachment 12, teaches C-17 Globemaster III maintenance to Airmen around world

By
Tyler Hemstreet
Staff writer

Teaching is something every instructor and supervisor in the 373rd Training Squadron, Detachment 12, takes very seriously.

After all, the consequences of the squadron's students not knowing how to do the job correctly can have disastrous results.

"We're talking about [the loss of] lives and millions of dollars worth of equipment," said 373rd TRS detachment chief Senior Master Sgt. Douglas Levesque.

For that reason, the entire squadron is immersed in a university-like environment every day. From the high-tech classrooms with monitors and computers at each desk and a smart board at each podium to the giant rooms with 11 life-size trainers (exact cutout sections of the C-17 Globemaster III), the squadron embraces several different teaching methods to instruct Airmen coming out of tech school, those transitioning to working on C-17s from a different aircraft and servicemembers from other countries who work on C-17s in their country's fleet.

The teaching is accomplished through formal lectures, written progress checks and then hands-

on work on the maintenance training devices, Sergeant Levesque said.

And due to the close working relationship the squadron has with the 62nd Maintenance Group, students and instructors even bring students out to the flightline and integrate course training objectives into real-world task accomplishments, he said.

Each of the squadron's hand-picked instructors is encouraged to weave personal experiences, the Air Force's core values and proper safety techniques into the classroom and simulator training for each four-person class, Sergeant Levesque said.

"By sharing knowledge and experiences with the students, the instructors are giving back and helping to shape the new generation of combat airlifters," he said.

The focus throughout is always on making sure everyone is communicating and learning.

"There isn't a time pressure like out on the flightline," Sergeant Levesque said. "We have no excuse to rush in here. [Our instructors] don't press on with any other topics until everyone understands."

And the students — who receive Community College of the Air Force credits for the courses — aren't the only ones benefiting from the learning environment.

Each of the squadron's 28 instructors have associate's degrees, six have bachelor's degrees, 17 are enrolled in bachelor's and two are enrolled in master's degree programs, Sergeant Levesque said.

For Tech. Sgt. Brendan Hilton, an instructor who entered into the four-year controlled tour at the 373rd TRS, Det. 12, from the 62nd Maintenance Squadron, teaching has been a very rewarding experience, he said.

Sergeant Hilton decided to make the move because he wanted to become a better public speaker.

"It's been leaps and bounds more than what I expected coming in," he said. "I now have an advanced technical knowledge of the C-17 and I'm not intimidated when it comes to public speaking, no matter who I'm speaking to."

The satisfaction that comes with teaching has been the biggest bonus for instructor Staff Sgt. Philip Wiese, 373rd TRS, Det. 12, who previously worked at the 62nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

"It's a good opportunity to train other guys and show them how to do things right," Sergeant Wiese said. "Sometimes when you use your background knowledge to fall back on when you're teaching — it's neat to see that light bulb go off in their head when they understand."



Instructor Staff Sgt. Jesus Lopez, 373rd TRS, Det. 12, looks on as Airman Martin runs through a series of checks while operating the maintenance monitor panel aboard a C-17. Airman Martin will remain at McChord as a flying crew chief after completing approximately 38 days of pipeline training.



Photos by Abner Guzman



(Above) C-17 maintenance instructor Tech. Sgt. Tony Hendry, 373rd TRS, Det. 12, reviews a lesson plan with students in the squadron's flight control trainer room.

(Left) Airman Basic Timothy Brammer, right, seated in the cockpit of a C-17 flight control trainer, learns to operate the flight controls during a recent class while Airman Basic Nicholas Tran slips into his seat to await his turn. The Airmen are going through training before being assigned to a base.

62nd SVS offers Survivor challenge game

By

Tyler Hemstreet
Staff writer

There won't be any exotic island obstacle courses or bug eating challenges, but the 62nd Services Squadron's McChord Survivor game will challenge Airmen in a variety of different ways.

The Survivor competition, which starts March 7 and runs for four weeks on Fridays throughout the month, will test each Airman's physical and mental abilities with challenges throughout Services' many activities, said competition coordinator Sheryl Swory, 62nd SVS.

The competition pits squadron teams comprised of five Airmen against each other in a variety of 10 different challenges based off the popular reality television show. Teams must have at least one female and everyone must be active duty, Department of Defense civilian, Reserve or a family member.

"It's designed to be a team-building event," Mrs. Swory said. "There will be some physicality to some of the events, but we'll also have mental challenges."

Those mental events could include solving various word scrambles, puzzles and trivia questions, she said.

Each week the location for the challenge will change and it will be built around the theme for the



File photo by Abner Guzman

Airmen practice for an event in the 22nd Special Tactics Squadron's Monster Mash competition last year by pushing a Humvee. Might the 62nd Services Squadron's Survivor competition have a similar event? Event planners aren't divulging any hints on the competition's many contests.

location. If teams lose in one category, they can make up points in another. The scores are added up at the end of the week.

"It will be something totally off the wall," Mrs. Swory said of the challenges 62nd SVS is planning to unveil each week.

In similar fashion to the televi-

sion show, in addition to a weekly prize winning teams for the week will receive immunity for certain future challenges, she said.

Everyone will receive a T-shirt for participation in the event and each team member on the winning team will receive a trophy, while the second place winners will

receive a plaque.

"Our goal with this competition is to give squadrons a little something fun and different," Mrs. Swory said.

Sign-ups are being accepted through the end of the month. For more information or to sign up, call 982-2876.



'Crews into shape' program kicks off

By
Tyler Hemstreet
Staff writer

According to a 2005 Department of Defense survey of health-related behaviors, 61 percent of active duty members older than the age of 20 are overweight, only 10 percent ate three or more servings per day of fruits and vegetables and 61 percent exercised at a moderate activity rate (30 minutes, three times per week).

To help combat those numbers, health officials here and DoD-wide are encouraging active duty members, Reservists, dependents, retirees, civilians and contractors to participate in the Crews into Shape challenge, which runs March 3-28.

The four-week challenge is designed to bring people together for a team approach to wellness, said Tanya Henriques, 62nd Medical Operations Squadron, health education program manager at the Health and Wellness Center.

"This program isn't just about the weigh-ins — it gives people enough time to make real healthy behavior changes," Mrs. Henriques said.

People are encouraged to join a two to ten-member squadron or unit team and then register for the challenge before Thursday at www.nehc.med.navy.mil/hp/crews_into_shape.

Each crew member earns points during the competition for exercising, maintaining or achieving a goal weight, eating fruits and vegetables and drinking water or other healthy fluids. All of the scoring for the contest is self-reported, Mrs. Henriques said.

"The goal is to help people change their health behaviors for the better," she said.

Teams all across the Air Force, Navy and Marines are participating in the competition



Photo by Abner Guzman

Airman 1st Class Shay Wood, 62nd Medical Operations Squadron, finishes her morning run near Heritage Hill recently. Airmen who participate in the Crews into Shape challenge, which runs March 3-28, can earn points for their team by exercising, maintaining or achieving a goal weight, eating fruits and vegetables and drinking water or other healthy fluids.

and everyone who participates gets a prize.

The HAWC will host various diet and nutrition and exercise classes throughout the month of March where those who attend can earn

points for their team, Mrs. Henriques said.

For more information about the competition or for help finding a team, call the HAWC at 982-2088.



Iraqi leaders visit civilian IED victims at AF hospital

By

1st Lt. Lisa Spilinek
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing
Public Affairs

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq — One day after a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device explosion devastated residents in the vicinity of the city of Balad, local Iraqi leaders came to the Air Force Theater Hospital here recently to visit the attack's most critically wounded.

The hospital serves as the region's premiere hub for medical care as the medical staff treats both coalition force members and Iraqi civilians who would likely not survive without the technologically-advanced care provided there.

The group of visiting Iraqi leaders consisted of Amer Mrhown Al-obedy, mayor of the city of Balad; Col. Hamad Ali Jassim, the 3rd Iraqi Army Battalion commander; Col. Hussein Alwan Hussein Al Saady, city of Balad police chief; and Lt. Col. Faisal Malik, the national police commander.

The men were taken to the bedsides of 16 car bombing victims, including two children who had been airlifted to the hospital the evening before by Soldiers from Forward Operating Base Poliwada. The injured suffered serious injuries to include burns, shrapnel wounds and head injuries. Twenty patients were taken to the hospital, but four, including two children, suffered fatal wounds.

"It's a great honor to see the technology you have here," said

Mayor Amer. He also said the suffering "breaks his heart" and that he would like to teach people about not committing crimes against humanity.

Accompanying the group was an Iraqi television cameraman, and the mayor as well as Colonel Hamad provided statements denouncing the attack while surrounded by their injured countrymen.

"Innocent people were targeted. That is sabotage. I would like to see my country free and safe," Colonel Hamad said.

Col. Timothy Halligan, the 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group deputy commander, credited the Air Force Theater Hospital doctors and nurses with saving the lives of the 16 car bombing victims. The efforts made to save the lives of the patients involved nearly 77 hours in surgery by hospital doctors.

"It's an honor to take care of your people," Colonel Halligan said on-camera to the Iraqi people. "This is a war we are fighting together."

As they made their rounds throughout the hospital's intensive care unit, the Iraqi leaders clasped hands with many of the patients and wished them well.

For one member of the group, the visit to the ward brought back personal memories. Colonel Hamad himself had been a patient at the hospital only two months ago following a serious car accident.

"Coalition forces are like angels — the doctors and the nurses," he



Photo by Senior Airman Julianne Showalter

Balad Mayor Amer Mrhown Al-Obedy kisses the cheek of a young Iraqi girl recently at Balad Air Base, Iraq. The girl was injured in a car bombing the day before and was brought to the Air Force Theater Hospital for treatment. The mayor and other local area leaders came to the hospital to visit with 16 Iraqi patients who were admitted there after a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device was detonated Feb. 10. The hospital serves as the region's premiere hub for medical care. The staff treats both coalition force members and Iraqi civilians who would likely not survive without the technologically-advanced care available at the hospital.

said through an interpreter. "Coalition forces are doing their best to care for our people. It is a good thing that coalition forces save not only our people, but also our culture."

"We thank you in the name of humanity," Mayor Amer said. "The

people who are hurt are happy to know they're coming here because they know you have special doctors here to take care of them."

(Staff Sgt. Mareshah Haynes from the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs contributed to this article)



Airman from Bronx drives convoys in Afghanistan

By

Master Sgt. Demetrius Lester
455th Air Expeditionary Wing
Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — Regardless of what job an Airman may have, being an Airman comes first. And, as a member of the most elite Air Force in history, today's Airman often gets the same news that Senior Airman Vanessa Velez received when she was first notified of her 365-day deployment: He or she is being deployed.

"I was told, 'you won't be working vehicle maintenance; you will be a driver,'" said Airman Velez, who took the news in stride. "At Fort Bragg I found out I wouldn't be driving shuttles, distinguished visitors, or commanders around in a car or bus like I was mistakenly told at my duty station. I would be driving a fully loaded Humvee outside the wire, in enemy territory at least five times a week."

Airman Velez recalls Lt. Col. Bobby L. Robinson, who would end up being her Provincial Reconstruction Team commander, telling the team they would be living in tents and riding outside the wire.

"That's when reality set in. At first I was shocked and couldn't believe that a girl from the Bronx, N.Y., was about to be a driver in a hostile situation," said Airman Velez. "I hate to drive with a passion. I'm from New York."

When Airman Velez arrived to

Afghanistan, she was assigned to the Bagram PRT, whose mission is to secure and rebuild a post-Taliban Afghanistan by extending the authority of the Afghan central government, improving security and promoting reconstruction. The PRTs, Airman Velez, and her team lead in Afghanistan have been so successful that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has used them as the template to help rebuild Iraq.

"My first convoy, I was so nervous that I kept stomping the brakes until the brake line broke," said Airman Velez, a vehicle maintenance controller with the 6th Logistics Readiness Squadron, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. "The heat and fluid from the brake line started a fire ... in the middle of Charikar District in Parwan."

More than 120 missions later, no more brake stomping and no more fires. She continues to shuttle the truck and mission commanders outside the wire on a daily basis like she was told, but no buses or Landcruisers — just her Humvee. Airman Velez believes she has made a difference for both America and the Afghan people during this war.

"I have learned so much about a lot of things especially my job and the Afghan people," said Airman Velez, who originally thought all Afghans were bad people. "I had the mentality they were all al-Qaida and Taliban until I talked to them. After spending time with the Afghans, I learned they don't like the Taliban either. Everything has



Photo by Master Sgt. Demetrius Lester

Senior Airman Vanessa Velez prepares for a convoy mission recently at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. Airman Velez, who is a vehicle maintenance controller with the 6th Logistics Readiness Squadron at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., has driven at least 120 convoys during her 365-day deployment in Afghanistan. She is a convoy driver with the Bagram Provincial Reconstruction Team.

gotten better since my arrival in March ... even the roads have improved."

When she's outside the wire, Airman Velez is somewhat of a celebrity with the Afghan children.

"They get excited because they see a female Airman. They want to touch my hair and earrings. The Afghans want to learn and have a lot of questions. They want to work and take care of their families like most ordinary people do."

This is Airman Velez's third deployment in three years, but she has no regrets.

"I am an Airman first, just like all the services have been preaching," added Airman Velez. "This shows, in this day and age, you could be tasked to do anything to support the war on terror."

"My job satisfaction comes from constantly thinking about all the people's lives I have in my hand," said Airman Velez, who's primary job is getting people back and forth from a mission safely. "My vehicle is my job. I drive so much that my Humvee is my office. I don't have a computer, e-mail, or an office; I have a Humvee."



The Clothesline Project

People can express their thoughts, feelings or community safety suggestions by decorating a Sexual Assault Awareness Month T-Shirt from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. March 3 and 5 at Habanero Mexican Grill. The goal of the free event is to increase awareness and celebrate a survivor's strength as well as provide another avenue for her or him to courageously break the silence that often surrounds their experience. All participants' information will remain confidential. During Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April, certain T-Shirts may be anonymously displayed in the Customer Service Mall in Bldg 100. For more information, call 982-0457.

McChord Chief's Group Scholarship

The McChord Chief's Group offers a scholarship program to defer the education-related financial obligations of active duty enlisted personnel in grades E-1 through E-5 pursuing mid-level and advanced degrees. Applications can be picked up at the Education Center (Bldg. 851), from any McChord active duty chief master sergeant, or downloaded from the chief's group share point site. Scholarship applications are due by Feb. 29 and can be e-mailed to rodney.billinghurst@mcchord.af.mil, given to your group superintendent or any McChord chief master sergeant. For more information, call Chief Master Sgt. Rod Billinghurst, 62nd Maintenance Squadron, at 982-7071.

Scholarship opportunity

The McChord Officer Spouses' Club is offering college scholarships to college-bound high school seniors who are Air Force dependents and to spouses of Air Force personnel enrolled in degree-granting college programs. Application

packets are available at the following locations: the McChord Base Education Office, the McChord Airman and Family Readiness Center, the McChord Library, the McChord Thrift Shop, and high school guidance counselors' offices. For more information, please contact Emily Manuel at (253) 875-8974 or teach-manuel@earthlink.net. Completed applications must be postmarked by Mar. 10.

Air Force Aid Society

Concerned about the soaring cost of higher education for your children? Maybe the Air Force Aid Society can help. The Society's General Henry Arnold Education Grant Program awards \$2,000 grants to sons and daughters of active duty, Title 10 AGR/Reservists on extended active duty, Title 32 AGR performing full-time active duty, retired, retired Reservists with 20 plus qualifying years of service and deceased Air Force members. Also eligible are spouses (residing stateside) of active duty and Title 10 AGR/Reservists on extended active duty and surviving spouses of deceased members. Last year, 75 percent of the McChord certified entries received the \$2,000 award. Call your AFAS section at the Airman & Family Readiness Center today at 982-2695 for more information and an application, or visit the Air Force Aid Society's web site at www.afas.org.

Lost and found

The 62nd Security Forces Squadron is currently in possession of numerous items of personal property such as bicycles, keys, etc. These items were found on or near McChord and may be reclaimed by contacting the Security Forces Investigation Section, located in Bldg. 160. For more information, call the Investigations Section at 982-5936.

Faith and Worship Programs

**For more information,
call the chapel support center at 982-5556.**

The following chapel program takes place at the base chapel support center, Bldg. 746, unless otherwise noted:

Adult Bible study is from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Wednesdays.



Lent & Easter Schedule of Services

Catholic

- Stations of the Cross: Every Friday until March 14. Service starts at 6 p.m. in Chapel 2 (Bldg 181).
- The March 14 service will be at the Chapel Support Center (Bldg 746).

Holy Week Schedule: March 16-23

- Palm Sunday Masses: Regularly scheduled services.
- Holy Thursday Mass: 7 p.m. on March 20 in Chapel 2 (Bldg 181).
- Good Friday "Veneration of the Cross" Service: 7 p.m. on March 21 in Chapel 2 (Bldg 181).
- Holy Saturday Easter Vigil: 5 p.m. on March 22 in Chapel 2 (Bldg 181).
- Easter Sunday Masses: Regularly scheduled services.

Protestant

- Holy Week Schedule: March 16-23.
- Good Friday Service: 5 p.m. on March 21 at the Chapel Support Center (Bldg 746).
- Palm Sunday Services: Regularly scheduled services.
- Easter Sunrise Service: 6:30 a.m. on March 23 in Chapel 1 (Bldg 180).
- Easter Services: Regularly scheduled services.

Schedule of worship services

