



# KEESLER NEWS

KEESLER AIR FORCE BASE, BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI

Train to Fight. Train to Win.

SEPT. 2, 2010 VOL. 71 NO. 34



## An exercise in deployment

Page 5

Accident scenario

Page 4

Focus on suicide

Page 14

Free fitness classes

Page 27

INSIDE

Commentary, 2-3 Training and Education, 4-7 News and Features, 8-24 Sports and Recreation, 26-27

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## Lorenz on Leadership — Professional advocacy

By Gen. Stephen Lorenz

Air Education and Training Command commander

RANDOLPH Air Force Base, Texas — As a service member, I have fought for programs and resources throughout my career. In many cases these battles were a matter of advocacy — my opportunity to fight for things I believed in. I began facing these challenging moments within days of my entry into military service. As a result, I have come to embrace several principles of professional advocacy that I want to share with you.

We all have personal beliefs and individual opinions. However, as service members we are expected to advocate for professional positions. You must establish what the issues are that require your professional energy and passion. These issues will vary as your careers progress from junior- to senior-level leadership, especially in the face of diminishing resources and ever-increasing global challenges.

### A vision without resources is an illusion

You must possess a vision. This is both a personal and professional expectation. We all have goals or beliefs that we want to see come to fruition for our unit and mission. These ideas vary in complexity and range in purpose from tactical to strategic. As we advocate for our beliefs we must establish a priority list. This list should be rank ordered from most-desired to least-desired. This list is dynamic. When one idea is fulfilled, the next one on the list moves up in priority. However, sometimes an item at the top of the list may find its way to the bottom without ever receiving the necessary resources. This is a reality. We live in a time of limited resources. We must learn to balance shortfalls where resources are the most constrained. However, the first step is to prepare your vision and then go after it.

### Exercise practicality

When advocating for your top priority, take a practical approach. Each time I am called upon to offer my opinion on a military matter, I mentally walk through a checklist of “dos” and “don’ts” that I have developed through previous experience and observation. First, do your homework. Understand what you are requesting, what resources you need (e.g. time, money and manpower) and the risks associated with your position. Spend time researching your position thoroughly and reach out to functional experts for support as you organize your thoughts. I would submit it is also appropriate to know the positions contrary to your own. This means analyzing all sides of your argument. It is also imperative that you identify the end-state. In other words, what is the desired effect you are seeking when offering your professional opinion?

### Keep your ego in check

Inevitably, in the battle of persuasion your desired effect is not always achieved. In some cases, you must compromise for an alternative. In other cases, your opinion will be rejected entirely. Remember, you researched your position and know the facts, so now is not the time to let emotion enter the equation. Emotion brings negative energy to the debate and takes an objective discussion and makes it personal ... and when it becomes personal, my experience tells me people stop listening. I think this is what a great American military leader, Gen. Colin Powell, meant when he adopted the following as one of his 10 personal rules: “Avoid having your ego so close to your position,” General Powell writes, “that when your position falls, your ego goes with it.” Passion for your position is good. Emotion tied to ego is bad.

### You won’t achieve everything you advocate for

As professionals we have to recognize when our issues will not make the “list” or will be rejected. Sometimes this means knowing when to submit to a decision contrary to our position. Please understand I’m not talking about matters of principle. On matters of principle, it’s important that we stand and fight for what we believe in. Ethical debates must be carefully examined as “right” versus “wrong” — we should always stand firm and fight for the “right” and against the “wrong.”

The larger point I am trying to make is an acceptance of “right” versus “right.” When the final decision has been made by leadership, we each have a choice to make. As professionals we can accept the decision, salute smartly and carry on as our leaders direct. Or, we can lose our objectivity and resist the choice that was made. This moment is defining for us as professionals.

Leaders must cultivate a professional environment. If we center our conduct on the foundational core values each of our services has, we will establish the very environment the American public expects and service members must follow. We have been called to great responsibility in defense of our nation and must remain rooted in the principles of our oath as we move our mission forward. Therefore, when the opportunity presents itself to offer your professional military opinion, I encourage you to be objective, do your homework, advocate for your vision and always be professional. If you do this, I guarantee that over the years you will end up achieving more than you ever thought possible.

## Remember, first impressions are lasting impressions

Double-check all aspects of uniform wear to put your most professional image forward.

Photo by  
Kemberly Groue



By Maj. Robert Paleo

Compliance inspection project officer

My first Air Force deployment as an Air Force officer was with the 2nd Marine Division aboard a Navy ship, the USS Mount Whitney. Our mission was to patrol the Gulf of Aden for terrorists transiting the waterway between Yemen and Somali. One thing that impressed me was the attention my military brethren paid to military customs and courtesies, as well as dress and appearance.

On one occasion, a young enlisted Marine respectfully called me on the improper wear of my fleece jacket. At first, I thought, “How dare he!”, but looking back, I know that Marine did the right thing, and this took backbone. The easy path would’ve been to overlook this infraction, but the right thing to do was to make an on-the-spot correction.

During our compliance inspection, the inspectors will prowl for these same types of infractions. Let’s not give them any to note. From now until the compliance inspection, we need to concentrate

Please see **Impressions**, Page 3



# TRAINING AND EDUCATION

## Accident response exercise focuses on fuel truck fire

A triage area is established behind the supply warehouse for an Aug. 25 major accident response exercise. In the scenario, a leaking fuel truck caught on fire, resulting in injuries to the truck driver and 20 nonprior service students.

Photos by Kemberly Groue



Keesler firefighters Staff Sgt. Commie Hobbs, left, and Jason Wallace arrive on scene.



Staff Sgt. Mark Born radios fellow firefighters with pertinent information as the exercise unfolds.



Top, Sergeant Hobbs, left, and fellow firefighter Airman 1st Class Jeffery Spivey carry a “burn victim,” Airman Basic Justin Acord, to the triage area. Airman Acord is a student in the 338th Training Squadron.

Left, firefighter Guy Chadwick evaluates the “injuries” of Airman Basic Brian Hines, a student in the 336th TRS.

## Exercise tests deployment readiness



Photo by Kemberly Groue

From left, Senior Airmen Joseph Jahnke and Christopher Hill and Airman 1st Class Porsha Hazzard inspect their deployment mobility bags at the supply warehouse during a deployment exercise Aug. 26. Airman Jahnke and Hazzard are from the 81st Security Forces Squadron. Airman Hill is assigned to the 81st Force Support Squadron.

## Academic ace



Airman 1st Class David Deloera graduated from the electronic principles course in the 332nd Training Squadron with a perfect score. Airman Deloera, from Bluffton, Ohio, continues his training at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, in the F-22 avionics systems apprentice course.

# Dark Knights help children with school supplies

By Susan Griggs

Keesler News editor

Equipping a child with classroom supplies for a new school year can be an expensive proposition. So what happens if a parent is already having financial difficulties — what do they do?

Airman 1st Class Tessie Lessman, a radio frequency transmission student in the 338th Training Squadron, recognized the problem and spearheaded a project drive that collected \$3,000 worth of school supplies for needy children in the Biloxi School System.

Airman Lessman, an Illinois Air National Guard member, has a sixth grader and a preschooler of her own back home. She was spurred to action when her military training leader, Staff Sgt. Nicholas Wilson, encouraged students to make a difference in the local community.



**Airman Lessman**

“I always preach to our nonprior service Airmen about giving back to the community and leaving a footprint while they’re here,” Sergeant Wilson remarked.

“I come from a small town of about 700 people,” said Airman Lessman, who arrived at Keesler March 22 and graduates

Sept. 29. “Back home, I work with a group of parents that go out and buy coats, hats and gloves when they’re on sale for children who need them.

“Parts of Biloxi are still recovering from Hurricane Katrina, and now the gulf oil spill, not to mention the challenges of the current economy,” she explained. “I know a lot of parents must be struggling to provide the essentials for their children.”

Airman Lessman rallied the support of her fellow classmates and the T-shift instructors in Jones Hall to bring in school supplies. The group even raised \$715 when students were given the opportunity to contribute \$3 for the cause and be released after formation one Sunday, instead of participating in the regular “GI party” cleaning effort.

“One student gave \$40 because he didn’t have a car to go shopping,” Airman Lessman reported. “He said he

came from a family that would have appreciated what we were trying to do.”

The students took the money to a nearby store to buy school supplies and the store manager contributed \$100 when she learned about the project.

“The cashier started crying when we told her what we were doing,” Airman Lessman said. “She had three children of her own and she knew how much it would mean to parents who are having financial struggles.”

Airman Lessman and her teammates delivered the supplies to Dr. David Spinks, director of student services for the Biloxi School System.

The system’s administrative staff sent the supplies to schools where they were needed.

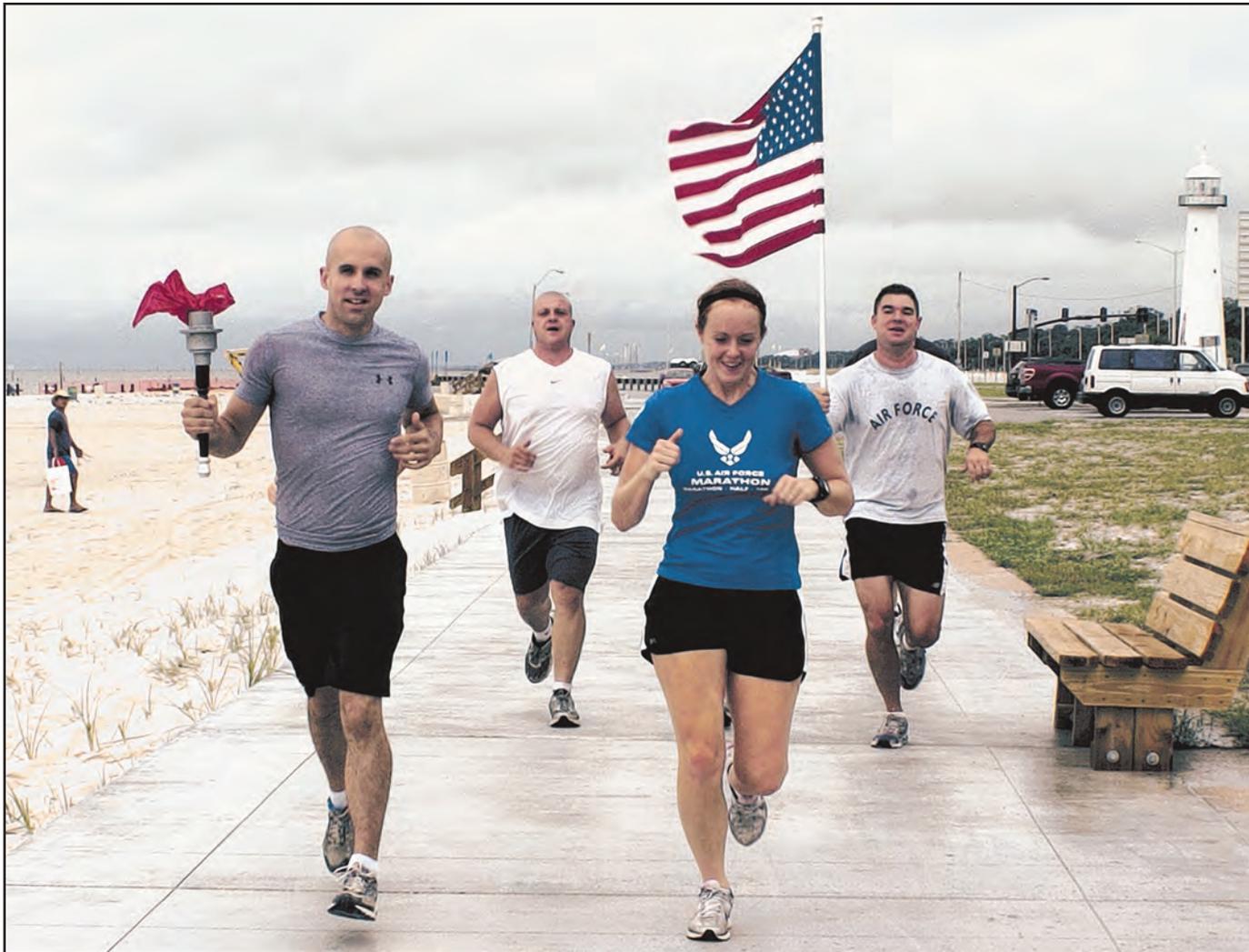
“This was a huge team effort,” Airman Lessman emphasized. “We just wanted to help the kids — they can’t help their situations.”

“I am amazed when student

Airmen are able to find the time to step up, volunteer and give back to the community,” said Lt. Col. Daniel Gottrich, 338th TRS commander. “I’m extremely proud of what Airman Lessman and her cohorts have accomplished in such a short time, along with their night shift instructors who participated.

“I first met Airman Lessman when she volunteered to watch over a group of more than a dozen children at the dorms while their moms attended one of our quarterly student spouse orientations,” he recalled. “Rather than sitting in the corner and throwing crackers at the kids, she engaged each and every one of them with crafts and toys.”

“Airman Lessman epitomizes ‘service before self,’ and this project will be her legacy at Keesler,” the colonel added. “I’m hoping it’s a project we can continue each and every semester.”



## Bulls participate in Katrina relay

From left, Senior Airman John Westlund, Tech. Sgt. Brandin Coy, 2nd Lt. Lindsey Pope and Tech. Sgt. Tyler Hamilton from the 335th Training Squadron's weather training flight represent Keesler in Saturday's Katrina Torch Relay. Airman Westlund and Lieutenant Pope are students and Sergeants Coy and Hamilton are instructors. Staff Sgts. Jonathan Berry and Daniel J. Alexander were also members of the team that carried the torch nine miles along Highway 90 from Debuys Road at the west end of Biloxi to the Isle of Capri Casino at the east edge of Biloxi. Runners at opposite ends of the state met at the foot of the Biloxi-Ocean Springs Bridge to symbolize the unity and determination of the Mississippi Gulf Coast five years after Hurricane Katrina devastated the area.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Bernard Moyer Jr.

## TRAINING, EDUCATION NOTES

### Free bowling

The Air Force Sergeants Association provides free glow bowling with a disk jockey, 3-5 p.m. Sept. 17 at Gaudé Lanes.

There's no charge for shoes. Food and drinks are available at regular prices.

### Drill down, parade

**Drill down** — 8 a.m. Oct. 15.

**Parade** — 6 p.m. Sept. 16.

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

### Commissioning briefings

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

### CCAF online

Visit the Air Force Virtual Education Center, <https://www.my.af.mil/afvecprod>, to create MyAFVEC accounts to access online customer service tools.

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

### DANTES procedures

The Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support won't fund re-testing on a previously funded exam title for the College Level Examination Program, Excelsior College Examinations and DANTES Subject Standardized Tests.

As a result, service members taking these exams who don't receive a passing score must be informed they won't be allowed to retest as a DANTES-funded candidate on a previously funded exam of the same title. However, they may personally pay for a retest after waiting the requisite period of time.

This includes spouses and civil service personnel of Reserve components and Coast Guard.

For more information, call education services, 376-8708.

### GI Bill benefits

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

For more information, call 376-8708.

Base shuttle schedules are found at  
<http://www.keesler.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp>

## Steak break

Chief Master Sgt. Michael Skidmore, left, serves a steak to Senior Master Sgt. Jason Devereaux Aug. 27 at the Outback Steak House in D'Iberville during the annual Keesler Chiefs Group steak sale. Chief Skidmore and Sergeant Devereaux are from the 81st Aerospace Medicine Squadron. The proceeds support various base activities for Keesler Airmen, including Airman Leadership School and NCO Academy graduations.

Photo by Steve Pivnick



## Keesler housing to be privatized

### Keesler Public Affairs

The Air Force has selected Forrest City Military Communities, LLC as the highest ranked offeror in its effort to privatize military family housing at Keesler and three other installations in the continental United States: Shaw and Charleston Air Force Bases, S.C., and Arnold AFB, Tenn.

The Air Force Southern Group Housing Privatization Project, a deal valued at \$291 million in development costs, will demolish and build hundreds of housing units over the next four years.

Under the deal, the Air Force will lease 316 acres of land at Keesler as part of a 50-year transaction and convey 1,188 existing housing units and other improvements to FCMC. At the four installations combined, the Air Force will lease a total of 846 acres of land and convey 2,387 existing housing units. At the other group bases, FCMC will demolish 972 existing inadequate housing units and construct 770 new housing units by the end of the three-year initial development period. FCMC will continue to operate and maintain a portfolio of 2,185 housing units across the four bases for a 50-year term.

The Air Force selected FCMC May 21 as the HRO on the Southern Group Housing Privatization Project through a competitive solicitation process led by the Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment, headquartered at Lackland AFB, Texas.

"We feel that FCMC offers the most advantageous business case to address quality development, long-term sustainability, competitive financ-

ing and the construction timeline for the bases in the Southern Group Project," said Eddie Richards, Keesler's HP contracted project manager.

Assuming the Air Force and FCMC reach successful closing, in early 2011 the existing houses at all four installations will become property of FCMC which will own and operate the rental housing development for military families. FCMC will finance, plan, design, and construct improvements in the development and maintain the housing units FOR the duration of the 50-year lease period.

The Air Force's housing privatization effort has been successful at 44 installations in the continental United States with almost 70 percent of family housing being privatized, totaling approximately 38,000 units. Housing privatization has eliminated nearly 35,000 inadequate units Air Force-wide and is providing an average of 500 new and renovated homes per month.

In 2009, 4,087 new homes were built and 2,654 were renovated. Beyond the Southern Group Project, the Air Force is looking to privatize about 14,000 additional units at 18 installations over the next two years. The Military Housing Privatization Initiative, originally authorized by Congress in the FY 1996 National Defense Authorization Act, has given the Air Force the ability to partner with the private sector development community to provide quality homes for Airmen and their families faster than traditional military construction programs.

For general information about the Air Force Housing Privatization program, visit [www.afcee.af.mil/resources/housingprivatization/index.asp](http://www.afcee.af.mil/resources/housingprivatization/index.asp).

## IN THE NEWS



## 7 weeks until Unit Compliance Inspection

### Wing commander's calls

Brig. Gen. Andrew Mueller, 81st Training Wing commander, plans three commander's calls next week at the Bay Breeze Event Center:

**81st Training Group** — 3:30 p.m. Tuesday.

**81st Medical Group** — 4:30 p.m. Wednesday.

**81st Mission Support Group** — 3:30 p.m. Sept. 9.

### Early Keesler News deadline

The deadline for submissions for the Sept. 9 issue of the Keesler News is noon today because of Monday's Labor Day holiday.

### Off-limits list

These establishments have been declared "off-limits" to all armed forces personnel by the Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board:

**Biloxi** — Ya-ya's, 2623 Pass Road.

**Pascagoula** — Bunksmall Apartments, 708 S. Pascagoula Street.

**Ocean Springs** — Pugs, 6213 Washington Avenue.

**D'Iberville** — Guitars and Cadillacs, 4031 Popp's Ferry Road

**Gulfport** — Herbal Alternatives, 1909 East Pass Road and 11530 U.S. Highway 49.

Service members are ordered not to enter or patronize these off-limits establishments or their locations. This restriction doesn't apply to armed forces police on duty or others on official business. Violations of this order are punishable under Article 92, Uniform Code of Military Justice.

### Clinics close for warrior training

#### 81st Medical Group Public Affairs

The 81st Medical Group conducts warrior training, noon to 5 p.m. Sept. 9.

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

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

For emergency situations, go to the nearest emergency room or call 911 for an ambulance.

## Keesler hosts Morning Call

Gary Fulton, center, and Chief Master Sgt. Billy Abbott listen to remarks from Brig. Gen. Andrew Mueller, 81st Training Wing commander, at the Biloxi Chamber of Commerce Morning Call, Aug. 25 at the Dragon's Lair. Mr. Fulton is manager of Keesler Federal Credit Union's Larcher Branch and Chief Abbott is superintendent of the 81st Training Group. The Morning Call is a quarterly gathering of civic leaders sponsored by area businesses and organizations.

Photo by Kemberly Groue



# PERSONNEL NOTES

## Faster VA health benefits process

**Air Force News Service**

WASHINGTON — As part of Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki's effort to streamline access to benefits, Department of Veterans Affairs officials have removed the signature requirement for veterans who electronically submit an online 10-10EZ "Application for Health Benefits."

"This singular action will reduce days, if not weeks, for veterans who apply online to access their hard-earned medical benefits and upholds the promise to reduce access barriers to needed care for this nation's veterans," Secretary Shinseki said.

Previously, veterans filling out the online application were required to print a copy, sign it and send to their local medical center or wait for a copy to be mailed to them for signature and mailing before enrollment into the VA health care system could occur.

For more information, go to [www.va.gov/healtheligibility](http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility) or call VA's toll-free number at 877-222-8387. The online form is available at <https://www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez/>.

## Retroactive stop loss pay claims

**Air Force News Service**

Airmen, veterans and beneficiaries who were involuntarily extended under stop loss between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 30, 2009, are eligible for retroactive stop loss special pay.

If your enlistment was involuntarily extended due to stop loss, and you have yet to file a claim for retroactive stop loss special pay, Oct. 21 is the last day to file.

For links to the claim forms and instructions on how to file, log on to [www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/stoploss](http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/stoploss)

## Moving in October?

**81st Logistics Readiness Squadron**

The Joint Personal Property Office in San Antonio relocates to Port San Antonio Oct. 7 and will be minimally manned the entire month.

Carol Emling, personal property chief for the 81st Logistics Readiness Squadron, advises all service members relocating in October to visit the personal property processing office, Room 114, Sablich Center, no later than 30 days prior to their desired pickup date to ensure a smooth personal property move.

Technical training students in the Triangle area must contact the traffic management office, Room 211, Levitow Training Support Facility.

## Records for departing civilians

**Air Force Personnel Center**

RANDOLPH Air Force Base, Texas — Air Force civilians are now able to access their electronic Official Personnel Folder for up to 60 days following their date of separation.

This new capability allows employees to log into the AFPC Secure website from a personal computer using a user ID and password and download a copy of their final separation Standard Form 50, Notification of Personnel Action, or any other eOPF document.

The user ID and password must be created prior to separation. For instructions on how to establish a user ID and password, visit the personnel services website and enter keyword "eOPF."

Allowing separated employees access to their eOPF for up to 60 days gives them immediate access to their final SF 50. Previously, employees had to wait for a hard copy to be mailed.

For more information on any of the self-service initiatives, visit the AFPC personnel services website and enter keywords "self service updates," or call the Total Force Service Center, 800-525-0102.



**DO NOT  
ENTER**

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

Identity theft is a personal nightmare and security risk. Shred bills, statements, letters, old journals, records, outdated application forms and any documents that contain your full name, Social Security number, duty title and job information, credit card, bank account numbers and names of family members. If you see documents being removed from trash cans, call the 81st Security Forces Squadron law enforcement desk, 377-3040.

# Settling disputes through mediation

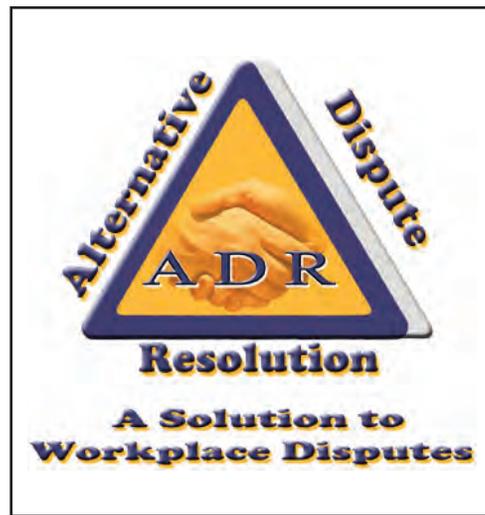
By Jonathan Hicks

## Keesler Public Affairs

Do you have a dispute, conflict, or misunderstanding with your supervisor, co-worker or other colleague? Alternative dispute resolution offered by the equal opportunity office may be the solution to help both civilian and military personnel resolve work related issues in a timely, private, and confidential manner.

One of the most commonly used forms of ADR is mediation, an informal and voluntary process intended to resolve conflicts without resorting to arbitration or litigation.

Why choose mediation? Mediation uses an impartial neutral third party to guide the discussion between the involved parties. A session with a mediator can encourage a constructive exchange of views, ideas and feelings, which may aid in each party seeing the other's perspective of the situation. Hopefully, by assisting the communication process, the mediator can help achieve a resolution to the conflict. Mediation is fast and cost-effective. It allows the parties to resolve the problem themselves,



instead having a court or judge decide for them, which can be expensive and time-consuming.

A mediation session varies depending on the situation, but it usually is completed within a few hours. However, not all disputes are suitable for mediation, but when used appropriately it can have positive results according to Annie Davison, equal opportunity director.

“Mediation is considered the ‘no-judg-

ment zone,’” Mrs. Davison pointed out. “If the parties are prepared and willing to dialogue earnestly, there’s no downside to mediation. If an agreement is not reached to resolve the issue at hand, at least the parties had an opportunity to sit and talk in a neutral setting, voice their opinions and concerns, clear the air, and hopefully have a better understanding of the other person’s point of view. As long as it fosters an amicable working environment and they can accomplish the mission, it’s a ‘win-win’ for all participating parties.”

Some common disputes aren’t appropriate for mediation, such as those with significant legal issues, those punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice or state or federal criminal laws or those involving allegations of fraud, waste and abuse or other improper conduct within the jurisdiction of the inspector general complaint system.”

To request mediation services, contact the equal opportunity office, 377-3586; legal office, 376-8601; civilian personnel office, 376-8318, or non-appropriated fund human resources office, 376-9055.



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Keesler AFB, MS

Volunteer —  
get connected.



## High holidays celebrated by Jewish community

**By Susan Griggs**

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**Keesler News editor**

Keesler's Jewish community will be observing the Jewish High Holidays at Congregation Beth Israel, 12277 Three Rivers Road, Gulfport.

**Sept. 8** — 8 p.m., Erev Rosh Hashanah.

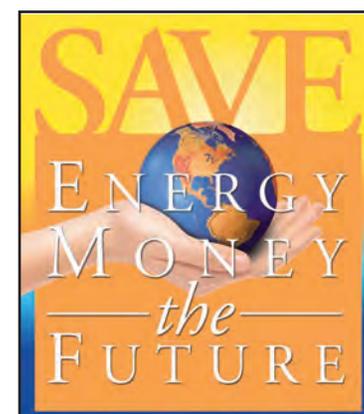
**Sept. 9** — First Day Rosh Hashanah; 9:30 a.m. Shacharit, 6:30 p.m. Minchah/Ma-ariv.

**Sept. 10** — Second Day Rosh Hashanah; 9:30 a.m. Shacharit, 6:30 p.m. Minchah/Ma-ariv followed by Oneg.

**Sept. 17** — 6:10 p.m., Erev Yom Kippur/Kol Nidre.

**Sept. 18** — Yom Kippur; 9:30 a.m. Shacharit, 5:15 p.m. Minchah/Ne-ilah followed by break-the-fast (please bring a dairy dish to share).

For more information, call Master Sgt. Michael Raff, 207-2196; e-mail michael.raff@us.af.mil or call Congregation Beth Israel, 539-1655.



# Direct communication key to suicide prevention

By Staff Sgt. Paul Croxon

Defense Media Activity-San Antonio

SAN ANTONIO — More than a decade in the making, the culture of the “wingman” approach to suicide prevention is still evolving as risk factors and causes of suicide are becoming more widely understood.

The wingman concept should be very familiar to most Airmen. Suicide prevention training has been incorporated into Airman culture from basic training through every level of professional military education and yearly refresher training.

For Lt. Col. Michael Kindt, Air Force Suicide Prevention Program manager, when it comes to suicide prevention, the numbers are the key to understanding what approach to take.

“In the late 90s the numbers indicated that suicide was becoming a problem in the Air Force,” he said. “There were about 20 suicides per 100,000 Airmen. The suicide rate across the civilian sector was about 11 per 100,000.”

This high suicide rate prompted senior Air Force leaders to take a look at suicide and develop a program to combat the trend, said Colonel Kindt. More than a decade later, the AFSP has successfully cut the suicide rate in half by implementing 11 initiatives that address suicide prevention from the individual level up to the command level.

“The Community Action Information Board was developed and the wing or vice commander appointed to chair it on every base,” Colonel Kindt said. “The Integrated Delivery System was also created. It made sure the chaplain, Airman and Family Readiness Centers and other agencies were on the same page and working together.”

In addition to the agency and senior leader involvement, the AFSP also brought supervisors and coworkers into the equation.

“When the program was developed they realized that a session with a psychiatrist wasn’t enough to identify a suicide risk,” Colonel Kindt said. “It was the people close to the individual who would notice behavioral changes and be able to address it in the most effective way.”

Colonel Kindt said recognizing the behavioral change is only the first step. The most difficult step is to ask the question.

“It’s a hard thing to do — ask a coworker or friend if they are thinking



Photo illustration by Airman 1st Class Corey Hook

of hurting themselves,” he said. “But imagine how much more difficult it would be for a person to approach you and tell you they are contemplating suicide. It’s important to meet them halfway. If you ask the question 20 times in your career you may have just

one where the person is contemplating suicide and you asking the question could be the key to that person opening up and result in saving a life.”

The colonel also advocates taking the ACE approach to suicide intervention — asking directly if someone is

thinking of hurting themselves, caring for the individual by removing them from a dangerous environment, and escorting them to a professional who can give them further help.

ACE is a simple concept but has powerful implications. Data collected on every Air Force suicide during the past 12 years has shown intervention by peers is extremely effective. That same data has also identified which Airmen are at the highest risk and points out misconceptions regarding who is most likely to hurt themselves.

Many of the identified risks for suicide are the same as those in the civilian sector; relationship trouble, financial instability, legal action. However, there are some risk factors within the Air Force that the collected data has highlighted, such as higher-risk career fields.

“The data has shown that security forces, intelligence and manned maintenance career fields have about twice the suicide rate of other career fields,” Colonel Kindt said.

According to some of the studies, security forces Airmen have a comfort with weapons and access to weapons that puts them at a higher risk than an Airman unfamiliar or uncomfortable with weapons.

Airmen who work in the intelligence career category may have unfounded cultural misconceptions that seeking help for personal problems jeopardizes security clearance. Airmen who work in manned maintenance are charged with a high-level of responsibility believed to contribute to an increased risk of suicide.

This information has changed the way the AFSP interacts with these career fields, Colonel Kindt said. Instead of the yearly computer-based training most Airmen complete, Air Force officials are beginning to implement face-to-face training with every Airman in those career fields.

The AFSP is a priority for senior leaders. In fact, Colonel Kindt conducts conference calls and reports to the chief of staff of the Air Force weekly.

“Senior leaders take this program seriously,” he said. “One preventable death is one too many.”

For more information on the Air Force Suicide Prevention Program and to see all 11 initiatives, visit <http://afsp.afms.mil>.

## Suicide Prevention Week observed on base Sept. 4-11

By Capt. Donna Burrowes

81st Medical Operations Squadron

The number of lives lost by suicide is a growing concern for the Air Force, with more than 18 Airmen, eight Guardsmen and Reservists and three civilians of all ranks and specialties taking their own lives in the past year. Suicide negatively impacts not only the family of those lost, but friends, co-workers, and peers.

During this year’s observance of International Suicide Prevention Week, representatives from the 81st Training Wing chaplain corps, family advocacy program, mental health clinic, airman and family readiness center and health and wellness center have partnered to promote awareness and outreach for suicide prevention.

The slogan for Keesler’s obser-

vance is “The individual nourishes, Keesler flourishes: Be the ray of sunshine in someone’s life.” To raise awareness during the week, a giant sunflower is displayed in various locations throughout the base.

Sept. 10, Worldwide Suicide Prevention Day, there’ll be guest speakers and briefings in the Welch Auditorium at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. to discuss the impact of suicide and strategies for keeping our Air Force families safe and healthy. The presentations are open to all military and civilian personnel on base.

Outreach briefings for suicide prevention are being offered to interested units during the week.

To find out what you can do to support suicide prevention and awareness or to schedule a briefing, call the mental health clinic, 376-0385, or Chaplain (Capt.) Charles Seligman, 377-4859.

# Career advisors can help choose the right path

By Staff Sgt. Kimberly Moore

## Keesler Public Affairs

Joining the Air Force can be a tough decision and deciding whether or not to make it a career can be even tougher. Luckily, the Air Force has career assistance advisors to help.

Master Sgt. Steven Mullens, 81st Force Support Squadron, is Keesler's CAA.

"CAAs are actually involved with quite a bit," he said. "One of the most visible things we do is helping to determine local factors negatively influencing career decisions by soliciting feedback through monthly informed decision briefings. This briefing is designed to provide members with information needed in order to make the best decision possible with regard to reenlisting or separating. The briefing is mandatory for first- and second-term Airmen within 12 to 15 months of their date of separation regardless of current reenlistment intent, with the exception of those pending involuntary separation."

CAAs also assist supervisors in counseling enlisted personnel on reenlistment and retraining opportunities, benefits and entitlements and manage day-to-day operations of the First Term Airman Center.

Sergeant Mullens said CAAs assist with many other things, like acting as advisors to commanders on retention issues, assisting in dissemination of personnel programs and new guidance to the base populace and working with air reserve component counterparts and recruiters to keep people informed of force-shaping options and the benefits of continued service.

Sometimes leaving the Air Force isn't a choice, though, and Sergeant Mullens has advice for those members facing separation.

"I feel it's important for members who find out they've been selected for separation



Photo by Kemberly Groue

## Sergeant Mullens discusses the retraining window with Staff Sgt. April Cullen, 81st Mission Support Group.

via force shaping programs to get scheduled for the transition assistance program with the airmen and family readiness center as soon as possible," he recommended. "If you find yourself in a retraining situation, carefully read all the published guidance and act quickly if you want to maximize your chances of having a voice in the process."

Other times, members would like to continue to serve the country but not on active duty.

"Those completing their active-duty commitment who want to continue to serve through the reserves or guard should know Palace Front is the program members utilize," Sergeant Mullens said. "Air Force Instruction 36-3205 has the details. We have an in-service Air Force Reserve recruiter here on Keesler, Master Sgt. Charlene McCombs, and Master Sgt. Ken Esaw out of Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., serves as our in-service Air National Guard recruiter and can assist members with their transition."

Occasionally members realize the Air Force isn't for them and would like to get out before their enlistment commitment expires. For those who would like to get out of the military early, the Palace Chase program is a part of force shaping programs and can also be a viable option for many others. Details about Palace Chase are also found in AFI 36-3205.

For those who have decided the Air Force is the career for them, Sergeant Mullens advised them to be aware of the Air Force benefits.

"One of the most important things we can do as members and especially as supervisors, is to stay aware of all the benefits of an Air Force career by reading and understanding the most current version of the Air Force benefits fact sheet and disseminate them to our subordinates," he said.

"I've found that it's not just one particular benefit, but rather

Please see **Career**, Page 16

## Career,

from Page 15

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the sum of the entire benefits package that many young Airmen often overlook,” Sergeant Mullens said. “Tangibly, and more specifically monetarily, I think we take for granted the many ‘pay allowances’ we receive and on top of that the federal tax advantage that most of those additional allowances are also tax exempt. Intangibly, I think it’s the unparalleled job security offered by this great organization and the opportunities for personal growth and development.”

Sergeant Mullens said his favorite part of his busy and varied CAA schedule is interacting with the military members.

“I really enjoy having the opportunity to interact with members from so many (Air Force Specialty Codes) and backgrounds, as well as their varied levels of experience, from the first-term Airmen just getting to his or her first base to the brand new master sergeant selects. I feel like a recruiter selling the Air Force story sometimes but hey, I’m pro-Blue. This is a phenomenal organization and it has done so much for my family and me. It has afforded me to travel, to experience new cultures and to work with members of foreign nations.”

For more information, call Sergeant Mullens, 377-3697; Sergeant McCombs, 377-7116, or Sergeant Esaw, (501) 987-7382.

The logo features the number '101' in a large, bold, blue font with a yellow and orange flame-like pattern. Below it, the words 'CRITICAL', 'DAYS OF', and 'SUMMER' are stacked in a smaller, bold, blue font with the same flame-like pattern.

Keep safety  
in mind  
during the  
Labor Day  
weekend.

# Toolkit helps separating service members land jobs

By Lisa Daniel

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors and Marines separating from the military can get extra help in finding a job from a new Defense Department resource.

Specialists in the Pentagon's Wounded Warrior Care and Transition Policy Office, part of the Office of Personnel and Readiness, recently developed the Career Decision Toolkit to help the 400,000-plus service members who separate from the military each year have a smoother transition into civilian work, John Campbell, deputy undersecretary for wounded warrior care and transition policy, said Aug. 27.

Mr. Campbell, a Vietnam War-era Marine who joined the department earlier this summer after working for decades in private industry, said too many civilian man-



Photo illustration by Steve Hoffmann

agers and hiring officials today don't have enough familiarity with the military to know the skills developed from a few years of service.

"Most employers today have never served, and that wasn't true when I got out" in 1970 and entered the banking industry, he said.

That, coupled with the bad economy — unemployment for people younger than 30 hovers around 15 percent nationally — makes getting hired an uphill battle, especially for former service members who may never have competed in the private sector market, Mr. Campbell said.

Service members applying for civilian jobs need to be able to explain how their military experience translates into the skills needed for jobs they are applying for. Many struggle with that, he said.

"One of the things I know, because I work with younger service members, is that they don't realize how valuable they are," Mr. Campbell said.

Service members, even as young enlisted members, serve in strategically important places and have opportunities and experiences beyond most of their civilian peers, Mr. Campbell said.

"They're warfighters, but they also work on civilian projects," he noted. "They're community activists; they meet with imams."

The toolkit helps separating service members "write the narrative" of their experiences, Mr. Campbell said. It includes a CD and supportive documents. Its portability allows it to be

used anywhere the service member is located, he said.

Designed by Defense Department officials in collaboration with officials from the Labor and the Veterans Affairs departments, the toolkit is available in the military transition course for separation, at Transition Assistance Program centers and at soldier-and-family and fleet-and-family support offices.

The toolkit includes information on job interviews, resumes and cover letters, and negotiating pay and benefits, among other things, Mr. Campbell said. It also has special sections for wounded warriors.

"We have used what we think are the best tools for civilians, as well as military, the best practices out there," he said. "And it's still evolving."

More resources are expected to become available in the fall, Mr. Campbell said.

# Officials urge strict operational security vigilance

By Tech Sgt. Amaani Lyle

Secretary of the Air Force  
Public Affairs

WASHINGTON — Fraudsters continue to hijack accounts on social networking sites and spread malicious software, FBI officials said. One technique entices users to download an application or view a video that appears to be sent from users' "friends", giving the perception of being legitimate. Once the user responds to the phishing site, downloads the application, or clicks on the video link, their computer becomes infected.

With the influx of social

media, Web 2.0 platforms and subsequent ease in sharing of sensitive and personally identifying information, Airmen should consider the risks and vulnerabilities in both personal and official activities, Air Force officials said.

Airmen using non-classified systems must ensure they are not posting classified, restricted distribution, proprietary or For Official Use Only information on public websites to include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blog sites, etc.

"We're starting to see a loss of sensitive information occurring at an alarming rate," said Ryan McCausland, from

the information protection directorate. "This information not only affects the user, but can impact millions of Americans through medical, payroll and military service records."

Mr. McCausland explained that release of personally identifiable information is also a concern. This includes any information about an individual maintained by an agency, including, but not limited to, education, financial transactions, medical history, and criminal or employment history. It also includes information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as their name,

social security number, date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, biometric records, etc., and any other personal information which can be linked or linkable to an individual.

The release of personally identifiable information also applies to information about active-duty military, DOD civilians, military family members, contractors, National Guard and the Reserve members. Among the restricted items are biographies, rosters, telephone directories, detailed organizational lists or charts that reflect personnel and multiple names of individuals from

different organizations or locations on the same document or web page.

Unclassified but sensitive information such as detailed mission statements, operations schedules, unit recall rosters, standing operating procedures and policy memorandums require special handling and should also not be posted on public websites, Mr. McCausland said.

"The discretion of every Airman is critical in today's information age," Mr. McCausland said. "We must all continually safeguard our personal information as well as the information we handle in the workplace."

Identity theft  
is a  
personal nightmare  
and security risk.

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

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



## Despite bans, use of Spice is still rising

### 81st Security Forces Squadron

The American Association of Poison Control Centers reported more than 866 cases related to Spice or K2 so far this year, an increase from 13 in 2009.

As of July, Keesler is reporting 28 cases of spice use so far this year.

The City of Biloxi has issued City Ordinance No. 13-2-1, prohibiting the use, purchase, distribution, sale or offering for sale of synthetic cannabinoids or other synthetic products.

Although spice has been banned in other municipalities and counties surrounding Keesler, this drug is being sold in shops in some areas and online as incense and is being smoked as a legal alternative to marijuana.

This drug has dangerous side effects such as anxiety attacks, hallucinations, nausea, and can produce a chemical dependency.

Keesler's leadership has determined this substance is a threat to the health and welfare of its members and issued a policy to ban the use, possession, purchase, or distribution of Spice, K2 or other cannabinoids for all military members.

For more information, call Staff Sgt. Sheralyn Gonzalez, 376-6604.



# Living and fighting 'the war I wasn't ready for'

Commentary by  
Senior Airman Emerald Ralston

## 92nd Air Refueling Wing

FAIRCHILD Air Force Base, Wash. — I thought I was ready for war.

I had gone through Army combat skills training at Fort Lewis, Wash. I had squared away all my financial and legal documents. I found a new confidence and a love for the military.

My brother, Army Sgt. Ian Ralston, a combat medic, and I spoke on the phone while I was at Baltimore/Washington International Airport, just hours before I boarded my first flight overseas.

He offered me advice, motivation and insight into the Army way of doing things, as I was deploying with the 10th Mountain Division.

I arrived in Afghanistan and was sent to Camp Spann, about 200 miles north of Kabul.

After a couple of weeks, I was preparing to convoy to a remote area for the next five months.

Before we left, I made the usual call home. I'd ask my parents to pray for me before I went on convoys so they knew what I was up to and, God forbid, in case anything happened, they would be prepared.

This particular time, I didn't get the "OK, honey — be safe," I was used to.

Instead I heard my mother's muffled sobs, and through the tears and gasps I put together what I could — the part of the war I wasn't ready for:

"Ian got hit," were the only words I heard before I let out that guttural groan of grief you never want to have to release.

"It's bad ... real bad," were the next words I heard.

My big brother was deployed to Iraq at the time with the 2/23 Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Battalion Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. He had been on a convoy earlier that day.

The hours that followed felt like years. My unit at Camp Spann acted more quickly than I thought possible. They understood the gravity of the situation and scheduled convoys, flights and liaisons for me at each stop to get me to my brother.

I spent the next 24 hours running from flight to flight from Afghanistan to Germany, fearing and expecting the worst, trying to find a way to prepare myself for what was to come. I couldn't eat, I couldn't sleep. I had nothing but the love for my brother to keep me going. I needed to see him, and I knew he needed me there.



Courtesy photo

Airman Ralston sits with her brother, Ian, at the Veterans Affairs Spinal Cord Injury Center in Minneapolis.

When I finally arrived at Landstuhl Army Medical Center, Germany, my brother was being stabilized and prepared for a medevac to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C.

I met with Sgt. Jake Flores, a close friend of Ian's from their first tour in Iraq. He specifically requested to be Ian's nurse so Ian would always have someone he knew and trusted by his side. He pulled me aside before I entered Ian's room and explained Ian's injury to me.

Sergeant Flores offered me a shoulder to cry on. He reminded me to breathe, and reassured me that if I needed to break down, I could take a moment to do just that before I

entered Ian's room.

And I did.

My brother — the reason I joined the military, the reason I wanted to deploy, the person I wanted to make proud more than anyone in the world with my military service — was now a quadriplegic. Shrapnel from an improvised explosive device had penetrated his C2 vertebra. The shrapnel, the doctors told me, would kill him if they tried to remove it.

When I finally pulled myself together, I knew from that point on I had to be strong, I had to take everything the military had taught me about strength and bearing and put it all to the test.

When I walked in, I looked at everything except him. I looked at the

machine that was breathing for him, at the monitors all around his bed. I focused on the sound of the ventilator breathing in and out, the beeping of his vitals. Finally, my eyes rested on my brother.

Honestly, he looked fine, as if nothing had happened. But then he looked up at me and tried to smile, and I noticed the tubes in his mouth.

From that moment, I spent every second by his side. I flew with him to Walter Reed and was greeted by hoards of military leaders. Chaplains asked if I was okay. Senior officers thanked us for our service. Then nurses loaded him onto another litter, taking his tubes,

Please see **Ralston**, Page 23

wires and monitors, and rushed him to the fourth floor, the intensive care unit, an area I became very familiar with over the next three weeks.

Later that night, after my parents arrived, a nurse frantically came into his ward and told us we had to look at something.

We did, and I knew what I had to do.

After all, my parents shouldn't have to ask their son if he wants to be taken off life support.

It was the single hardest thing I've ever done.

After we took him off his medication and asked him, he blinked twice. No.

He wanted to be kept alive.

From that moment on, I realized the fragility, preciousness and importance of life. I realized the difference between the war they prepare us for and the side of war that exists in hospitals.

I spent 19 days in Afghanistan and 19 days at Walter Reed. The part of war I saw at Walter Reed was one I didn't see in Afghanistan. It's a side that isn't glamorized in the media like

“‘Ian got hit,’

were the only words I heard before  
I let out that guttural groan of grief  
you never want to have to release.”

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— **Airman Ralston**

the heroic photos of troops with their weapons at the ready or passing out candy to children in remote villages.

Not many people see those in limbo — the ones who live after sustaining serious injuries in defense of our country. They are certainly not forgotten, and they don't go unnoticed. As I saw amputees walking or wheeling themselves around in the halls, or the young troops who keep the ICUs full at all times, I realized these heroes are all versions of my brother, my hero, the young Soldier who wanted to serve his country and ended up with a ball bearing in his spine. They all have families who care, units who pulled together to see them through, lives they've impacted, and a country that thanks them for their sacrifices.

Ian was a Soldier to the core, even when we were kids. Every Halloween,

he wanted to wear camouflage. He “bled green” from the day he was born at the U.S. Army Hospital at Wurzburg, Germany, while our father served in the 123rd Signal Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division in 1985.

He “bled green” until the day he took shrapnel to the back of the neck and rolled out of the back of his Stryker.

Then he just bled.

Ian currently sits in the Veterans Affairs Spinal Cord Injury Center in Minneapolis, constantly surrounded by friends and family. His positivity is a reminder to everyone who knows him that life is worth living; life is bigger than the problems we face at the moment.

He smiles and laughs every day. He says “please” and “thank you” when asking for medication. He knows he is

blessed to be alive, and the nurses and doctors are consistently blown away by his progress.

The doctors say he will never walk again. Ian feels differently. His faith and stubbornness have already taken him past what the doctors told him he would be capable of.

People like Ian are reasons to make life worth living, to live a life worth the sacrifices of those who serve.

I urge service members to keep in mind what it means to wear our uniform, the uniform so many Soldiers and Airmen may never be able to put back on because of their sacrifices.

You may never be prepared for what you may face, but if you ever have to see the horrors of war, face them with honor.

I thought I was ready for war. Now I have to prepare for a fight of a different kind: the fight to help my brother live his life.

He has certainly taught me how to live mine.

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Editor's note: Airman Ralston is separating from the Air Force to become her brother's full-time caregiver. Their parents' Iowa home is being renovated so Sergeant Ralston will be able to convalesce when he's ready to leave the center.

# KEESLER NOTES

## Cub Scout Pack 214

Cub Scout Pack 214 holds its first meeting since Hurricane Katrina, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Sept. 7 at Welch Auditorium.

A representative from the American Red Cross speaks about hurricane preparedness.

Applications and more information will be on hand for prospective members.

For more information, call Staff Sgt. Nathan Evans, 334-207-6360; e-mail Pack214.keesler@gmail.com or check out Keesler Cub Scout Pack 214 on Facebook and Pack 214 on Twitter.

## Patriots Day dinner

In support of the Aerospace Education Foundation, the John C. Stennis Chapter of the Air Force Association is co-hosting a banquet and fund-raiser with the Diamondhead military retirees on Sept. 11, Patriots Day.

The guest of honor is Maj. Gen. Mary Kay Hertog, 2nd Air Force commander. Tickets are \$50 and are available by calling Lt. Col. Janet Haug, 334-2382.

## Spouses club luau

The Keesler Spouses Club hosts a welcome back luau, 6:30 p.m. Sept. 14 at the youth center.

Dress is Hawaiian casual. Desserts are served.

New members can join at the event.

For more information, call Lisa Wilder, 447-4992.

## Top 3 fundraiser

The Keesler Top 3 hosts a spaghetti lunch, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sept. 16 at the Triangle Chapel Annex.

The \$7 price for dine-in or take-out orders includes also includes french bread, dessert and drink.

Tickets are available from:

**81st Medical Group** — Senior Master Sgt. Jason Devereaux, 376-8508.

**81st Mission Support Group** — Master Sgt. Jessica Woodruff, 376-8508.

**81st Training Group** — Master Sgt. Sunday Mangum, 377-2909.

**81st Training Wing staff**

**agencies** — Master Sgt. Michael Rieger, 377-2975.

## Heart Walk

Base teams are being organized for the American Heart Association's Heart Walk on Oct. 2.

Festivities and registration begin at 7:30 a.m. at the former Gulfport Veterans Administration Medical Center site on U.S. Hwy. 90. The walk starts at 8:30 a.m.

For more information, call Staff Sgt. Isunté Barnes, 377-2936, (504) 274-9030 or e-mail isunte.barnes@us.af.mil.

## Book signing

Retired Maj. Gen. Jesse Allen of Biloxi signs copies of his book, From Jeep Driver to General, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sept. 24-25 at the main exchange.

## Thrift shop hours

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

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

Donations are accepted during regular hours. Consignments are accepted 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Mondays.

For more information, call 377-3217.

## Airman's Attic hours

Airman's Attic is now located at the corner of Meadows Drive and 1st Street in a building it shares with the Keesler Thrift Shop.

Airman's Attic 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 which are clean and in good condition. Donations may be dropped off at Airman's Attic during regular hours, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays, non-training Fridays and the last Saturday of the month.

## Supply classes

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

**Block I** basic supply class

is 9 a.m. Sept. 22 and Dec. 15.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Supply source

The Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office is a free source of supplies and equipment.

For more information, visit the CSC supply customer service element, Room 126, Taylor Logistics Center, Building 4002; call Michael Cashion, 377-8891, or e-mail michael.cashion.2.ctr@us.af.mil.

## Root canal treatment

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

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

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

Referral from a dentist for root canal treatment is needed.

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

## Visitor center hours

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

## First sergeant runs marathon for wounded warrior program



Photo by Steve Pivnick  
Joseph Wheeler, 81st Inpatient Operations Squadron first sergeant, completes a 5-mile run on the Croswell Track Aug. 26. He is spearheading a fundraiser for wounded, injured and ill service members sponsored by the Keesler First Sergeants Council by running in the annual Air Force Marathon Sept. 18 at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. He hopes to raise \$5,000 based on pledges for the number of miles he runs to benefit Keesler's Wounded Warrior Program. Donations may be pledged per mile or be a flat donation. He finished last year's marathon in 5 hours, 40 minutes and hopes to complete the course this year in 4½ hours.



## Free tourney celebrates Bay Breeze's loyal golfers

Sonny Rametta, a retired Marine from Biloxi, prepares his scorecard while awaiting the start of a free golf tournament Aug. 26. The event honored Keesler's loyal golfers for their patience and patronage in the five years since Hurricane Katrina ravaged the base and its golf facility.



Marlon Brown, left, and Nick Curtis, Bay Breeze staff man the grill for the free lunch.



From left, Taylor Made representative Mark Stratmann shows golf clubs and bags to Edward Williams, Roy Jackson and Edmon Harvey. Mr. Williams is an Army retiree from Ocean Springs, Mr. Jackson works in the 81st Force Support Squadron and Mr. Harvey is a Navy retiree from Biloxi. Bay Breeze reopened to golfers last month.

Photos by Kemberly Groue



Army retiree Ernest Bolton of Gulfport warms up on the putting green.

# Fitness that's fun and free

By Steve Hoffmann

Keesler News staff

With the New Year's resolutions hopelessly forgotten and the holidays just around the corner, now is the perfect time to take advantage of the many fitness classes being offered on base — and they're all free.

Since February 2009, contractors have been teaching fitness classes for the Keesler community. These classes are designed to expose participants to total body fitness — aerobic, anaerobic, cardiovascular conditioning, flexibility, strength and endurance.

"We don't like to call them workouts," said Jaime Denmark, contract fitness director. "These are group fitness classes. Anyone and everyone can come — advanced, intermediate or beginner."

Zumba, a class inspired by Latin and international dance, is one of the most popular classes being offered.

"It used to be if I had 10 people, that was a good class," said Ms. Denmark. "At Keesler, we are seeing 40-50 people in attendance regularly at 6:30 a.m., and some are in their 70s."

Every class but yoga fits the criteria needed to qualify as a "fitness improvement program" course. Airmen who have fallen back on PT can take these classes to help them catch up on their fitness level. However, the majority of people who take these classes are family members and dependants, civilians and contractors on base.

"People are very pleased with the classes and instructors," said Ms. Denmark. "Most of the suggestions we get are for more classes and more times." Right now, there are eight classes offered at the Dragon Fitness Center. All instructors are nationally licensed and certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid.

There are currently 50-60 hours of classes per week being offered. Here is a list of



Photo by Kemberly Groue

**Dance instructor Gretchen Sayers, left, leads a Dragon Fitness Center class in Zumba, a high-energy fitness class fusing Latin and international music and dance.**

classes and their descriptions:

**Boot camp** — Early morning intermediate and advanced class designed to improve both cardio and strength conditioning. It's a perfect class for starting your day off on the right foot.

**C30/C30** — 30 minutes of cycling and 30 minutes of circuit training for improving cardiovascular endurance as well as strength training for all major muscle groups.

**Cycling** — A high-energy bike class designed to improve overall cardiovascular endurance and conditioning.

**Kick boxing** — An intermediate class which incorporates karate kicks and blocks designed to improve cardiovascular endurance and conditioning.

**Pilates** — A mind-and-body class combining a method of exercise and physical movements designed to stretch, strengthen and balance the body. Pilates concentrates on a systematic practice of specific exercises coupled with focused breathing patterns to improve core strength and balance.

**Step aerobics** — Basic cardiovascular step class to serve all skill and conditioning levels.

**Yoga** — This mind-and-body class incorporates basic Hatha Yoga breathing techniques, balance and core exercises and relaxation exercises designed for improving one's overall quality of life. This class is a great stress reliever.

**Zumba** — This class is a fusion of Latin and International music and dance themes that creates a dynamic, exciting, effective fitness system. The routines feature aerobic fitness interval training with a combination of fast and slow rhythms to tone and sculpt the body. Zumba utilizes the principles of fitness interval training and resistance training to maximize caloric output, fat burning and total body toning. It is a mixture of body sculpting movements with easy-to-follow dance steps.

For more information on fitness center programs and services or to download a schedule of classes, visit [www.keeslerservicesus/fitnesscenters2.html](http://www.keeslerservicesus/fitnesscenters2.html)