



# KEESLER NEWS

KEESLER AIR FORCE BASE, BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI

Train to Fight. Train to Win.

JUNE 7, 2012 VOL. 73 NO. 23



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The Keesler News office is in Room 201A, Wall Studio, Building 0902. The mailing address: 81TRW/PAIN, Keesler AFB, MS 39534-2120. Phone: 377-3837, 3604, 2254 or 9966. Published Thursday. News deadline: noon Monday. Editorial content edited, prepared and provided by the 81st TRW Public Affairs Office is in compliance with Air Force journalistic standards. Photos are Air Force photos unless otherwise indicated. The Keesler News is published by Gulf Publishing Co., a private firm in no way connected with the Air Force, under an exclusive written contract with the 81st TRW as an authorized publication for U.S. military service members. Contents aren't necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, Department of Defense or Air Force. Advertising doesn't constitute endorsement by the U.S. government, DOD, Air Force or Gulf Publishing of products or services advertised. Everything advertised shall be available without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other non-merit factor.



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## ON THE COVER

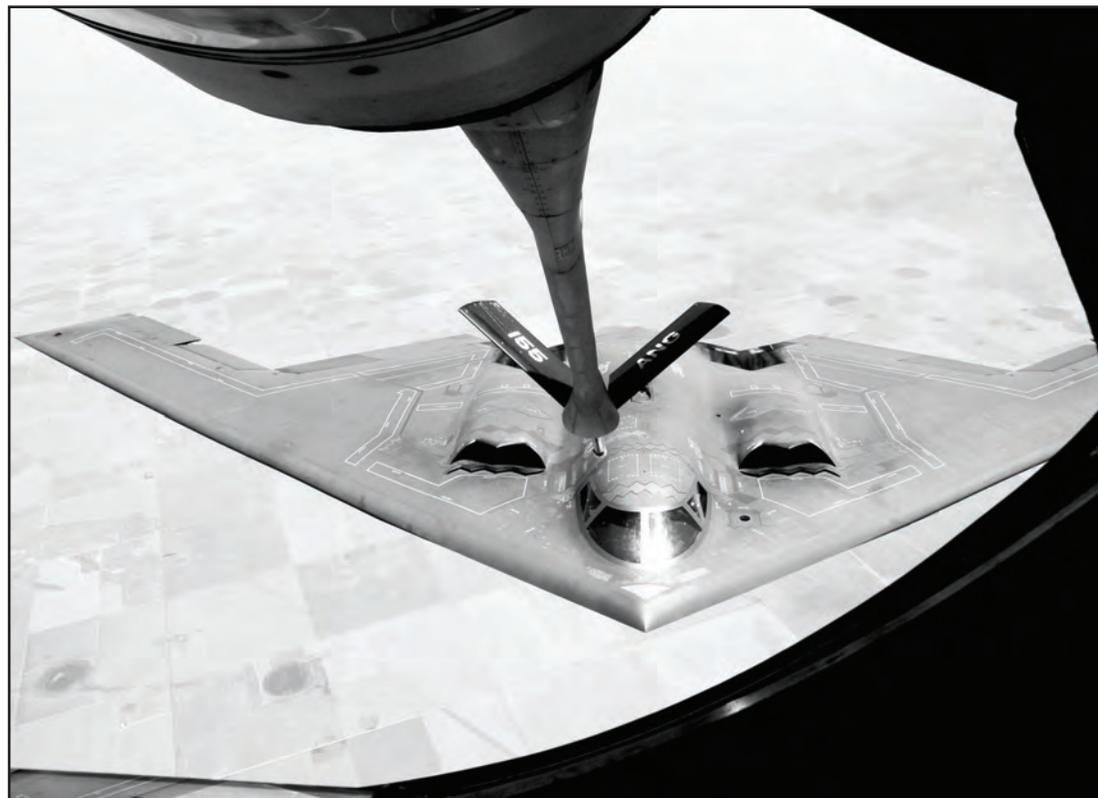
Ram Rod team members from the 81st Security Forces Squadron, Capt. Chris Porta, Staff Sgt. Audrey Spoor, Senior Airman Justin Gachett and Staff Sgt. Christopher Hernandez, compete in the "Tire Toss" challenge during the 81st Mission Support Group Ultimate Warrior Challenge Friday at the Triangle Track. The challenge consists of two personnel flipping an aircraft tire to the designated location, then the awaiting team members flipped it back to the start. The challenge was held in honor of fellow service members who lost their lives in the fight for our nation's freedom. It consisted of nine four-member teams racing in a competition designed to take them through various aspects of a deployment. The Ram Rods were the first-place winners of the Ultimate Warrior Challenge. More photos, Pages 14-15.

Photo by Kemberly Groue



## PHOTO OF THE WEEK

## Fueling up



A KC-135 Stratotanker from the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refueling Wing passes fuel to a B-2 Spirit May 22, over Southern Colorado. The KC-135, first deployed in 1956, is one of the Air Force's longest serving aircraft type. The B-2 fleet is one of the Air Force's youngest, reaching initial operational capability in 1997. Together, these two aircraft and their crews allow the Air Force to reach targets across the globe in a matter of hours.

To submit your photo, email a high-resolution copy to [keeslernews@us.af.mil](mailto:keeslernews@us.af.mil).

Photo by Duncan Wood



TRAIN, CARE, INNOVATE — DEVELOPING COMBAT POWER FOR AIR, SPACE AND CYBERSPACE

# Keesler Airman descendant of famous war hero

By Airman 1st Class  
Kyle Longaker

336th Training Squadron

Many of us have relatives from generations past that have served with honor in the military, but not many can say that they are related to the one of our country's most decorated war veterans. However, Airman Tyler York can.

Airman York, a cyber systems operations tech school student here at Keesler, comes from a proud military family having relatives serving as far back as the American Revolution and continuing to serve even today.

One of Airman York's most distinguished relatives is Sergeant Alvin York, who was the most decorated veteran of World War I. Airman York, who is a fifth cousin to Sergeant York, said that it's "one of the coolest feelings" to know what his cousin did in the military.

Sergeant York came from humble beginnings in Tennessee where he was the third of 11 children. In his youth, Sergeant York overcame many obstacles eventually finding peace in his religion and ultimately enlisting into military service.

Ironically, Sergeant York actually claimed to be a conscientious objector. He wanted nothing to do with the Army, World War I or killing. However, one day, a sympathetic commanding officer lectured Sergeant York about history — in particular, how fighting and service in the military actually saves lives.

This commander gave Sergeant York leave to go home, to reflect on these words and to read the history book from which the commander officer spoke. After reading that history book and the Bible — and after lots of self reflection — Sergeant York decided that he could serve his country and the greater cause, and he reported back to his base.

Though Sergeant York still had some reservations, he put his faith in God and was sent

to the European theater for combat duty.

While serving in the Argonne Forest of France, Sergeant York was at the tip of the spear during an offensive maneuver. As he watched, the men of his unit were pinned down by German fire and were being cut down around him.

Though he had doubts about what to do initially, his doubt disappeared when he realized that he was the last remaining noncommissioned officer and was now in charge of the remaining men of his unit.

Under great pressure, Sergeant York devised a daring plan and worked his way to a hill near the German lines. With deadly accuracy, Sergeant York engaged the Germans — forcing them to surrender. With only seven men, Sergeant York captured 132 prisoners and disabled 36 machine gun emplacements.

In the face of adversity, Sergeant York not only showed true leadership but also showed the difference one good leader can make. He not only saved the lives of the men in his unit but, in effect, he saved countless more as well.

Additionally, Sergeant York even saved the lives of the German prisoners. Many may not see that as a good thing, but it takes an exceptional leader to convince 132 enemy soldiers to surrender to only seven men.

When World War I ended, Sergeant York returned home to Tennessee and married his childhood sweetheart, Grace Williams. He started the Alvin C. York Agricultural Institute in his home town.

This institute was a vocational school dedicated to education of his community. He resented any implication that people where he was from were backwards or ignorant. He often said, "... mountaineers are the secret of America's greatness."

When World War II started, Sergeant York was called back to service once again as an honorary colonel



Sergeant Alvin C. York, 328th Infantry, who with aid of seven men captured 132 German prisoners, shows the hill on which the raid took place, Oct. 8, 1918 in the Argonne Forest, near Cornay, France.

in the Army Signal Corps. Though he attempted to reenlist, the honorary colonel was turned down due to his age and health.

Instead, he worked with recruiting and war bond drives. He also inspected tours of American soldiers in training. Further, Colonel York praised the accomplishments of women during the war, saying "they deserved a permanent place in public life."

He also advocated the use of African-American soldiers in the war effort, stating "failure to allow them to serve in all roles was agreeing with Hitler's assertion that African-Americans were inferior troops."

Service and bravery in the face of adversity is how York became one of our nation's most decorated war veterans. He received our nation's highest military honor, the Medal of Honor, and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, Victory Medal, American Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, the French Legion of Honor, the

ues in everything he did.

**Integrity First.** York recognized in the Argonne Forest that he could have turned and retreated in the face of overwhelming odds, but he did not. Rather, he took the seven remaining men in his unit and captured 132 enemy prisoners.

Also, York recognized the accomplishments and service of African-Americans and women during World War II. This was not a popular opinion at that time, but that didn't matter to him. He showed that the popular opinion is not always the right one.

**Service Before Self.** York exemplified this by his life and the things he did. During World War II, York didn't want to take it easy. In fact, he wanted to go back into the Army at the age of 54.

Despite his advanced age, health problems, previous service in World War I, York led by example — insisting that he be allowed to return to the Army and to continue fighting for liberty and freedom. When the Army would not allow this, York did everything he could to assist the war effort and serve his country in any way he could.

When York returned home from World War I, he opened his agricultural institute to educate and serve the community. When he faced the dilemma of his religious beliefs, he chose his country and the men he served — believing that his faith would see him through anything... and it did.

**Excellence In All We Do.** York did everything to the best of his ability. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for the demonstrations of his remarkable abilities. He did not let the past influence anything he attempted. He discovered that he was a born leader — taking himself and the men with whom he served to their very best in the most extreme situations.

French Croix-de-Guerre with Palm, the Italian Croce di Guerra and the Montenegrin War Medal.

As a leader and NCO, Sergeant York had great confidence and faith in his men. This, combined with his definitive actions in the face of overwhelming adversity, made Sergeant York a living definition of what an exceptional leader is all about.

Leadership is often defined as guiding or influencing people. A true leader is someone who can guide and influence people in adverse situations.

Sergeant York effectively guided the seven remaining men in his unit at that time through what was probably the hardest thing any of them had ever attempted to do. Because York did not give up no matter how bleak the situation was, he was able to successfully lead his men in overcoming monumental obstacles.

What can we take from Alvin C. York's life experiences as Airmen in today's Air Force? Alvin York lived our core val-

# Keesler instructor wins Air Force-level award

By Senior Airman Eric Summers

Keesler Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. Trae Clark, 334th Training Squadron aviation resource management instructor, won the Air Force Outstanding Aviation Resource Management Award for 2011.

Clark taught six three-level courses of more than 1,242 hours with an average student grade of 92 percent. He also devoted 22 hours of special individual assistance to ensure 19 students passed the retests saving the Air Force \$17,000 in retraining costs.

Clark also analyzed 200 test questions, identified seven ambiguities and updated four questions. He managed more than 450 technical training

management system entries on 57 students with zero errors.

Since 1942, Keesler has graduated more than 2.2 million students. Keesler's training mission is the responsibility of the 81st Training Group, the largest electronics training group in the world. On any given day, more than 5,000 students attend classes in one of more than 600 courses. The 81st TRG annually provides training to more than 38,000 officers, Airmen and civilian employees of the Air Force, Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, other Department of Defense agencies and contractors, as well as allied nations.



Photo by Kemberly Groue  
Staff Sgt. Trae Clark, 334<sup>th</sup> Training Squadron aviation resource management instructor, trains students on the operations desk in the squadron/host aviation resource management lab at Cody Hall. Clark is the Air Force aviation resource management instructor of the year for 2011.

## Active shooter exercise to disrupt normal base operations Tuesday

By Airman 1st Class Heather Heiney

Keesler News co-editor

Visitors to Keesler Tuesday should expect to participate in an active shooter exercise.

Active shooter exercises are required annually so that first responders and the base populace are prepared to respond and recover in the event of a real-world incident. The exercise will begin around 9 a.m. and may delay base operations for several hours.

In this type of exercise, everyone on base should react as if there is a real gunman threatening their safety. If you hear gunshots or are notified that the base is being locked down, immediately seek cover in a place clear of direct fire. Lock doors and windows, barricade the access, turn off lights and make your location appear unoccupied. Safely and quietly use available means to contact your unit control center or chain of command with your location, status and personnel present. Then, stay where you are until authorities instruct you to move, or the lockdown has been lifted. Only take action against the gunman as a last resort if you are in immediate danger.

Air Education and Training Command describes the exercise scenario as "a dynamic situation that evolves rapidly and demands immediate response from law enforcement to terminate the life-threatening situation. The immediate response of the first patrolmen on scene is to take aggressive action to find and stop the shooter(s). Rescue efforts will be delayed until the danger can either be mitigated or eliminated."

After the threat has been neutralized, recovery efforts begin. Overall, the base will return to normal operations at this point, but individual organizations play a vital role in recovery efforts including security forces, investigators, medical teams, chaplains, commanders, first sergeants, the airman and family readiness center, public affairs and many others.

It's important for people to understand that the exercise will affect all facilities on base. Despite the potential inconveniences locking down the base may cause, preparing for an active shooter incident is essential because in real life, preparation equals saved lives.



Photo by Kemberly Groue  
Benjamin Thomas and Staff Sgt. Jermaine Wilson, 81st Security Forces Squadron, escort Staff Sgt. Derrick Gerlich, 81st Logistics Readiness Squadron, after he was "apprehended" during Keesler's active shooter exercise, June 21-22, 2011. Sergeant Gerlich portrayed the lone gunman who opened fire at Airman Leadership School, with 12 people 'killed' and 17 'injured'. The exercise, conducted by Air Education and Training Command, tested the base's ability to respond and recover from a mass casualty event.

# Fire department issues tips for cooking safety

By James Palmer, Jr.

Fire prevention assistant chief

The U.S. Fire Administration reports that most fires start in the kitchen. With today's fast pace of life and all the different activities, it is very easy to forget the pan heating on the stove. Suddenly, you smell smoke and remember that you had started cooking.

The most common type of fire in the kitchen is when water boils away and the pan becomes empty or food is left on the burner and gets scorched. These usually do not cause a lot of damage. Grease fires are more dangerous and oil is the most dangerous and flammable cooking ingredient, so never leave the room when you have something on the stove with hot oil.

A fire can burst out in seconds, so always remain close enough to put out the flames. Open flames can reach out to surrounding cupboards. If left alone, the flames can engulf the kitchen and spread to the rest of the home.

The fire prevention section of the base fire department recommends the following:

- If you are cooking something greasy, use a wire mesh over the top of the pan.
- Clean the stove frequently and do not let the grease build up.
- Heat oil slowly and there will be less chance of it splattering on you.
- Never heat a pan first and then pour in the oil — it can burst into flames immediately.
- Make sure oil doesn't begin to smoke. The next thing you know, it will be in flames. If oil does get hot, turn off the burner and let it cool down before using it.
- Be very careful when adding foods that have been washed in water into the hot oil, it is better to add them when the heat is lower.
- Use the right pan size for the intended amount of food to be cooked. A pan that's too large can boil dry too quickly and a pan that's too small will

cause food to overflow onto the burner.

• Deep fat fryers are also dangerous when cooking with oil. Never leave liquid close to the fryer because it may spill. If it does, it will turn into steam instantly and can violently spray hot oil in all directions.

• Also be careful when you add food to a deep fat fryer. If the fat is too hot, or if there are pockets of liquid in the prepared food, the hot fat can spray the oil in all directions.

Water and grease don't mix. In the event of a grease fire, never pour water on the fire, it will spread or splatter. Slide a lid over the pan, turn off the stove burner, leave the lid on until it is completely cool. Never remove the heated pan from the stove. Use a fire extinguisher, or when in doubt, get out of the house and dial 911 for emergency assistance from the base or local fire department.

In the event of a fire, do not spend a significant amount of time attempting to put it out. Get out of the build-

ing and call the fire department. Make sure to provide your complete address, the phone number you are calling from, the location of the fire and inform and whether or not anyone is still inside the home. No matter the reason, never go back into the home until it has been declared safe by the fire department.

Remember, it is very important to review the basics of fire prevention with family members. If your household consists of more than one member, it is good idea to gather everyone on a regular basis to summarize the home's fire safety and evacuation plans including two points of exit from the home and the family's meeting place outside the home.

All fires on Keesler's property must be reported by calling 911, even if the fire has been extinguished.

For more information call 228-377-3330/3333 or stop by the base fire departments at Building 4225 on Hangar Road.

## Local high school student wins Navy scholarship

Members of the Keesler Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training Unit First Class Petty Officer' Association, Petty Officers 1st Class Aaron Wimberly, Kenneth Thomas and Joseph Gilmore, recognize Joseph Ross, a senior at Vancleave High School for efforts in his education by awarding him a \$500 scholarship May 19. To win the scholarship, Ross submitted his high school transcripts, letter of acceptance to the University of Southern Mississippi and his answer to the topic, 'The Need of a Navy.'

Courtesy photo



# Keesler nurse thwarts robbery of elderly lady

By Steve Pivnick

81st Medical Group Public Affairs

Don't mess with an Air Force nurse.

That may be what a purse-snatcher thought after 2nd Lt. Stacy Thomas, 81st Inpatient Operations Squadron surgical inpatient unit clinical nurse, and a friend thwarted an attempted theft May 24 in the William Carey University campus parking lot.

Thomas said that she and her friend had just finished registering for nursing classes at the university when they noticed an elderly woman begin hitting a man.

"Apparently, he had taken her purse from her car," Thomas said. "We learned that the assailant had some type of siren on his car. He used it to 'pull her over' as she drove on Highway 67. She was wise to pull into the William Carey parking lot. After she stopped, he came over and told her that her tire was wobbling. When she got out of her car to check the tire, he reached in and grabbed her purse. She chased him back to

his car and began hitting him. We learned later that she had retired from the Army."

"We got her purse and returned it to her. The guy didn't resist, although he initially tried to pull away. We had taken pictures of him and his license plate. That's when he realized he was caught. My friend stayed with him and I remained with the woman while we waited for the police to arrive," Thomas said.

The assailant, Jason Lyle Thomas (no relation), was charged with "strong-arm robbery" and taken to the Harrison County jail. It never occurred to the lieutenant that the purse snatcher might have been armed until the police arrived.

Thomas added the dean of William Carey awarded both her and her friend a \$500 book scholarship for their service to the community.

The lieutenant said she came to the woman's aid because she believed anyone in a similar situation would do the same.



Photo by Steve Pivnick

Thomas checks the equipment on a medical inpatient unit crash cart May 29 at the Keesler Hospital. Thomas recently helped thwart a would-be purse snatcher at William Carey University when she noticed an elderly woman hitting a man in the parking lot.

## Mold mitigation can prevent health problems

By Capts. Christopher Judy and Brittany Chase

81st Aerospace Medicine Squadron

As summer approaches and humid weather settles in, mold will make its annual appearance in homes and buildings.

Mold that is normally in the air becomes challenging when it settles on moist surfaces and begins to grow, causing structural damage as well as occasional symptoms such as allergies and runny noses for building occupants. It is important to take action to prevent mold growth in homes or offices well before summer begins.

Building occupants can prevent or eliminate most mold growth. The first step is

to create an atmosphere that is not conducive to growth. A dehumidifier goes a long way toward minimizing the mold-friendly environment.

Also, keep windows and doors closed to avoid excess humidity and condensation. Next, if the contaminated area is less than 10 square feet, it can be wiped down with a solution of one part bleach and 10 parts water. Do not mix bleach with ammonia because it will create poisonous vapors.

Protect skin and eyes from irritation by wearing gloves and eye protection. N-95 respirators are also handy and can be purchased at local hardware stores. They look like

dust masks but are designed to fit snugly around the mouth and nose to provide more adequate protection from spores. They do not, however, protect against chemical gases or vapors. No matter how many times they are cleaned, large porous items are very difficult to thoroughly clean and mold is likely to return. Therefore, it is best to dispose of heavily-contaminated items.

If the moldy area is larger than 10 square feet, it may be necessary to hire a professional to remove the water-damaged area, but be wary of businesses claiming to test or sample mold. If you are a resident of base housing, Forest City will evalu-

ate and treat the problem. Do not call outside contractors if you live in base housing. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Environmental Protection Agency do not advocate mold testing because test results provide little useful information. No matter what species or how many spores are present, the remediation process is the same. In addition, every person has a different threshold for mold sensitivity, so a higher quantity of airborne mold does not necessarily mean more health problems.

Anyone who experiences symptoms they suspect are caused by mold should visit their physician to be evalu-

ated. If necessary, the doctor can recommend an evaluation of the patient's on-base house, which must be coordinated through Forest City. Those with no symptoms who see mold should notify their building manager so he or she can take appropriate steps to remedy the situation. Those living in base housing who wish to report mold should call Forest City at (855) 452-3499.

The bottom line is that mold is all around in southern Mississippi but prevention and control can mitigate its effects.

For more information go to [www.epa.gov/mold](http://www.epa.gov/mold) or <http://www.cdc.gov/mold/default.htm>.



Photos by Steve Pivnick

## Physician assistants receive diplomas

### 81st Medical Group

Two new physician assistants received their diplomas during a May 10 graduation ceremony in the Keesler Hospital's Don Wylie Auditorium.

Brig. Gen. (Dr.) Kory Cornum, 81st Medical Group commander, presented Coast Guard Ensign Seth Harris and 1st Lt. Sarah Sims graduation certificates as well as their master of science degrees

from the University of Nebraska Medical Center. The ceremony marked the end of their one-year clinical training phase here.

Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Jonathan Stehn administered the oath of office to Harris and retired Navy Lt. Harold Marenbach gave Sims the oath. Lt. Col. Tim Howerton, acting Biomedical Science Corps associate corps chief for physician assistants and

operations officer for the PA career field, was guest speaker. Prior to entering the Phase II program at Keesler, both graduates completed one year of training at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio.

Harris has been assigned to the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center at Cape May, N.J., and Sims to Cannon Air Force Base, N.M.

# Former enlisted 'Dragon Medics' commissioned

By Steve Pivnick

### 81st Medical Group Public Affairs

Two formerly enlisted "Dragon Medics" were commissioned second lieutenants during a ceremony May 8 in the Keesler Hospital's Don Wylie Auditorium. Capt. Brandon Shealey, 81st Medical Support Squadron, administered the oath of office.

Second Lts. Donelle Clark, a former technical sergeant and member of the 81st Surgical Operations Squadron, and Jessica Shealey, a former staff sergeant with the 81st Dental Squadron, completed the Nurse Enlisted Commissioning Program upon their May 12 graduation from the two-year program at William Carey University's Joseph and Nancy Fail School of Nursing at Traditions, near

Biloxi. They were selected for the training in June 2010.

Both will attend six weeks of Commissioned Officer Training at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., followed by nine weeks of Nurse Transition Training. Clark will complete NTT at the San Antonio Military Medical Center and Shealey in Scottsdale, Ariz. Following NTT, he will be assigned to Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., and she to Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.

Shealey was enlisted for six years before entering the NECP. Clark had served 15 years when he began the NECP. He learned he had been selected for promotion to master sergeant the week before the NECP announcement.



Photo by Steve Pivnick

Clark and Shealey pose after graduation where they were commissioned as second lieutenants.



# 81st MSG Ultimate Warrior Challenge

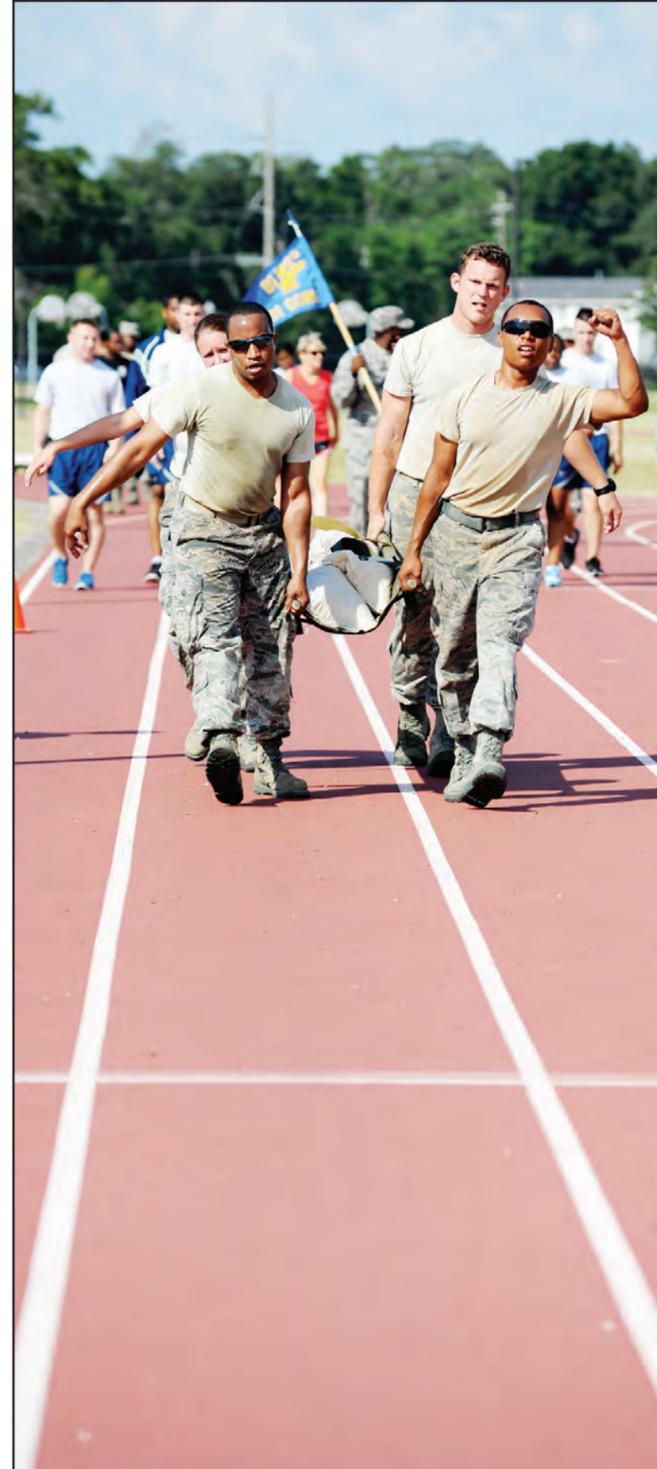
Photos by Kemberly Groue

Top, Trophies sit on display at the 81st Mission Support Group's Ultimate Warrior Challenge Friday at the Triangle Track. The challenge was held in honor of fellow service members who lost their lives in the fight for our nation's freedom. It consisted of nine four-member teams racing in a competition designed to take them through various aspects of a deployment.

Right, Shock and Awe team member Airman 1st Class Xeng Xiong, 81st Force Support Squadron, fires an M4 weapon at a target 10 meters away in the "Combat Arms Weapons" challenge.



Staff Sgt. Errol Wallace, 81st Logistics Readiness Squadron, cheers on his squadron team members, Senior Airmen Patsy Chandler and Aaron Ruschau; 1st Lt. Josh Anson (sitting) and Staff Sgt. Blaine Hunter, as they complete the challenge, "Are You Smarter than a First Termer?" The Log Monsters have to complete a 25-question quiz as quickly as possible on a computer before moving on to the next challenge.



Senior Airman Amanda Nesbitt, Staff Sgt. Jamal Kareem, 2nd Lt. Steve Shaffer and Senior Airman T.J. Faxon, The Money Badgers from the 81st Contracting Squadron, compete in the "Litter Carry" challenge. The challenge consisted of retrieving four sandbags, placing them securely on a litter and carrying them to the next challenge starting point.



Col. Rodney Berk, 81st Mission Support Group commander, gives closing remarks prior to announcing the top three teams in the 81st MSG Ultimate Warrior Challenge.



Capt. Chris Porta, Senior Airman Justin Gachett, and Staff Sgts. Audrey Spoor and Christopher Hernandez, Ram Rod team members from the 81st Security Forces Squadron, complete the "Mogadishu Mile" challenge by crossing the finish line with Gachett carrying a MOPP gear bag. The Ram Rods took first place in the challenge.

# Equine assistance important part of healing

By Tech. Sgt.  
Mereshah Hayes

Air Force News Service

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — The relationship between man and his horse is a storied one. Winston Churchill once said, “There’s something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man.” The 19th century novelist Robert Smith Surtees said, “There is no secret so close as that between a rider and his horse.” And the 20th century American novelist John Steinbeck said, “A man on a horse is spiritually as well as physically bigger than a man on foot.”

For hundreds of years, people have recognized the healing qualities of horses. Here, on the grounds of the U.S. Air Force Academy, equine specialists have taken those healing qualities to a whole new level with the equine assisted learning experience.

As part of the Warrior Wellness Program, service members can participate in the program as a way to cope with their mental and physical injuries, especially those that are combat related. Although the bulk of the guests are Soldiers from the southern Colorado area, the program is open to service members from all branches.

The stables are tucked away in a corner of the base that used to be a family housing area. Away from the space-themed structures on the main base, modern-day cowboys, clad in Stetsons and spurs, can be seen tending to the animals. And then there’s Boris; the resident mule who thinks he’s more akin to the family dog than a farm animal.

“Once you cross the rock bridge, it’s like a different world,” said Robert Templin, an animal caretaker and equine specialist. “It’s like taking a step back in time. There’s the Rocky Mountains right there and the river - it’s a goose bump giver.”

The staff members at the

equestrian center use their old-fashioned “cures” to help treat Soldiers who are dealing with an issue that plagues many service members who are returning from combat in today’s conflicts.

“I can tell you firsthand, these people save lives,” said an Airman who participated in the program and asked to remain anonymous. “I know that sounds melodramatic, but make no mistake, Mr. Barrett and his team save Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, and Airmen from taking their own lives, and they allow military families an amazing venue to start healing together -- no doubt, no drama, no embellishment.”

Mr. Barrett is Billy Jack Barrett, who has managed this working ranch for more than 30 years.

“We do on-the-ground exercises and some exercises on horseback and (Soldiers) work with a pair of trained equine specialists who help devise the exercises and work with them on the ground,” said Jeannie Springer, an accounting clerk and equine specialist. “We ask very open ended questions based on our observations and things that we see.”

Although each member of the equestrian center staff is certified through the O.K. Corral series, that was developed by the founder of equine-assisted therapy, the team is in the process of acquiring two licensed clinical therapists to help guests deal with difficult emotional and physical issues.

“Once we started working with Soldiers, we quickly found that (EAL) brings some things to the surface that reminded them of their Iraq or Afghanistan experience; it’s a break-through moment.

“For most guests, the highlight of the program is the horseback ride. Typically the ride is the culminating event for the participants in the program, but depending on the equine specialists’ recommendations, it can be earlier



Photos by Val Gempis

U.S. Army Sgt. Dale Chick pets a horse at the equestrian center April 27, 2012, at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo. Chick said volunteering at the stables and working with horses helps him find inner peace and comfort after being deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

in the treatment plan. The ride gives the Soldiers a chance to connect with the horse in the great wide open.

“During a particularly rough therapy session, Mr. Templin and Ms. Jeanne Springer just stopped and gave me a hug,” the Airman said. “No judgment, not allowing me to wallow in survivor’s guilt, not letting me try and ‘tough it out’ alone. (In my prior career field,) I was always placing my patients’ and my troops’ welfare before my own. In that moment I was allowed to let go and have a moment of solace and care from two amazing human beings.”

When the equine specialists take Soldiers out for their ride, they refer to it as “checking fence.” When the program first began, there was no funding available to offer rides to all the guests. The ranch manager, who is responsible

for making sure there are no holes in the fences enclosing the tens of thousands of acres of pasture the Academy owns, would take Soldiers out with him to “check the fences.”

“There was one Soldier who we took out on a ride during his fourth session, and it was an eye opener for us,” Springer said. “He had been in the Marine Corps and a Navy medic and then a sniper. Then he went to (Officer Training School) and became an Air Force officer.

“He saw a lot,” she said. “The ride was hard for him because there were a lot of places that were natural ambush places. He said, ‘My rational mind keeps reminding me that I’m safe, but all according to all my instincts, this is a bad spot and the next spot is a bad spot.’ We shed a lot of tears together. We had not anticipated that, but it was

really valuable and he wanted to bring his family back to do that. He really felt good that he did it.”

The EAL doesn’t just consist of horseback riding. Soldiers help care for the horses and use them as tools for some of their lessons. Guests may be asked to identify which horse’s behavior in the herd they can relate with the most and why. Often, the horse becomes a metaphor for the Soldier.

Even though a horse may weigh well over 1,200 pounds, it is still an animal of prey. Horses live in a constant state of hyperawareness, something that many Soldiers who live with PTSD can identify with.

“We (get Soldiers to see) this huge animal and realize it’s a prey animal and it lives with a constant sense of hyper alertness, but they’re calm,”

See **Equine**, Page 20

## Hiring Our Heroes

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is hosting the 2012 Hiring Our Heroes event for veterans today at the Naval Construction Battalion Center in Gulfport. This event is a hiring fair for active duty military members, Guard and Reserve and military dependants. To register go to <http://hoh.greatjob.net>.

## Medical Service Corps Accession Board

Medical Service Corps officers serve as professional health care administrators throughout the world in various positions in hospitals. Members with a health or business related degree may qualify to apply for commission. The MSC board is held annually, normally in October. Tentative dates for the AY2013 Accession Board are Oct. 15-19. To obtain an application, the

applicant must first complete the Air Force MSC application questionnaire. To receive a questionnaire, contact AFPC/DPAMS at DSN 665-4094, opt 2/commercial 210-565-4094, opt 2 or email AFPC.DPAMS1@us.af.mil. Once complete, return by fax (210-565-4240, DSN 665-4240) or e-mail AFPC.DPAMS1@us.af.mil. The questionnaire is used to verify qualifications to meet the board. Applications are due no later than Sept. 17.

## I-81 running track

Portions of the I-81 running track will be under construction and closed in order to remove and replace the asphalt surface. The contractor is scheduled to be completed mid-July.

## Keesler Airman's Attic

The Keesler Airman's Attic provides free donated items

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

## Chapel Marriage Care retreat

There is a free chapel-sponsored marriage care retreat June 15-17 at the Riverview Plaza Renaissance Hotel in Mobile, Ala., to provide couples with an opportunity to take time out for their relationship. For more information and to register, call (228) 377-4859.

## AFCEA luncheon

There will be an Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association Gulf Coast Chapter luncheon at 11:45 a.m. June 13 at the Bay Breeze Event Center third floor lounge.

The scheduled guest speaker is Maj. Gen Earl D. Matthews, Office of Information Dominance and Chief Information Officer cyberspace operations director for the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force.

For more information call (228) 377-0627.

## New SharePoint site

To provide customers with more efficient service, the military personnel section is rolling out a new SharePoint site on Monday. This new site will provide customers with Air Force Instructions, Personnel Services Delivery Guides, templates, forms and a drop-box. This initiative is expected to reduce the number of trips customers make to the MPS by enabling them access from their desk tops at <https://keesler.eis.aetc.af.mil/81msg/fss/mps/default.aspx?PageView=Shared>.

For more information call (228) 376-8648.

## Street Survival School

Keesler members can register for the second installment of Keesler's Street Survival School until June 19. The class is scheduled from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. June 23 with a classroom portion at the professional development building, 2902, and a hands-on portion on ramp three of the flight line.

To reserve a spot or for more information, call (228) 376-3123, email [keeslerauttox@gmail.com](mailto:keeslerauttox@gmail.com) or visit [www.streetsurvival.org](http://www.streetsurvival.org).

## Keesler Thrift Shop

The Keesler Thrift Shop, operated by the Keesler Spouses' Club, is at the corner of Meadows Drive and First Street. Profits benefit base and area charities and provide scholarships. Hours are 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. Consignments are accepted 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Mondays. Visit [www.keeslerspousesclub.com](http://www.keeslerspousesclub.com) for more information and a list of preferred donations. Pickup is available for bulk donations. For more information, call (228) 377-3217.

# Keesler Events Calendar

## Today

**8 a.m.** — Heart Link at the Sablich Center Room 108B. For more information, call (228) 376-8728.

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

**4 p.m.** — Father's Day special at the arts and crafts center.

## Saturday

**1 p.m.** — Father's Day special at the arts and crafts center.

## Tuesday

**\*Active shooter exercise\*** see Page 5 for more information.

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

— Separatees pre-separation counseling at the Sablich Center in Room 110. Call (228) 376-8728 to register.

**1 p.m.** — Retiree pre-separation counseling at the Sablich Center Room 110. Call (228) 376-8728 to register.

## Wednesday

**7 a.m.** — Newcomer's orientation at the Sablich Center Room 108B.

**2 p.m.** — Intramural soccer coach's meeting at the Vandenberg Community Center.

## June 14

**8 a.m.** — Veterans benefit briefing at the Sablich Center Room 108A. Call (228) 376-8728 to register.

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

— Retirement benefits briefing at the Sablich Center Room 108A. Call (228) 376-8728 to register.

## June 15

**6 p.m.** — Cocktails and canvas at the arts and crafts center. Call (228) 377-2821 to register.

## June 16

**9 a.m.** — Wood shop at the arts and crafts center.

## June 17

**8 a.m.** — Father's Day brunch at the Bay Breeze Event Center.

## June 19

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

— Separatees pre-separation counseling at the Sablich Center in Room 110. Call (228) 376-8728 to register.

**1 p.m.** — Retiree pre-separation counseling at the Sablich Center Room 110. Call (228) 376-8728 to register.

## Clinics closed for warrior training

### By Steve Pivnick

#### 81st Medical Group Public Affairs

Keesler Medical Center clinics are closed for warrior training from 1-5 p.m. the second Thursday of each month.

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

gency room.

Although pharmacy, radiology and laboratory services are open, they will have reduced staffing. Patients are asked to delay visits to these services during warrior training.

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

## Equine,

from Page 17

Springer said. “They manage their day, they manage their life and (there is a way for them to) figure out how to do that too.”

Sgt. Dale Chick, a Bradley mechanic who is now assigned to the Warrior Transition Unit’s Bravo Company at Fort Carson, Colo., has been taking advantage of EAL as part of his recovery from various injuries he incurred, including PTSD and a TBI, on multiple deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. As a result, his short-term memory was affected and he has difficulty dealing with large groups of people.

“You go through a lot of stuff over there that most people couldn’t fathom seeing, let alone experience,” Chick said. “Then you come home and you really don’t want to talk about it, but people keep asking you what was it like or did you kill anybody. You have no idea what it’s like to take another person’s life. It will haunt you.”

Although he is going through the healing process, Chick admits he’s not fully recovered, but EAL has helped

him on the journey to finding his “new normal.”

“When I got home I didn’t feel at home” Chick said. “I felt like a stranger in my own house. I didn’t feel like I knew my kids or my wife. I avoided going places like to the (post exchange) or crowded places like that. I can’t walk into a Wal-Mart at 5 p.m. I can’t do it — there are too many people.

“I hate to admit it, but there are some days that I just feel like running my car off a bridge and praying I don’t wake up from a crash,” he said. “And I think a lot of Soldiers feel the same way — they just don’t verbalize it. That’s why I think equine therapy is so good because it takes your mind off of that stuff.”

Andy Popejoy, a life long wrangler and equine specialist, said he has seen firsthand the benefits that EAL has had on the Soldiers who have come through the program.

“Once we get them on horseback, it’s like they’re free again,” he said. “It’s kind of like reading the Bible sometimes when you’re looking for that peace and tranquility — and horses do that. They do it for

me, and they have all my life. No matter how bad things get, I can either pick up my Bible or I can get on my horse.”

As the Soldiers progress through the program, the goal is to give them the tools to help integrate back into their families and their lives while coping with their injuries. A Soldier may never completely recover from an injury like PTSD, but he can always continue to heal. Equine-assisted learning and the tools it provides is one way Soldiers can continue that healing process.

“It helps open doors that were once closed,” Chick said. “A lot of Soldiers, like me, close themselves off from the world, and they have a really hard time interacting with the general public because of what they’ve been through. For me, equine therapy is just wonderful. I love it.”

As doctors and researchers continue to learn more about PTSD and TBI, more therapies will become available to treat service members. But at the equestrian center here, there will always be fences to be checked for the Soldiers who need them.

“There’s something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man.”

— Winston Churchill



Army Sgt. Dale Chick returns a saddle to the stables after riding a horse at the equestrian center April 26, at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo. Chick said volunteering at the stables and working with horses helps him find inner peace and comfort after being deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

# Air Force siblings career paths cross at Keesler

By Steve Pivnick

81st Medical Group Public Affairs

Three Air Force siblings recently found themselves at the same duty location for the first time in their 13-year careers.

Maj. Amber Barker is commander of the 81st Medical Group’s education and training flight. Maj. Amalia DiVittorio was on temporary duty here from the Pentagon to implement the 81st MDG’s MiCare program, a web-based program enabling patients to communicate securely and privately with their health-care team. Tech. Sgt. John Alex Jordan was attending Keesler’s Mathies NCO Academy from Offutt Air Force Base, Neb. He graduated May 24 with his wife and children in attendance at the graduation luncheon.

Barker pointed out, “We have visited one another at different duty stations,” Baker said. “But for the first time, our careers led us all to Keesler for duty — at least for a short week.”

Coincidentally, DiVittorio once was assigned to the 81st MDG and also worked in the education and training flight.

Barker added, “Our dad, Jack Jordan — a retired KC-135 pilot and Air Force Junior ROTC instructor, came to town for the unplanned family reunion. Our mom, designated ‘General Jenny’ Jordan, was in Washington, D.C., to watch over Amalia’s kids since her husband Ernesto, an Air Force lieutenant colonel, is on temporary duty to Hickam AFB, Hawaii. I’m not sure we could be more of a proud Air Force family!”



DiVittorio, left, Jordan and Barker.

Photo by Steve Pivnick

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## Intramural Soccer League



## Registration

Letter of Intent Due **Today!**

Coaches' Meeting **June 13**  
2 p.m. @  
the "V"

Season Starts **July 9**

All games will be held at multipurpose field.

For more information,  
call 377-2444.



## Intramural bowling final results

Team	Won	Lost
335th TRS-A	166	106
81st FSS	164	108
81st LRS-A	157	115
81st TRSS-PMEL	155	117
81st CS	153	119
81st WSA	152	120
338th TRS	150	122
403rd AMXS	147	125
334th TRS	144	128
335th TRS-B	141	131
ECS Strikers	136	136
2nd Air Force	124	148
81st LRS-B	119	153
336th TRS	110	154
81st TRSS-A	102	170
Seabees	40	72

## Season high scores

**Team game** — 335th TRS-A, 1055

**Team series** — 335th TRS-A, 2996

**High handicap game (team)** — 81st WSA, 1161

**High handicap series (team)** — 81st CS, 3300

**Game/men** — Keith Jackson, 279

**Series/men** — Jeff Miracle, 734

**High handicap game/men** — Taras Butrej, 300

**High handicap series/men** — Will Steele, 772

**Game/women** — Vicki Dickinson, 213

**Series/women** — Sabra Miracle, 567

**High handicap game/women** — Yolanda Jerry, 273

**High handicap series/women** — Sabra Miracle, 678

**Average/men** — Jeff Miracle, 203.38

**Average/women** — Vicki Dickinson, 157.68

**Most improved** — Bernard Moyer Jr., 29.72; Carol Wetzler, 4.05

## Cardboard Boat Regatta

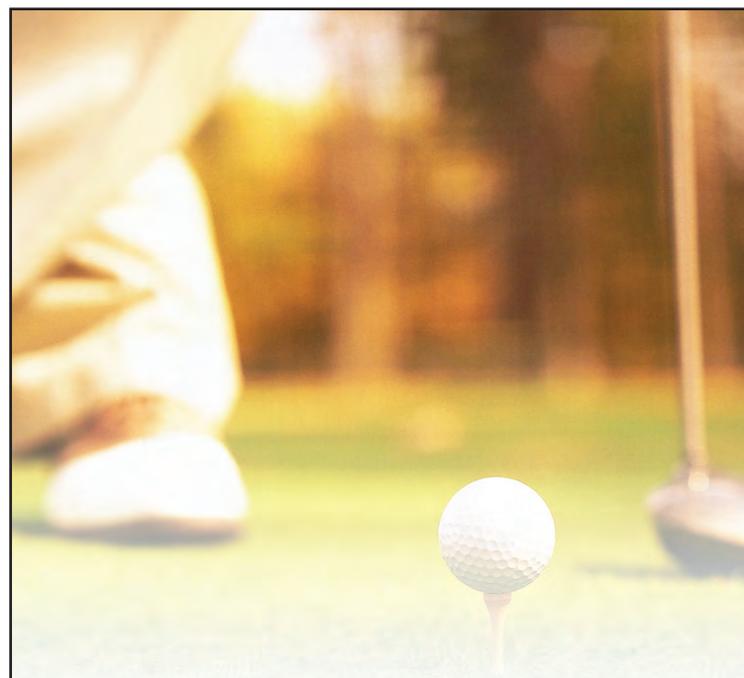
6-8 p.m. June 16  
Triangle Pool

Create a seaworthy craft using only cardboard and duct tape and sail it to the finish line.



**Free to enter.**  
**Sign up by June 11.**

Register at Vandenberg & Bay Breeze Community Centers or Outdoor Recreation. Rules are available online. For more information, call 377-2509.



## First sergeants to hold golf tournament

The Keesler First Sergeants' Council is holding a fundraiser golf tournament noon June 21 at the Bay Breeze Golf Course. The cost is \$50 per person and registration is due June 13. For more information, call 228-376-7581.