



KEESLER NEWS

KEESLER AIR FORCE BASE, BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI

Train. Fight. Win.

JAN. 31, 2013 VOL. 74 NO. 4

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A DIME's worth of fun helps mission success

By Lt. Col. Brian Worth

81st Training Group deputy commander

What can you buy with a dime today? You might think, "Not much," but I would argue that you can buy a lot of fun and contribute to mission accomplishment.

Every day we come to work with the intention of doing a good job, striving toward our goals and being a true professional in the execution of our duties. Sounds like hard work, doesn't it? Well, having fun is just as important as doing your job. Whether you plan to have fun with your family and friends or simply follow a spur of the moment interest, having fun can actually make you a more valuable player and contribute to the accomplishment of your mission.

People need to make time for fun. Whether that fun is simply taking

time on the weekends to talk with neighbors or trying something new, your fun translates into good community relations, an outlet for stress and, ultimately, mission accomplishment. A happy person makes for a happy world and provides us with the harmonious environment we seek. But what can you do to have fun for a dime?

For those of us stationed here on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, having fun is very easy since we're in the heart of southern hospitality. Every year at this time, you see and hear about Mardi Gras parades and celebrations that span miles of densely populated street sides while the krewes that build the floats have taken great care in preparing and providing their individual interpretation of fun.

For those of us in the crowds, simply participating is also fun and helps accomplish our mission here at

Keesler by supporting base and local community participants. In turn, the local community leadership and populace give back through their support of the Keesler mission.

Because of that relationship with the community, we know that if Keesler goes through another hurricane or disaster, the local community will work together with us to clear the debris, collect refuse, fix our water supplies, provide meals when our dining facilities are inoperative, care for our injured and keep us safe from criminal elements. So where does the dime come into play?

In this case, a DIME is diplomacy, information, military and economy. By virtue of simply wearing the uniform, you are an Air Force diplomat representing all of us on and off duty. Your participation in Mardi Gras is an opportunity to set the example and show

that Keesler's people know how to do their jobs and have fun.

When you share your personal stories with neighbors, it paints Airmen in a positive light and gives our friends in the community more information about their military partners. Having fun translates into economic support for Keesler and our neighbors along the Gulf Coast as each DIME you spend while having fun contributes to someone's livelihood, as well as the city and county annual budgets.

So remember that it's OK to have fun, and that having fun alongside our friends in the community can even help accomplish our mission as Airmen. A DIME's worth of fun can go a very long way to help us tell our Air Force story. Have fun out there!

Cody expresses gratitude in letter to Airmen

By Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James Cody

First and foremost, I could not be any prouder of the men and women in our United States Air Force and their families. Thank you for your service. Our Air Force consists of 690,000 diverse, highly-skilled, dedicated and brilliant people, and none is more important than another. We must all work together as a team to produce unbeatable airpower for our nation.

As Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, Air Force chief of staff, has said, every one of us has a story. Mine revolves around the Air Force. I am proud to have been an Airman for just over 28 years now. I married an Airman; Athena is a retired chief master sergeant and our son is an Airman. We understand the sacrifices you make and the challenges you face — this is family business.

Coming out of Air Educa-

tion and Training Command, I have a pretty clear view of how we train and educate Airmen. I believe education and training are the foundation of our airpower advantage and must be protected. This will be one of my focus areas. Education and training, along with experience, are the keys to the deliberate development of Airmen that will ensure the continued success of our Air Force today and into the future. I expect us to continue focusing on all three of these things.

We cannot have airpower without Airmen. We rely on Airmen to accomplish our missions. I think it's critical that we make sure you have the resources you need to do your job. Our programs and services should meet the needs of our Airmen and their families. This will be another of my focus areas.

While we're doing all this, we also need to strike an appropriate work/life balance.

Our nation demands a lot from its Airmen, and that is not likely to change, but if we can eliminate unnecessary additional duties and find ways to use technology to give us some time back, I think we should do that. On top of that, our workplaces must be safe and productive environments where innovative Airmen can function at their best. This will be another of my focus areas.

From the pioneering spirit of CMSAF Paul Airey to the bold leadership of CMSAF Jim Roy, our force has prospered from a long line of brilliant and visionary Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force. It is my mission to continue that legacy in the best way I can.

It's most important to me that you know Athena and I will be working with you, your family, your development, and your mission in mind.

Thank you for your service to our nation.



THE AIRMAN'S CREED

I AM AN AMERICAN AIRMAN.
I AM A WARRIOR.
I HAVE ANSWERED MY NATION'S CALL.

I AM AN AMERICAN AIRMAN.
MY MISSION IS TO FLY, FIGHT, AND WIN.
I AM FAITHFUL TO A PROUD HERITAGE,
A TRADITION OF HONOR,
AND A LEGACY OF VALOR.

I AM AN AMERICAN AIRMAN,
GUARDIAN OF FREEDOM AND JUSTICE,
MY NATION'S SWORD AND SHIELD,
ITS SENTRY AND AVENGER.
I DEFEND MY COUNTRY WITH MY LIFE.

I AM AN AMERICAN AIRMAN:
WINGMAN, LEADER, WARRIOR.
I WILL NEVER LEAVE AN AIRMAN BEHIND,
I WILL NEVER FALTER,

AND I WILL NOT FAIL.

Brig. Gen. Brad Spacy
81st Training Wing
commander

**81st Training Wing
Public Affairs**

1st Lt. Victoria Porto
Chief

Jerry Taranto
Deputy chief

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ON THE COVER

Senior Airman Emmanuel Maldonado Rosario, 81st Dental Squadron, performs with the Tops in Blue 2012 World Tour Sunday at the Mississippi Coast Coliseum. Hundreds of Keesler Airmen, families and community members watched and listened as the sequin-studded members of Tops in Blue performed their diverse show. According to its website, Tops in Blue began in 1953 and has since performed on film, on national television and at events like the Super Bowl and World's Fair. This year's tour takes the group to more than 20 countries with nearly 130 performances. For more information on the team or audition requirements, visit www.topsinblue.com. Story and more photos, pages 14-15.

Photo by Kemberly Groue



PHOTO OF THE WEEK



Royalty reigns at Krewe of Medics Mardi Gras Ball

The 81st Medical Group's Krewe of Medics royalty and court meet their "subjects" after being introduced at the krewe's 25th annual Mardi Gras Ball Jan. 19 at the Bay Breeze Event Center. They are, from left: "Duke Robin Hood," Bernie Payne, 81st Medical Support Squadron; "Maid Maureen O'Hara," Chief Master Sgt. Paula Eischen, 81st Surgical Operations Squadron; "Duke John Wayne," Don Lee, Humana Government; "Queen Cinderella," Col. (Dr.) Susan Perez, 81st MDG; "King Prince Charming," Capt. Christopher Dykes, 81st Diagnostics and Therapeutics Squadron; "Maid Wonder Woman," Annette Coakley, 81st MDTs; and "Duke Superman," Master Sgt. Gene McCants, 81st MDG. This year's ball theme was "Memories," based on the themes from the previous 24 years of the krewe's Mardi Gras balls.

Photo by Steve Pivnick



THE WORLD'S BEST AIRMEN — TRAINING, FIGHTING, WINNING

Keesler-developed program AIMS at efficiency

By Senior Airman Heather Heiney

81st Training Wing Public Affairs

A new military training leader workflow program developed at Keesler begins implementation across Air Education and Training Command Friday.

The Airman Interactive Management System was inspired by and developed for MTLs as a multi-faceted tool to track every aspect of an Airman's time in technical training.

Main components of the Tech Training Management System-integrated program include processing, student data, dormitories, reports and management.

Tech. Sgt. Shaun Wilke, 81st Training Group MTL, has been involved with the development of AIMS since the first meeting in 2010 in which MTLs from various bases and developers gathered to discuss

ideas and goals for the project.

He said before AIMS was developed, each base with technical training students had to develop its own databases to fulfill their student management needs.

For example, a need unique to Keesler is hurricane season accountability. Although this function isn't needed at all bases, it is included in the system. This way, all MTLs only have to learn one system, no matter where they are stationed.

Before Airmen even leave basic military training, they are processed into the system.

Wilke said that most administrative tasks, such as assigning Airmen dorm rooms and MTLs, are done automatically. Those that aren't are essentially completed with the push of a button.

"It's going to impact training in a great way," he said. "It'll get MTLs away from their com-

puters and in front of Airmen."

Michael Esposito, TTMS integration sustainment team, said that the development of AIMS took three full-time developers and one person to write the "help" system. Three people were also assigned to the quality assurance of the contract, one full-time and two part-time.

Esposito said it's a complex system that includes aspects similar to hotel management and personal training. He also said that one goal of the system is to process Airmen into the system once and have their information follow them throughout the lifecycle of their training.

"We've been trying to do something for MTLs for a long time," Esposito said. "They have a hard job and there are a lot of things to keep track of."

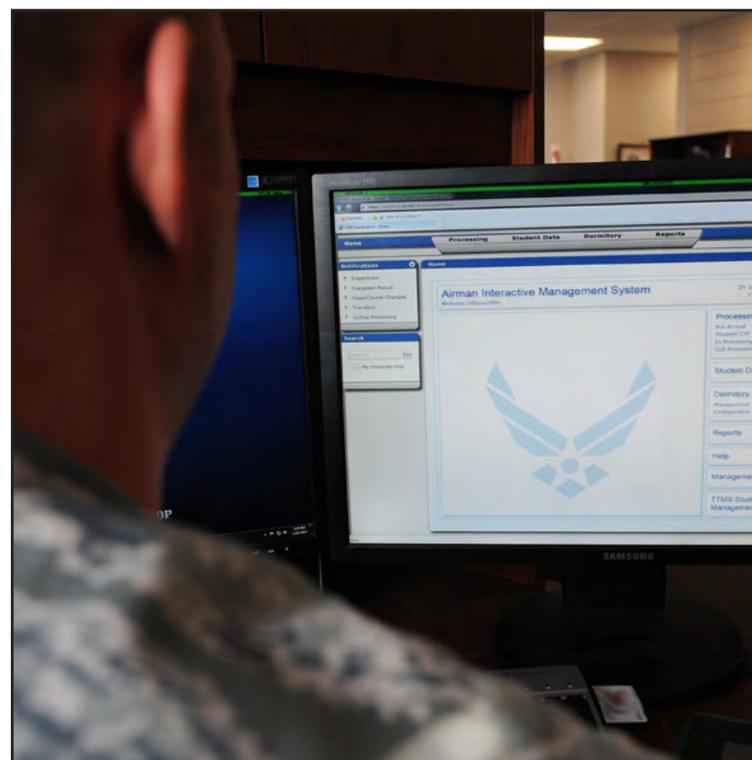


Photo by Kemberly Groue

A military training leader logs onto the Airman Interactive Management System Friday at Keesler. AIMS is a Keesler-developed database which gives MTLs a consolidated tool for non-prior service student management.



Wall Studio to hold photography classes

Beginning Feb. 5, 81st Training Wing Public Affairs is scheduled to hold self help photography classes 11 a.m. the first Tuesday of each month at Wall Studio. The class is intended to help unit representatives learn how to fill their unit's official photography requirements. Classes will include camera familiarization and basic functions; shooting tips and techniques; composition; self-help studio use and setup; how to know when a photo should be accessioned; and the rules for publicly releasing photos. For more information, call 228-377-4378.

Photo by Kemberly Groue

Airmen say goodbye to Roy, welcome Cody

By Staff Sgt. David Salanitri

Air Force Public Affairs Agency

JOINT BASE ANDREWS, Md. — The Air Force appointed its 17th chief master sergeant of the Air Force during a transition and retirement ceremony here Jan. 24.

In his last official act before retiring, Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James Roy relinquished the duties and responsibilities of the Air Force's highest enlisted leader to Chief Master Sgt. James Cody.

Looking across the airplane hangar, Cody addressed some of his main goals in his new position.

"We have to invest before we can reap rewards," said Cody, who was previously assigned as the command chief master sergeant of Air Education and Training Command. "We will continue to invest in the development of our Airmen in the most deliberate way possible, and we will ensure our force is ready to handle the challenges it will face in the future."

Cody said as the service's senior enlisted leader, his focus will be on helping Airmen be successful.

"We need to protect them by making sure they know how to deal with the stress that comes with military life," said Cody. "We will focus on strengthening relationships, taking care of one another, and holding each other more accountable for measuring up to the high standards we demand of every Airman."

Themes of innovation and critical thinking were reinforced throughout the ceremony with Cody calling upon Airmen to continue being efficient tacticians.

"As resources tighten, our nation will require more from each one of us. Airmen will meet that challenge through



Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James Cody and the retired 16th Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James Roy watch as the colors are posted during the retirement and transition ceremony at Joint Base Andrews, Md., Jan. 24.

Photo by Master Sgt. Cecilio Ricardo

innovation as they always have," he said.

Though the ceremony was a time to celebrate the retirement of Roy and the appointment of Cody, leaders reminded the crowd that there's work to be done.

The Air Force's highest-ranking uniformed Airman said he is ready to roll up his sleeves, alongside Chief and Mrs. Cody.

"Take a look around the hangar here," said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III. "This is your Air Force. And all of us are now your Airmen. Lead us well."

During the ceremony, the Air Force debuted a new item for enlisted Airmen to be proud of — the Chief Master

Sergeant of the Air Force positional colors.

Today's ceremony contained great moments — the transition of the service's 17th CMSAF and the unveiling of the positional colors. However, there was also a bittersweet moment as the Air Force said farewell to a great Airman.

Speaking to his character, one theme throughout Roy's farewell speech was the importance of relationships.

"Over the past few weeks I've spent a lot of time reflecting on my career," said Roy. "I've been thinking — not about what we got accomplished, or what we didn't get accomplished — but about relationships.

"Our 30 years in the Air

Force allowed Ms. Paula and I to develop a lot of valuable relationships," he said. "We are thankful for each of these, and will continue to build on them as we move into the next chapter of our lives."

Roy's 3½ years as chief master sergeant of the Air Force were marked by building relationships with Airmen. A staunch advocate of face-to-face communication, Roy traveled about nine months out of each year to meet and interact with Airmen of all ranks.

Cody said he will continue that legacy.

"To ensure continued success, leaders at all levels must focus on our Airmen and their families," said Cody. "We look forward to getting out to the

bases and meeting our Airmen, listening to their stories, understanding their challenges. And we're committing to you we will bring those back and work those issues hard here on the staff."

After closely working together the past six months, Roy and Welsh have bonded over a common denominator — caring for Airmen.

"Chief Roy, there's just no way to properly say thank you for what you've given to our Air Force ... but thank you," said Welsh. "Take care of yourself 16, and wear the number proudly. You've earned it."

81st TRW holds quarterly awards ceremony

By Senior Airman Heather Heiney

81st Training Wing Public Affairs

The 81st Training Wing quarterly awards ceremony was held 11 a.m. Friday to recognize Keesler members in 11 categories.

Winners in each category are:

Senior Airman Cory Chandler, 81st Security Forces Squadron — Airman.

Tech. Sgt. Teddy Poole, 81st SFS — non-commissioned officer.

Master Sgt. Michael Davis, 81st Medical Operations Squadron — senior NCO.

2nd Lt. Franklin Shipp, 81st Medical Support Squadron — company grade officer.

Katie Wilson, 81st Diagnostics and Ther-

apeutics Squadron — category I, non-supervisory civilian.

Albert Ciampa, health and wellness center — category II, non-supervisory civilian.

Douglas Lee, 81st Communications Squadron — category II, supervisory civilian.

Tech. Sgt. Brian Margavich, 333rd Training Squadron, and **Jessica Barattini**, 81st Force Support Squadron — volunteers.

Airman 1st Class Chelsea Dean, 81st Aerospace Medicine Squadron — honor guard Airman.

Tech. Sgt. Kerry Ann Gaubault, 334th TRS — honor guard NCO.

Airman 1st Class Jessica Montoya, 81st MDTs — Spartan Award.

Be considerate. Keep your car radios
at a reasonable volume.

Joint Commission team to inspect hospital

By Steve Pivnick

81st Medical Group Public Affairs

The 81st Medical Group received word Jan. 24 that a survey by the Joint Commission begins Feb. 4.

According to Lt. Col. Carla Leeseberg, chief of the 81st Medical Group performance improvement and regulatory compliance department, the Joint Commission team will consist of three surveyors — a physician, nurse and facility engineer.

She said The Joint Commission looks at how the medical group produces safe, high-quality patient care.

“They will observe our people doing their work and interview them to ask them about the work they do,” Leeseberg said.

The Joint Commission was founded in 1951 and, according to its website, seeks to continuously improve health care for the public in collaboration with other stakeholders by evaluating more than 20,000 healthcare organizations in the United States and inspiring them to excel in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality and value.

According to Col. Dana Venenga, 81st MDG medical center administrator, while ci-

vilian health-care organizations voluntarily pursue accreditation from the Joint Commission, it is essentially mandatory for Air Force hospitals.

“The Joint Commission surveyors visit accredited hospitals a minimum of once every three years to evaluate standards compliance. This visit is called a survey, and since 2006, all surveys have been unannounced. (The Joint commission does provide seven days prior notice.) Joint Commission surveyors are highly-trained experts in their respective fields of expertise — physicians, nurses, adminis-

trators, clinical engineers, etc,” Venenga said.

The colonel noted, “The objective of the survey is not only to evaluate the hospital, but to provide education and guidance that will help the staff continue to improve the hospital’s performance. The survey process evaluates actual care processes by tracing patients through the care, treatment and services they received.”

Venenga pointed out the Joint Commission standards focus on patient safety and quality of care and are updated regularly to reflect the rapid advances in health care and medicine.

“Numbering more than 250, the standards address everything from patient rights and education, infection control, medication management and preventing medical errors, to how the hospital verifies its professional staff is qualified and competent, how it prepares for emergencies and how it collects data on its performance and uses that data to improve itself.”

Leeseberg indicated The Joint Commission will provide an outbrief to the 81st MDG executive staff Feb. 8 when the survey is complete.

Remaining combat positions open to women

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Martin Dempsey announced today the rescission of the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule for women and that the Department of Defense plans to remove gender-based barriers to service.

“Women have shown great courage and sacrifice on and off the battlefield, contributed in unprecedented ways to the military’s mission and proven their ability to serve in an expanding number of roles,” Panetta said. “The Department’s goal in rescinding the rule is to ensure that the mission is met with the best-qualified and most capable people, regardless of gender.”

While 99 percent of Air Force positions are currently open to women, Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III said the service will now pursue opening the final 1 percent.

“2013 marks the twentieth anniversary of the Department of Defense allowing women to serve as combat pilots,” Welsh said. “By rescinding the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule, we can pursue integrating women into the seven remaining Air Force career fields still closed, all associated with special operations. We’re focused on ensuring America’s Air Force remains capable and ready with the best-qualified people serving where we need them.”

The Air Force will partner with U.S. Special Operations Command and the other services to review opening these positions in a deliberate, measured, and responsible way, officials said. Those positions are:

Officer / enlisted Air Force Specialty Codes closed to women:

• **13DXA** (combat control officer — special operations forces/direct ground



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Colette Graham
Col. Jeannie Leavitt speaks to the crowd during the wing change of command ceremony on Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C., June 1, 2012. Leavitt is the first female to command an Air Force fighter wing.

combat)

• **13DXB** (combat rescue/special tactics officer — special operations forces /direct ground combat)

• **15WXC** (special operations weather officer — special operations forces /direct ground combat)

• **1C2XX** (enlisted combat controller — special operations forces/direct ground combat)

• **1C4XX** (enlisted tactical air command and control — some special operations forces/direct ground combat)

• **1T2XX** (enlisted pararescue — special operations forces /direct ground combat)

• **1W0X2** (enlisted special operations weather — special operations forces/direct ground combat)

These career fields comprise approx-

imately 3,235 positions.

Today, women make up approximately 15 percent, or nearly 202,400, of the U.S. military’s 1.4 million active personnel. Over the course of the past decade, more than 280,000 women have deployed in support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Today’s announcement follows an extensive review by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who unanimously concluded that now is the time to move forward with the full intent to integrate women into occupational fields to the maximum extent possible.

It builds on a February 2012 decision to open more than 14,000 additional positions to women by rescinding the co-location restriction and allowing women to be assigned to select positions in ground combat units at the battalion level.

“The Joint Chiefs share common cause on the need to start doing this now and to doing this right. We are committed to a purposeful and principled approach,” said Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey.

The DOD is determined to successfully integrate women into the remaining restricted occupational fields within our military, while adhering to the following guiding principles developed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

• Ensuring the success of our nation’s warfighting forces by preserving unit readiness, cohesion, and morale.

• Ensuring all service men and women are given the opportunity to succeed and are set up for success with viable career paths.

• Retaining the trust and confidence of the American people to defend this nation by promoting policies that maintain the best quality and most qualified people.

• Validating occupational performance standards, both physical and mental, for all military occupational specialties, specifically those that remain closed to women. Eligibility for training and development within designated occupational fields should consist of qualitative and quantifiable standards reflecting the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for each occupation. For occupational specialties open to women, the occupational performance standards must be gender-neutral as required by Public Law 103-160, Section 542 (1993).

• Ensuring that a sufficient cadre of midgrade/senior women enlisted and officers are assigned to commands at the point of introduction to ensure success in the long run. This may require an adjustment to recruiting efforts, assignment processes, and personnel policies. Assimilation of women into heretofore “closed units” will be informed by continual in-stride assessments and pilot efforts.

Using these guiding principles, positions will be opened to women following service reviews and the congressional notification procedures established by law. Panetta directed the military departments to submit detailed plans by May 15 for the implementation of this change, and to move ahead expeditiously to integrate women into previously closed positions. The secretary’s direction is for this process to be complete by Jan. 1, 2016.

The Joint Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Women in Service Review Memorandum can be viewed at: <http://www.defense.gov/news/WISRJointMemo.pdf>

The Chairman’s Women in Service Review Memorandum can be viewed at: <http://www.defense.gov/news/WISRImplementationPlanMemo.pdf>

Improving finances: how Keesler can help

By Senior Airman
Heather Heiney

81st Training Wing Public Affairs

Editor's note: This is the last in a series of four on common New Year's resolutions.

For many people the New Year brings with it the desire to start fresh, set goals and do something to make themselves better in one way or another. While not everyone creates a resolution each year and those that do tailor their goals to their specific needs, four of the more common resolutions are to quit smoking, be healthier, help others and improve finances. Each week throughout the month of January, this series will explore the four resolutions above and how different Keesler agencies can help individuals reach their goals.

Week three: improve finances.

Love it or hate it, money is an unavoidable aspect of living in the 21st Century. While managing finances may come naturally to some people, there are others who may find it a struggle. The airman and family readiness center offers military members here at Keesler several resources to help understand and manage money. Some services include one-on-one financial counseling, help receiving a free credit score and take-home educational resources.

Jessica Barattini, A&FRC, said, "Having a grasp on where you are spending your money will help you reach financial success. If you are not tracking what you are spending, you are more likely to be living paycheck to paycheck, which makes it difficult accumulate any real savings."

Rose Janosik, A&FRC, said that mission success and financial readiness go hand-in-hand and it is important to maintain good credit, financial stability, regularly save, contribute to a Thrift Savings Plan, have Servicemembers Group Life Insurance and receive low in-



terest loans.

Janosik also said that financial irresponsibility can lead to anxiety, loss of focus, strained relationships, health issues and even deeper financial issues.

"The No. 1 piece of advice that most financial planners give out to their clients is to live below your means and control your debt," Barattini said. "The first step to becoming financially stable is to create a budget."

One of the first things Barattini said she tells military members is to attack their debt like it's their enemy.

"After all, if you are worried about creditors calling you or how you are going to put food on the table, then your mind is not really on the mission and that could be dangerous for everyone," Barattini said. "Financial stress can often manifest itself in your personal relationships as well. Arguments about money are one of the leading causes of divorce."

Many people may think

that if they simply create a budget, their financial problems will be solved.

"Being on a budget is not a very motivating goal. The budget should be thought of as a tool to help you reach your goals," Barattini said. "A goal should be specific, have a time limit and have an action plan."

The goal should not be to generally save money, but should be much more specific. For example, someone could set the goal to save \$1,200 by the end of the year by putting \$100 in savings every month.

One resource offered to military members for long-term savings is the Thrift Savings Plan for the Uniformed Services. It is a retirement savings plan separate from the plan offered to military members who retire with more than 20 years of service.

"You have your choice of a traditional TSP or a Roth TSP," Janosik said.

There are several differences between the two. The tradition-

al TSP is not taxed up front; the money will be taxed when withdrawn. The Roth TSP is taxed up front so more money comes out of your paycheck, but withdrawals are tax-free if five years have passed since Jan. 1 of the year you made your first Roth contribution, and you are age 59 or older or permanently disabled. Family members may make tax-free withdrawals if you have passed away. For more information about TSP, go to www.tsp.gov or call 1-877-968-3778.

"The president approved the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 on Jan. 2, 2013. This law allows the TSP and other qualified plans to give participants the option to convert their traditional account balances to a Roth balance," Janosik said. "The amount converted would be taxable to the participant. The Thrift Board is currently waiting for tax reporting guidance from the IRS and they will be studying the actions required to offer a con-

version option. After their review, they will make a decision on whether to proceed."

Another resource available to military families is Military Saves. Part of the Department of Defense's financial readiness campaign since 2003, it encourages all service members, their families and civilian employees to become more financially responsible.

"It's my favorite program and I wanted everyone to get as excited about it as I am. I try to present information in a fun way to keep people interested and my hope is that it gets people talking and thinking more about their money," Barattini said.

For assistance or more information, call (228)376-8728 or visit www.militarysaves.org.

Keesler members can also interact with one another, receive financial tips and get involved with Military Saves at www.facebook.com/groups/keeslersaves.

81st TRW Public Affairs wins four AETC awards

By Senior Airman
Heather Heiney

81st Training Wing Public Affairs

The 81st Training Wing Public Affairs office won four Air Education and Train-

ing Command Public Affairs Communication Excellence Awards.

Winners are:
81st Training Wing Public Affairs — Maj. Henry H. “Hap” Arnold Award for Pub-

lic Affairs Communication Effectiveness.

First Lt. Victoria Porto — Captain Bradley R. Schuldt Outstanding Communication Company-Grade Officer.

Jerry Taranto — Out-

standing Communication Intermediate-Grade Civilian.

Susan Griggs — Outstanding Communication Tactical-Level Civilian.

The “Hap” Arnold Award was presented to the 81st

TRW for their coordination of the Biloxi Chamber of Commerce’s quarterly “morning call” hosted at the Bay Breeze Event Center in October. The PA team reinvigorated the program by turning a community meeting into a full multimedia show honoring Keesler’s Airmen and educating more than 200 distinguished visitors on Keesler’s role in the community and in the Air Force.

Porto was named one of the AETC Inspector General’s top 5 percent professional performers during the AETC Consolidated Unit Inspection for leading her team to a zero-discrepancy “excellent” rating. She saved the Air Force \$330,000 per year by orchestrating a new visual information contract and writing a public affairs prioritization plan. She also supervised Keesler’s social media program during Hurricane Isaac, providing potentially life-saving information to more than 6,000 people.

Taranto led a last-minute congressional staff visit to the base and coordinated a tour to share Keesler’s mission and people with members of the House of Representatives. He was the public affairs representative for the Portraits in Courage member chosen for Keesler. He also led the banquet and coordinated flyover requests and media coverage for Keesler’s involvement in the 2012 Mississippi Bowl Game, reaching more than 100,000 viewers.

Griggs directed honor guard support for 34 civic events ensuring increased taxpayer support and understanding of the Air Force mission. She led the base tour program, organizing 24 events and showcasing Keesler Airmen and missions to more than 141,000 people locally. She also revitalized the speakers bureau program and added 80 new speakers by engaging commanders to nominate Air Force ambassadors.



Photos by Kemberly Groue

Tops in Blue performed their diverse show in front of hundreds of Keesler Airmen, families and community members Saturday at the Mississippi Coast Coliseum during their 2012 world tour. According to its website, Tops in Blue began in 1953 and has since performed on film, on national television and at events like the Super Bowl and World's Fair. This year's tour takes the group to more than 20 countries with nearly 130 performances. For more information on the team or audition requirements, visit www.topsinblue.com

Keesler Airmen entertain with Tops in Blue

By 1st Lt. Victoria Porto
81st TRW Public Affairs chief

Hundreds of Keesler Airmen, families and community members watched and listened as the sequin-studded members of Tops in Blue performed their diverse show Sunday at the Mississippi Coast Coliseum.

For one vocalist, Senior Airman Emmanuel Maldonado Rosario, the performance was a homecoming of sorts as the crowd was filled with Airmen from his home station and unit, the 81st Dental Squadron.

"I was so excited to perform for my Keesler family; they've been so supportive of me on the road," he said.

Maldonado Rosario has

been with Tops in Blue since March 2012, performing on their 2012 World Tour, titled "Listen."

Hours before the show started, the 31-member Tops in Blue team had on a different uniform: hard hats and working gloves.

"A lot of people don't expect to see that we set up everything ourselves," Maldonado Rosario said. Aside from being a vocalist, he is also the loadmaster for their truck, ensuring their equipment travels safely.

During their 10-month tour around the world, the performers and technical staff act as their own road crew, preparing their stage, lights and sound equipment.

All together, the team is re-

sponsible for setting up and tearing down more than 64,000 pounds of equipment each time they perform.

Senior Airman Roger Payne, Tops in Blue audio engineer, is one of the technical experts working behind the scene at each show.

"We're the cogs behind the curtain," he said. "We put the final touch on the show."

Payne, who is a Keesler technical school graduate and electronic warfare journeyman, said Tops in Blue allowed him the opportunity to combine two of his favorite things: working in the military and doing theatrical work.

"It really pushed me as an Airman and as a person," he said.

The group entertained

the audience with pop songs and ballads from artists like Maroon 5, The Zac Brown Band and Michael Jackson. They donned costume after costume and even showcased their dancing talents and miming skills.

"I was really inspired by the energy and the joy they bring to the community when they perform," said 2nd Lt. Jen Aggas, a clinical nurse with the 81st Inpatient Operations Squadron. "It's amazing to see how talented our Airmen are."

A Keesler personnel officer graduate and the group's officer in charge, Capt. Ashley Elmore, said team members strive to put on the best show possible to boost morale and to build community relations.

"We want to tell the Air

Force story," she said, adding that the experience of being on the team has helped them all grow and become Air Force ambassadors across the world.

"You step up to a whole new level of Airmanship," she said. "You return a much stronger Airman than when you left."

According to its website, Tops in Blue began in 1953 and has since performed on film, on national television and at events like the Super Bowl and World's Fair. This year's tour takes the group to more than 20 countries with nearly 130 performances. For more information on the team or audition requirements, visit www.topsinblue.com.



1st Lt. Kandis Rich, Kirtland AFB, N.M., performs the song "I'm So Excited" by the Pointer Sisters.



Airman Basic Jarrett Stockton, 334th Training Squadron, dances in the aisle with Tops in Blue member Capt. Ashley Elmore, Ellsworth AFB, S.D., during the performance.



Members of Tops in Blue 2012 World Tour perform the song "This" by Darius Rucker.



Senior Airman Charles Cooper, Ramstein Air Base, Germany, portrays Michael Jackson as he sings the song "ABC" by the Jackson 5.

KEESLER NOTES

Worship bus service

Non-prior service training students will have the opportunity to ride the shuttle bus to and from the 11 a.m. gospel worship service at the Larcher Chapel beginning Sunday. This bus service will pick up students at 10:45 a.m. at the 338th Training Squadron bus stop across from vehicle operations. After the worship service, the shuttle bus will pick up students from Larcher Chapel at 1 p.m. and return them to the 338th TRS bus stop.

CCAF deadline

The last day to apply for the Community College of the Air Force Spring 2013 Graduating Class is Feb. 22. By that date, all supporting documentation must be on file with CCAF at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., including a nomination

Action Request. For more information go to the education services office in Room 224 of the Sablich Center, or call 228-376-8708.

AFAS grants

Keesler's airman and family readiness center received \$4,000 from the Air Force Aid Society for 10 spouses to take the physician's office assistant course through Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College. Applications are available at the airman and family readiness center or can be emailed upon request. The deadline to turn in completed applications is 3 p.m. Friday. The scholarship is open to non-military spouses of Air Force members assigned to a Keesler unit. If the military member is Air Guard or Reserve, Title 10 orders showing they will be on active status from Feb. 20

through May 15 are required. Active-duty members must have orders showing they will be at Keesler through May 15.

All applicants will be notified if they are selected or non-selected no later than Feb. 15.

The course will be held evenings at the MGCCC Jeff Davis Campus. For more information go to www.mgccc.edu.

Black History Month

Black History Month activities organized by Keesler's African American Heritage committee include:

Soul food sampling, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Feb. 7 at the youth center.

A three-on-three basketball tournament, 8:30 a.m. Feb. 16 at the Blake Fitness Center.

The ninth annual bowling tournament, noon Feb. 21 at Gaudé Lanes.

A gospel concert, 6-8 p.m. Feb. 23 at the Triangle Chapel.

AAAC Black History luncheon, 11 a.m. Feb. 28 at the Roberts Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Facility.

Gas line repairs

CSC, in conjunction with The Green-Simmons Company, is currently repairing the natural gas lines throughout Keesler. The project began Jan. 14 and is scheduled to conclude Dec. 10.

During the course of the project, each building with gas will experience an interruption in their service. The interruption should not last more than two hours. As the project progresses, CSC will be contacting each building manager to schedule the gas interruptions and work as best they can around the building occupants' schedules.

There will be contractors on the base either trenching along the roads to install the new gas lines or boring along and under the roads. The following are the dates and areas the contractors will be working:

Today through Saturday — Vicinity of 1st St, G St., Meadows Dr., E St. and General Chappie James Ave. in Buildings 4330, 4331, 4332,

4309, 2901 and 2902.

Monday through Feb. 9 — Vicinity of Triangle in Buildings 7510, 7504, 7331, 7333, 7334, 7301, 7316, 7318, 7315 and 7310.

Feb. 11-19 — Vicinity of Triangle in Buildings 6901, 6902, 6903, 6918 and 6905.

USM applications

The University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast campus is now accepting applications for the Summer 2013 and Fall 2013 semesters. Stop by the USM office in Room 219 of the Sablich Center Mondays through Thursdays to find out what programs are offered by USM.

Keesler Airman's Attic

The Keesler Airman's Attic provides free donated items to enlisted members of any branch, E-5 and below. 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.

KEESLER EVENTS CALENDAR

Today

1 p.m. — Ten steps to a federal job class at the airman and family readiness center.

3:30 p.m. — Airman on the move class at the airman and family readiness center.

5 p.m. — Family ceramic night at the arts and crafts center.

— Youth wildlife poster contest entries due at outdoor recreation.

— Retreat ceremony at the flagpole in front of 81st Training Wing headquarters.

Saturday

4 p.m. — Give parents a break night at the youth center and child development center.

— Parents' night out at the youth center.

Sunday

9 a.m. — Super Bowl scramble at the Bay Breeze Golf Course.

4 p.m. — Super bowling party at Gaudé lanes.

— Super Bowl party at the Bay Breeze Event Center Collocated Club.

Monday

9 a.m. — Deployment briefing at the airman and family readiness center.

3:30 p.m. — 81st Training Wing enlisted promotion ceremony at the Bay Breeze Event Center.

Wednesday

8 a.m. — Newcomers Orientation at the airman and family readiness center.

10:30 a.m. — Art for Wee at the arts and crafts center.

3 p.m. — USA Jobs federal job search class at the airman and family readiness center.

5:30 p.m. — Make it "App'n" at your library at the McBride Library.

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

Feb. 7

4 p.m. — Children's story time at the McBride Library.

5 p.m. — Family dinner and craft night at the Bay Breeze Collocated Club.

6 p.m. — Party play date at the arts and crafts center.

Feb. 8

10 a.m. — VA jobs (Medical Personal Title 38) class at the airman and family readiness center.

6:30 p.m. — Mardi Gras Mambo at the youth center.

Feb. 9

1 p.m. — Family time at the arts and crafts center.

Feb. 13

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

4 p.m. — Children's story time at the McBride Library.

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

6 p.m. — Airman leadership school graduation at the Bay Breeze Event Center.

Dental Health Month events

By Steve Pivnick

81st MDG Public Affairs

The 81st Dental Squadron is planning several activities during February for National Children's Dental Health Month.

Feb. 6

8:30-11 a.m. — Children from the child development center visit the clinic.

Feb. 8

8:15-9 a.m. — Clinic staff members visit Pecan Park Elementary School, Ocean Springs.

10-11 a.m. — Clinic staff members visit Oak Park Elementary School, Ocean Springs.

Feb. 13

7-11 a.m. — Dental screenings, treatments and education are available to

dependents of active duty and retired members ages 3-12 during the annual "Give Kids A Smile Day."

Feb. 14

4 p.m. — Dental staff members offer story time at the McBride Library.

Feb. 19

9 a.m. — The clinic staff visits Good Shepherd Pre-K on Pass Road.

Feb. 21

4 p.m. — Dental staff members offer story time at the McBride Library.

Registered dental hygienist Tech. Sgt. Caroline Bunce said the staff will provide brushing and flossing demonstrations and talk to the children about the importance of good nutrition and regular dental visits.

Keesler medic on Warrior Games selection team

By Steve Pivnick

81st Medical Group Public Affairs

Maj. (Dr.) James Bales is passionate about the Air Force Warrior Games and the participating athletes.

Bales, an orthopedic surgeon with the 81st Surgical Operations Squadron, served as head coach for the Air Force 2012 Warrior Games team during the competition held April 30-May 5 in Colorado Springs, Colo.

A 2001 Air Force Academy graduate, Bales arrived at Keesler in November 2012 from Peterson Air Force Base, Colo.

He almost naturally became a triathlete.

"I was a collegiate swimmer at the academy and have participated in many triathlons. In fact, I have a professional license in the sport. While I was in medical school and residency, I commuted 20 miles every day, either by cycling or running," Bales said.

Bales spent the past two years at Peterson participating in the Air Force World Class Athlete Program. The WCAP provides active duty, National Guard and Reserve Air Force personnel the opportunity to train and compete at national and international sports competitions with the ultimate goal of selection to the U.S. Olympic Team.



Photo by Steve Pivnick

Maj. (Dr.) James Bales, 81st Surgical Operations Squadron, checks Senior Airman Joshua Hoover's post-operative progress. Bales is a returning coach for the 2013 Warrior Games May 11-17 in Colorado Springs, Colo. Hoover is an 81st Training Group command post member.

It was during this time Bales learned about the Warrior Games, which started in 2010. The games are designed to introduce ill, injured or wounded service members to Paralympics sports. The Air Force team is composed of 40 active-duty and reserve Airmen from across the country who still wish to represent the Air Force. Their injuries range from post-traumatic stress disorder to quadriplegia.

"There are about 6,000 Air Force wounded warriors and the Warrior Games are open to all of them," Bales explained.

An Air Force Wounded Warrior is any Airman who

has an injury or illness that may require long-term care or a medical or physical evaluation board to determine fitness for duty.

"The 40-member team competes in seven Olympic-style sports: shooting, archery, wheelchair basketball, sitting volleyball, swimming, cycling and track and field," he said.

Bales served as the upright-cycling coach during the 2011 games.

"Following the 2011 games, the Air Force Warrior Games staff came to me and asked me to be the head coach for the 2012 games. My triathlon experience was also a factor.

I was honored to accept the post, especially since it combines my passions of medicine, coaching and athletics. I was able to blend my experience and areas of expertise to help service members," he said.

Bales returned to Colorado Springs this week for the week-long selection camp.

"I'll look at the athletes as head coach and classify them based on the respective Warrior Games categories they qualify for. For instance, there are different amputee categories established by the type of amputation. Service members with other types of injuries such as spinal cord, traumatic brain injury and PTSD also participate in the games.

"Many athletes are multi-talented and enjoy all the sports, so I rely on my assistant coaches to help me decide which event the respective athlete can be of most benefit to the team. It's like a chess game as we determine where to place them," Bales said.

Initially, the athletes are brought to San Antonio for multiple adaptive sports programs to give them experience in the different sports. Then, over three separate one-week blocks, the potential team members are involved in steps leading to and participation in the actual competition.

Bales said, "The selection

camp is being held Jan. 27 through Feb. 1 and all interested athletes attend and participate. The training camp, April 14-20, is an intense sport-specific training camp, for the 40-member Air Force Warrior team. Coaches are engaged with the athletes from January until mid-May while they're back at home to see how they are doing with their training plans. The final week is the actual week-long competition, the Olympic-style event held at the U.S. Olympic Training Center and Air Force Academy, both in Colorado Springs."

The 2013 event is May 11-17.

"We are proud to host the Warrior Games at the U.S. Olympic Training Center and the Air Force Academy," said Charlie Huebner, USOC Chief of Paralympics. "Paralympic sport has a tremendously positive impact on individuals with physical disabilities, and the Warrior Games allow us to salute these fine young men and women."

More than 200 wounded, ill and injured service members and veterans are expected to participate in 2013. They will comprise five U.S. teams representing the Army, Marine Corps, Navy/Coast Guard, Air Force and Special Operations, as well as one international team from the United Kingdom.

Just how important are baby teeth anyway?

By Capt. (Dr.) Angela Cook

81st Dental Squadron

Baby teeth, called primary teeth by dentists, serve many important purposes for children. Primary teeth must be properly cared for so they can stay in place until they are lost naturally. Primary teeth help children with proper chewing and speech development and help the permanent teeth by saving space for them.

The most prevalent infectious diseases in children are cavities, or dental carries, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Dental caries can form in children as young as 14 or 15 months. Thankfully, cavities can be prevented as long as parents start taking care of their children's teeth as soon as they first appear.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry both agree that one of the most important parts of infant oral hygiene is the first dental visit because it helps establish what the dental community calls a dental home. A first trip to the dentist is typically a very short appointment that should be made after a baby's first tooth erupts at about six months old, and no later than age 1. At this time, a pediatric or general dentist will discuss the child's treatment needs and risk factors for cavities, as well as nutrition and oral hygiene. By age 2, a child should visit the dentist every six months.

A dentist or dental hygienist can demonstrate proper brushing technique. Hold the brush at a 45-degree angle with the bristle tips pointing toward the gums and use light pressure

against the tooth with circular brushing motions. Teeth should be brushed after breakfast and before bed with a soft-bristled, child-specific toothbrush. As a child develops the ability to spit, usually around age 3, they may start using a pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste.

As a child gets older, it is still important for parents to supervise and follow up after he or she has brushed. Until the child can successfully tie his or her own shoes, his or her manual dexterity isn't developed enough to handle tooth brushing and ensure clean teeth.

A common, but avoidable, mistake is putting infants or children to bed with a bottle containing something other than water. Giving children bottles of juice, soda or milk before bed is discouraged

because this can cause baby-bottle tooth decay. As the child nurses through the night, these drinks bathe teeth in sugar that isn't easily cleared away by saliva. This causes a perfect environment in the mouth for bacteria to cause cavities. Cavities in children can be painful and, without dental treatment, can become infections which may affect the developing permanent teeth and possibly become life threatening.

Because baby teeth serve a number of functions in a child's growth and development, it is important that they be protected. Proper oral hygiene begins at home before the first dental visit. With an increased understanding of dental needs and access to proper dental care, parents can help their children have strong, healthy teeth for a lifetime.

Safety office issues Mardi Gras safety tips

By the 81st Training Wing Safety Office

Mardi Gras is considered the Gulf Coast's largest free outdoor party. Here are a few tips and suggestions to make the Mardi Gras season safe and enjoyable;

- Obey all no parking zones, illegally parked vehicles will be towed. Officials suggest arriving early to find parking close to the parade route.

- Do not carry open glass or metal containers in public.

- Be cooperative with all law enforcement officials.

- Try not to attend alone — there is safety in numbers.

- Do not leave children, elderly

or intoxicated people alone.

- Maintain a close watch over your children.

- Watch out for any suspicious activity including pickpocketing or purse snatching.

- Do not wear expensive jewelry.
- Do not stand between a tractor and the float.

- Do not press close to floats.

- Do not push others while trying to retrieve beads, coins and other Mardi Gras throws.

- Do not harass float members or parade viewers in any way.

- Take your time while departing the parades from parking lots.

- Do not drink and drive.



Photo by Kemberly Groue

The Keesler Honor Guard and Airmen carrying the 50 state flags lead the D'Iberville, Miss., Mardi Gras parade Feb. 19, 2012. Leadership from the 81st Training Wing also participated in the festivities.



Dameka McClendon, Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., drives the ball around Takela Mister, Keesler, during a women's varsity basketball game Saturday at the Blake Fitness Center. Keesler defeated Eglin, 85-42.

Women's varsity basketball



Sarah Newbauer, Keesler, takes a shot from inside the three-point line, as Shanika Ezell and Dameka McClendon, Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., attempt to block the shot.

Photos by Kemberly Groue