

Pacific Crossings

September 2009

The Official Newsletter of the 624th Regional Support Group



Welcome back
48th APS "Port Dawgs"
home from Iraq

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Letter to Airmen: Teamwork

*By Michael B. Donley
Secretary of the Air Force*

Earlier this year General Schwartz and I had the privilege of presenting the Air Force Cross, the Air Force's highest distinction of valor in combat, to Staff Sergeant Zachary Rhyner for his efforts on April 6, 2008 in Afghanistan. Family, friends and comrades gathered to honor the extraordinary heroism of Sergeant Rhyner and his Joint teammates -- and to be reminded of the remarkable tenacity of the American warrior.

Like all of America's Airmen, Sergeant Rhyner's story is one of teamwork -- teamwork that began well before combat started.

As Sergeant Rhyner and his Army teammates fought their long and grueling battle, they were not alone!

Contributions came from many corners and Services. Acquisition professionals and industry partners ensured that the team deployed with reliable and effective equipment.

Veterans of recent expeditionary operations ensured that the team's tactics, techniques and procedures were first-rate by passing on hard-won knowledge. Finally, combat power from the skies above helped secure the team's position by multiplying their firepower.

This remarkable experience reminds us that teamwork starts with YOU.

By joining the Air Force, you have joined a cause greater than yourself -- one where success comes from collective efforts.

Daily, you build on a rich legacy of Americans who pooled their talent to change the world -- from launching American military aviation with the Wright Flyer ... to catapulting the Project Mercury astronauts into space ... to being a critical component of the Joint cyber team.

And, while domains of air, space and cyberspace continually evolve, our heritage demonstrates that teamwork is the linchpin of success.

We have added Sergeant Rhyner to a long list of distinguished Airmen -- rightfully so, as the actions of his Joint team reflect the finest traditions of American warriors in battle. In the process, we are reminded that all Air Force stories -- including your own -- begin with Airmen who commit to working together to serve our Nation. Thank you for all that you do for our continued success as a Total Force team.

Pacific Crossings

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Content is edited and prepared by the 624th Regional Support Group Public Affairs Office, 290 Vickers Avenue, Building 1050, Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii 96853. All photographs are U.S. Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated.

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Pacific Crossings is a monthly newsletter published online at www.4af.afrc.af.mil/units/624rsg. Submissions may be sent to 624RSG.PA@hickam.af.mil. Submission deadline is Friday two weeks prior to the next Hickam UTA weekend. All submissions are subject to editing and acceptance of any material does not guarantee publication. Public Affairs can be reached at (808) 449-7232 or DSN [315] 449-7232

Action Line

The Action line is your direct line to the 624th Regional Support Group Commander. If you have worked through normal channels and are not satisfied with the answer, the Action Line is your opportunity to ask questions or make suggestions about the subjects of concern to the 624th RSG community.

You may contact the action line at 624RSG.PA@Hickam.af.mil.

Please include your name and phone number in case additional information is required. Action lines of general interest will be published in Pacific Crossings while others will be answered by phone.

On the Cover

Master Sgt. Randall Quindica savors the moment with his wife, Ponciana, after seeing her for the first time since deploying to Iraq in May. Sergeant Quindica and 14 of his fellow aerial porters from the 48th Aerial Port Squadron arrived at Honolulu airport September 8 following a four-month deployment to Joint Base Balad.

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(Photo by Master Sgt. Janet Hudson)

Welcome back



48th APS deployers returning home

Fifteen aerial porters from the 48th Aerial Port Squadron, Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, arrived at Honolulu International Airport Sept. 8 following a four-month deployment to Joint Base Balad, Iraq. The rest of their team of 25 Airmen are scheduled to return later this month.

The team was deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom to the 332nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron handling baggage pallets, general cargo, special handling cargo, rolling stock and aerospace ground equipment.

(Top) Returning deployers proudly display the Hawaii State flag they carried with them on their tour of duty in Iraq. (Photo by Master Sgt. Janet Hudson)
(Above) Tech. Sgt. Louis McCabe is interviewed by KITV news about his recent deployment. This was his fifth and final deployment. He has served in Vietnam and every major conflict since then except for Bosnia. (Photo by Capt. Christy Stravolo)

(Left) Senior Airman Bree Davis reunites with boyfriend. (Photo by Master Sgt. Janet Hudson)



CE Team conducts a "rock drill" where they plan their entry into a village and how to set up for a dismounted patrol. (Courtesy photo)

Civil engineers train at Ft. McCoy on way to AOR

*By Lt. Col. Rich Parkinson
624th Civil Engineer Squadron
Commander*

We graduated from Combat Skills Training! The final five days were spent riding in convoys, doing a dismounted patrol in a village where the convoy commander met with the town mayor to discuss projects and then base defense.

We got pretty good at hooking up a damaged vehicle and towing it out of the kill zone, sticking one another with IVs, and eating MREs in little 10-minute breaks. Twenty eight of class left the next day leaving us with our team of 56 headed to Bagram and 6 firefighters headed to Qatar. After 21 days straight of training, most of the guys and gals headed out to Minneapolis, Chicago, Detroit, and Milwaukee for

some R&R - I'm staying at Ft McCoy worrying that someone will get hurt! We did have a couple of guys (MSgt Gabriel and Sgt Balignasay) head home for some pressing family issues and we're praying they are resolved quickly.

Our next event is a flight from Volk ANG base, about 20 miles from Ft McCoy. I should find out tomorrow the "when" portion of our travel. We'll then head for Kyrgyzstan for some additional gear and then on into Afghanistan in time for some post election issues and the rainy season.

Colonel Parkinson, now the commander of an Expeditionary Prime BEEF Squadron in Afghanistan, reports frequently on the CE team's progress. Read more at <http://www.4af.afrc.af.mil/units/624rsg/rsgblog.asp>



Tech. Sgt. Bussey searching for a sniper and providing security for the convoy. (Courtesy photo)



624th RSG children deploy to Hele On

Having your mom or dad deploy can be a difficult thing for a child to understand. To help them, Team Hickam holds its annual kids deployment Operation Hele On, a mock deployment whose name means ‘to move’ in Hawaiian.

This year Roland Belong, son of Senior Master Sgt. Rolando Belong, 624th Civil Engineer Squadron, was processing through a deployment line and learning drill and ceremony while his father was on his way to Afghanistan.

During the all-day event, Roland and other junior warriors watched K-9 demonstrations, ate MREs, toured a C-17 Globemaster III and more.

“This program was a fun and interactive way for the children to get a glimpse into a day in the life of what their parents are doing,” said Master Sgt. Janet Hudson, 624th RSG. “Operation Hele On is important because it helps the children deal with the difficult time of a deployment if they have a better understanding of it.”

(Top) Roland Belong, son of Senior Master Sgt. Rolando Belong, 624th Civil Engineer Squadron, handles a demonstration model of a rocket propelled grenade launcher.

(Left) Tech. Sgt. Suzarah Velasco, 624th Regional Support Group Airman & Family Readiness, applies moulage or wound makeup to Roland.

(Photos by Master Sgt. Janet Hudson)



Never Forget

By Capt. Kathleen Izon
48th Aerial Port Squadron

Now that the U.S. service members have withdrawn from Iraqi cities, there has been an influx of personnel and equipment coming here to continue the mission.

At Joint Base Balad the 332d Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron, Deployment & Distribution Flight first time deployers share their expectations



Senior Airman Christopher Maeda

and experiences. Three airman from the 48 APS, Hickam AFB, Hawaii, have had different expectations and experiences. SrA Maeda, SrA Laikupu, (these two just promoted from A1C to SrA) and SrA Kanagusuku, all graduates of the STP Program, attended from December 2008 to March 2009, November 2008 to January 2009, March to June 2007, respectively, share their experiences.

SrA Christopher Maeda, a graduate of Pearl City High School had his expectations for this deployment.

Assigned to the Passenger terminal as dispatcher, his daily routine included tracking the line schedule, communicating with the Air Terminal Operations Center and passenger reps for the aircraft arrivals and departures. He also handled counter duties, assisting passengers with Space-R sign up for various locations throughout Iraq as well as outside the Area of Responsibility.

"Coming to this deployment I was expecting the weather to be really hot. I was told it was going to be a little dusty but didn't expect the

dust to be everywhere. The living area is way better than I thought. I expected it to be run down building or at worst a tent! Didn't expect it to be nice with

bunk beds. I thought the workload was gonna be really busy." The

workload at the Passenger Terminal cargo up and down and depends on the rotation of the units, rest and recuperation schedule, and the large unit moves.

SrA Isaiah Laikupu, a graduate of Waianae High

School, had a different perspective. Prior to leaving Hickam AFB, several of the past deployers conducted briefs on their experiences, and was advised that one should expect to work thirty straight days before getting a day off.

"That claimed to be true, Airman Laikupu noted, Although not as heavy workload as I had expected, there were times that we were really busy, it was hit and miss."

SrA Laikupu, Ramp dispatcher, has gained a lot of experience from this duty noting that he always knew it was a part of the aerial port, but didn't realize how much responsibility it had. "Although not a physically demanding job as it is out on the flight line, at times it proved just as stressful."

"What surprised me about being here in a deployed environment, versus being at home, was the other jobs that were still mission essential in one way or another. For example, we had to pickup mermits daily, three times a day, (hot meals in plastic bins) from the dining facility to feed our personnel in Air Freight [as they could not leave with the mission schedule], as well as water and mail which had to be distributed to the different sections in the aerial port. While in a deployed location one realizes that these things are so important for the mission and bottom line is to take care of the airmen."

For SrA Ryan Kanagusuku, assigned to Ramp, the environment and housing areas took him by surprise.

"Everything looked alike. It felt like every corner I took led me into the same area. The work environment was more intense than back at Hickam AFB, Hawaii. Here we have less people to work each mission here, than back at home station, so

each mission we did was much more full of work. We had to utilize what personnel we had and schedule accordingly."

For these three airmen the common

thread for their best experience and memories were the mission.

SrA Maeda said, "Being able to help the mission and rebuilding efforts of the Armed Forces by trans-



Senior Airman Isaiah Laikupu

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Warrior of the Month



Charles S. Carter

Staff Sergeant

724th Aeromedical Staging Flight
Andersen Air Force Base, Guam

JOB TITLE: Aeromedical Service Craftsman

JOB DESCRIPTION: Assist with the management of the Preventive Individual Medical Readiness Program (PIMR); Screening of deployers to ensure medically ready to deploy. PT leader for the Unit Fitness Program. Tracks medical suspense and profiles

HOMETOWN: Yigo, Guam

FAVORITE THING ABOUT UNIT: "Being in small unit, makes me feel that I have a second family that I can rely on to take care of my wife and kids while I'm away and which my unit has done for me while I go on an AEF tasking and TDYs."

FAVORITE THING ABOUT JOB: "I like knowing the fact that I am part of the first line of defense sending our motivated reservists out to the different AORs, in ensuring that they are medically capable to perform their mission on hand. I also like being able to volunteer to go out and do an AEF tasking and perform the medical skills that I have been taught, it feels pretty good to help out those in need."

LITTLE KNOWN FACT: "I am a 'hard charger' that is willing to take any challenge that is given to me, I am silent but deadly (in a good way). Don't underestimate my shy character as the guy who can't do the job, because I could surprise you when the task is given to me."

SUPERVISOR SAYS: "Charles' quote that best fits his character: "Take one home for the team." Positive attitude, always willing to lend a hand to fellow unit members. Not afraid to volunteer and steps up to challenges that he is given. - Tech. Sgt. Mae Estoy.

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porting troops safely on military aircraft to the

bases in order for them to do their job, is the best experience for me. I would deploy again in order to help my country put an end to any insurgency abroad."

For SrA Kanagusuku, "The connections I've made with people from different bases, from Ohio, Minnesota, Delaware and Florida and meeting our active duty counterparts and working with them has been a great experience. For my best experience it would be the hands on experience as a 2T2 and working the mission. Being a reservist we may not get the same experience like our active duty counterparts. I am more proficient at my job now. With this experience I would be more willing to deploy again."

SrA Laikupu had a memorable experience which brought the mission closer to the heart.

"I was honored to participate in a "HR" (Human Remains) mission. A United States soldier who had just arrived two weeks prior was part of a patrol unit when they were ambushed outside the wire. He died. All his comrades were present during the ceremony, including those who were injured. I remember one on crutches, one with his arm in a sling, and another with his foot bandaged, limping on the flight line.

We all saluted the fallen soldier as he was brought on board, and that is when it hit me. on how this war was real. I was a few feet away from this soldier who risked



Senior Airman Ryan Kanagusuku

his life for all of us. I hope there will not be a need for another ceremony, but that one I will never forget."

Captain Izon wrote this article while she was the commander of the Distribution and Deployment Flight, 332nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. She returned home Sept. 5.



Graduating with honors

Senior Airman Khrysallis Santos dedication and hard work at Airman Leadership School earned her top honors at a graduation ceremony on Aug. 13 held at the Palm Tree Golf Course and Conference Center, Andersen Air Force Base, Guam.

The criteria for winning the John L. Levitow Award is based on overall performance evaluations, academic scores, and peer and staff ratings.

The award is named after John Lee Levitow, an AC-47 gunship loadmaster, who became the lowest ranking Airman ever to receive the Medal of Honor for exceptional heroism during wartime while serving in Vietnam.

(Courtesy photo) (Courtesy photo)

UTA Schedule

Hickam

September 12-13
October 3-4
November 7-8
December 12-13

Andersen

September 19-20
October 24-25
November 21-22
December 19-20



*By Senior Master Sgt. Leony Macapagal
48th Aerial Port Squadron
First Sergeant*

Many times a supervisor has to look closely at the appearance of an Airman to determine if they comply with standards.

Take a moment to look at the front side on an EPR and decide if you want to be the person that "complies" with standards or "exceeds" standards. Supervisor, keep this in mind when you rate someone.

Do not inflate the system because you do not want to be honest with yourself or your Airmen.