

September 2008

Pacific Crossings

The Official Newsletter of the 624th Regional Support Group



Taking the
pulse of the
enlisted
force:

4th AF Command
Chief visits Hickam

See Page 7

Defining the future

New mission, vision shapes 624th RSG

*by Col. John Morris
624th Regional Support Group
Commander*

624th RSG leaders, wingmen and fellow warrior Airmen: Aloha and Hafa Adai, and welcome to another UTA training weekend!

First, I am so glad you are all present, safe and sound. As you know, the US Air Force 101 Critical Days of Summer Safety Campaign ended on Labor Day weekend, and throughout the Air Force, we did experience some accidents, and lost some fellow Airmen. I am just thankful that no one from 624 RSG suffered any bad accidents and that we had no losses. I thank you all for maintaining full safety awareness and practicing solid Operational Risk Management principles.

We have just rewritten our group vision and mission statements and goals, which I would like to elaborate on below.

624th RSG Vision Statement: Provide world-class Air Force Reserve combat support to the US Air Force and our joint partners and help promote peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and throughout the world – An Unrivaled Wingman!

624th RSG Mission Statement: Provide world-class civil engineer, aerial port and medical combat support in the Global War on Terrorism and help promote peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and throughout the world.

Our vision and mission statements reflect our warrior ethos and our responsibility and mission to provide the very best com-

bat ready civil engineer, aerial port and medical support we can to the United States Air Force and our joint partners. These statements also reflect our deployments in support of AEF taskings and our numerous TDYs on a global scale to help promote peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and throughout the world.

We need to be mission ready every day, and in order to achieve this, we have established the following goals:

1. Maintain the highest state of war-time deployment readiness
2. Take care of our Airmen and their families
3. Maintain solid program management oversight
4. Conduct our operations and processes in a safe manner

Together, these vision/mission statements and goals will serve as our compass for what we need to accomplish for the United States of America, the US Air Force and our Reserve Airmen.

I thank all of you each and every day for your patriotism, dedication to mission accomplishment, and love of country. You are true Citizen-Airmen, and the finest group of men and women in the United States Air Force in my opinion. It is an honor to be your commander.

CHARLIE-MIKE!

Pacific Crossings

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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 jennifer.chamberlin@us.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, and others will be answered by phone.

On the Cover
Chief Master Sgt. Patricia Thorton, 4th AF/CCC, meets with Staff Sgt. Maria Tailo, 624th Regional Support Group Personnel, during the August drill weekend. Chief Thornton was here to address her top priorities: fitness, education and keeping up with the changes that are currently affecting the Air Force. Story on page 7.

Photo by
Master Sgt. Daniel Nathaniel

Going up!

Tech. Sgt. Angel Quinquirin, 48th Aerial Port Squadron, demonstrates the proper procedures for raising and lowering a mobile staircase to Senior Airman Isaac Smith, 735th Air Mobility Squadron. This important training is required for aerial porters working in passenger service. The 48th APS and active duty often work and train together on the Hickam flight line in order to move people and cargo in support of operations around the world.

Photo by Master Sgt. Daniel Nathaniel

New Chief of Staff gets down to business

by Staff Sgt. J.G. Buzanowski
Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

On his first day after being sworn in as the Air Force chief of staff, Gen. Norton Schwartz wasted no time in getting his message out to Airmen.

"The key thing we need to do is achieve stability," General Schwartz said. "At the same time, we need to focus on those things that are most important, specifically precision and reliability in everything that we do."

General Schwartz takes over as the 19th Air Force chief of staff at a critical juncture when the service has faced criticism from media, elected officials and the public.

The general said he has confidence in Airmen and has established three particular areas of emphasis that are his immediate goals as the chief of staff:

- Re-establish the Air Force's credibility with its nuclear enterprise
- Provide joint warfighters with as much Air Force capability as possible
- Address acquisition processes.

Air Force requirements to purchase a new tanker and combat search and rescue helicopter "need attention immediately," General Schwartz added.

The general said he will be accessible and approachable to Airmen and "lead from the front." His wife, Suzie, will accompany him on many visits so she can talk with family members and address their concerns as well.

"Suzie and I have been doing this for quite a long time -- she's all in," General Schwartz said. "She cares, and I think she brings great value to our Air Force [and] certainly our joint team as a person who sees things, hears things, perceives things that I might miss. We have always been a team and will continue to be a team."

General Schwartz and his wife enjoy running together as fitness is very important to them both. He's also a reader and recently finished "Ghost Wars" by Steve Coll, a book about how the Taliban came into existence during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

"I also try to stay current and try to be as knowledgeable about aerospace as I can," he said.

The 1973 Air Force Academy graduate spent the last three years as the head of U.S. Transportation Command, and the bulk of his career as a special operations pilot, which gives him a unique perspective as the service chief, a position traditionally held by fighter and bomber pilots.

General Schwartz is a command pilot with more than 4,400 flying hours in a variety of aircraft. He participated as a crewmember in the 1975 airlift evacuation of Saigon, and in 1991 served as chief of staff of the Joint Special Operations Task Force for Northern Iraq in operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.



General Norton Schwartz, Air Force Chief of Staff

General Schwartz sent out a 60-second video introductory message to all Airmen Aug. 12, pledging the Air Force will "keep our promise to our joint teammates and to our families."

General Schwartz said he wants to reestablish faith and credibility in Air Force stewardship and pride in the service.

"We should be proud of what we do for all: for America, for the joint team, for our Air Force and for our Airmen and their families. I will strive to work hard every day and maintain the same high standards as each of you.

"And along the way, we'll have fun, too," he added.

RSG implements family readiness program

The 624th Regional Support Group is proud to add a fully trained specialist to run its family readiness program.

But what is the function of a family readiness specialist?

“I am a liaison between the deployed member and the family back home to make sure that everybody has everything they need – financial needs, any stress management, any child care needs,” said Tech Sgt. Janet Hudson, pictured right.

The Jacksonville, Fla., native realized the importance of the Family Care program when she was activated for duty to Charleston Air Force Base, S.C., During that time, the base’s Family Care squadron sent her mother newsletters to keep her informed. “She really appreciated it,” said Sergeant Hudson. “She also got letters from the commander thanking her for all of her help and support.”

Deployed members and their families are highly encouraged to take advantage of all the various services open to them.

“We are here, we are open and we want to help any way that we can,” said Sergeant Hudson.

To reach Sergeant Hudson call 449-3393 or email her at janet.czipo@hickam.af.mil



Tech. Sgt. Janet Hudson, Family Readiness Specialist

Briefs

Readiness Management Period

Commanders may authorize a Readiness Management Period to satisfy a four-hour minimum requirement. In special cases, a commander may waive the four-hour minimum for an RMP.

Use this authority only in exceptional circumstances and not for the personal convenience of the member. The member must attend the RMP for at least two hours.

Commanders may extend an RMP beyond the normally scheduled four-hour period to meet mission needs.

NOTE: The extension of the RMP beyond the four-hour period does not entitle the member to any additional pay or points.

Keeping vRED up-to-date

Servicemembers are required to keep their Virtual Record of Emergency Data current at all times and to review their vRED at least annually.

Additionally, the member must also review their vRED during in/out-processing, RSG annual mobility folder inspection, and prior to all deployments.

Each command support staff orderly room will outline in writing specific review procedures to ensure in/out-processing and pre-deployment review requirements are met.

The vRED is accessed through the vMPF using the AF Portal at <https://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil>.

New guidance on washing ABUs

Effective immediately, the new Airman Battle Uniform may be laundered in detergent containing optical brighteners.

All other care instructions on the inside label should be adhered to. The initial policy was based on Army research and guidance.

However, in 2007, the Army conducted an extensive field evaluation and determined that uniforms laundered in detergents containing optical brighteners do not pose a threat to the wearer in an operational environment.

After reviewing Army test results, the Air Force reached the same conclusion.

AF leaders discuss new mission statement, way ahead

8/27/2008 - WASHINGTON (AFP) -- Senior Air Force leaders gathered for a strategic summit Aug. 27 at Bolling Air Force Base to discuss the way ahead for the Air Force as a part of the August emphasis on strategic planning.

"The summit allows us to identify issues that need senior leader review and decide on matters affecting the entire Air Force," Acting Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley said.

The group -- including Mr. Donley, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz, assistant secretaries, major command commanders and Headquarters Air Force staff -- discussed near-term issues facing the Air Force. Decisions coming out of the summit include a new mission statement for the Air Force.

The new mission statement returns the Air Force to familiar ground. "The mission of the United States Air Force is to fly, fight and win...in air, space and cyberspace."

While it borrows from the previous statement, this one is shorter, "simple and easy to understand," General Schwartz said. "This is who we are. It's what motivates us and drives us to serve."

The group also decided to halt the initiative to reorganize maintenance functions into operations groups.

Previous global wing reorganization plans included aligning fighter and combat search and rescue maintenance units with their flying squadrons, and forming materiel groups that would encompass maintenance, logistics and aerial port squadrons. Today's decision means maintenance groups will remain as is.

"This will reduce organizational turmoil as we focus on winning today's fight," General Schwartz said. He went on to say the goal is mission effective combat support and Airmen are accomplishing just that.

"Independent maintenance groups produce professionals with the highest levels of maintenance and logistics competency," he said, "and that translates to mission effectiveness."



Acting Secretary of the Air Force Michael B. Donley and Chief of Staff Gen. Norton A. Schwartz discuss conference items Aug. 27, during a strategic summit at Bolling Air Force Base, D.C. (U.S. Air Force photo/Andy Morataya)

Leaders reached consensus that the focus should be on fixing problems Airmen are having with the current uniforms before moving on to new uniforms. The staff will field near-term solutions to correct issues with the Airman Battle Uniform, All Purpose Environmental Clothing System jacket, and physical training gear.

"We will consider all other uniform initiatives after we fix the issues we have now with the uniforms we work in every day," General Schwartz said.

While the strategic summit yielded these decisions, senior leaders focused their discussion on winning today's fight and addressing the priorities laid out by the acting secretary and the chief in past weeks.

"The priorities -- reinvigorating the nuclear enterprise, prevailing in the Global War on Terror, strengthening joint warfighting capabilities, focusing on people and achieving acquisition excellence -- are advanced by the decisions reached today," Mr. Donley said.

Senior leaders received an update on nuclear enterprise matters at the event. An additional nuclear summit will be held in mid-September to discuss the nuclear enterprise roadmap.

That discussion will include more dialogue on the Air Force's cyber mission.

"Cyber operations remain a critical and growing mission area," Mr. Donley said. "We will continue to develop our cyber capabilities while examining various organizational options."

Leaders also heard progress reports on other mid-term agenda items including Unmanned Aircraft Systems manning initiatives, personnel end strength and Common Battlefield Airman Training.

By the end of the year, the service expects to complete an unmanned aircraft system roadmap and a review of the acquisition enterprise. Senior leaders will meet for Corona Fall in October, where they expect to make more decisions on key subjects.

Underlying all of these issues, said Mr. Donley, is how to ensure the right mix of Airmen remain in uniform. Previous force-shaping initiatives planned for the active-duty force to eventually decrease to 316,000, but in June Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said the service had been cut too deeply and called for the decrease in Air Force end-strength to stop at 330,000 people.

4th AF CCC visits Hickam

Chief Master Sgt. Patricia Thornton, 4th Air Force command chief, asks Senior Airman Joel Moniz, 624th Civil Engineer Squadron, fresh from the Air National Guard, his observations about life in the Air Force Reserve versus its sibling Air Reserve Component.

Nothing too different that he couldn't handle, Airman Moniz said.

While visting Hickam-based units, Chief Thornton addressed enlisted concerns on a range of topics including Air Expeditionary Force deployment lengths, the G.I. Bill, and the 1,095 man day tour waivers.

One issue of particular interest to the command chief is the the value of education. She encourages members to get their Community College of the Air Force degree, not only for themselves "but to serve as an example for the younger Airmen."

"You have no idea when that degree will come in handy. It's free and you get paid to do it," Chief Thornton said.

Photo by Master Sgt. Daniel Nathaniel



Group deputy CC briefs newcomers

Lt. Col. Deric Wong, 624th Regional Support Group deputy commander, briefs newcomers to the Group on the importance of the Lautenberg Amendment. The amendment prevents anyone convicted of a domestic violence offense or under a restraining order for domestic abuse from use or possession of a fire rm. This affects the Armed Forces since all members may be required at some point to use and handle weapons. The next newcomers briefing will be held during the October UTA.

Photo by Master Sgt. Daniel Nathaniel



Aloha from the desert

48th Aerial Port Squadron members Tech. Sgt. Louis McCabe, Senior Airman Devin Caringer, Staff Sgt. William McNeil, Airman 1st Class Dennis Gaxiola, Tech. Sgt. Sean Concepcion and Senior Airman Derek Dumlao show their state pride while deployed with the 332nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron at Balad Air Base, Iraq. The Hawaii team is standing on a Buffalo 6x6 Mine-Protected Clearance Vehicle. The MPCV is the most advanced mine resistant vehicle in the world. It can be configured for multiple missions and is specifically designed to be repaired in the field. This one has been modified with a "fence" style of additional armor to prevent shrapnel from hitting the vehicle.

Courtesy photo from 48th APS

UTA Schedule

Hickam

October 4-5
November 3-4
December 6-7
January 10-11

Andersen

October 18-19
November 17-18
December 14-15
January 24-25



*By Master Sgt. Leony Macapagal
624th Civil Engineer Squadron
First Sergeant*

Air Force members may not participate in demonstrations when they are on duty, in a foreign country, in uniform, involved in activities that breach law and order, or when violence is likely.