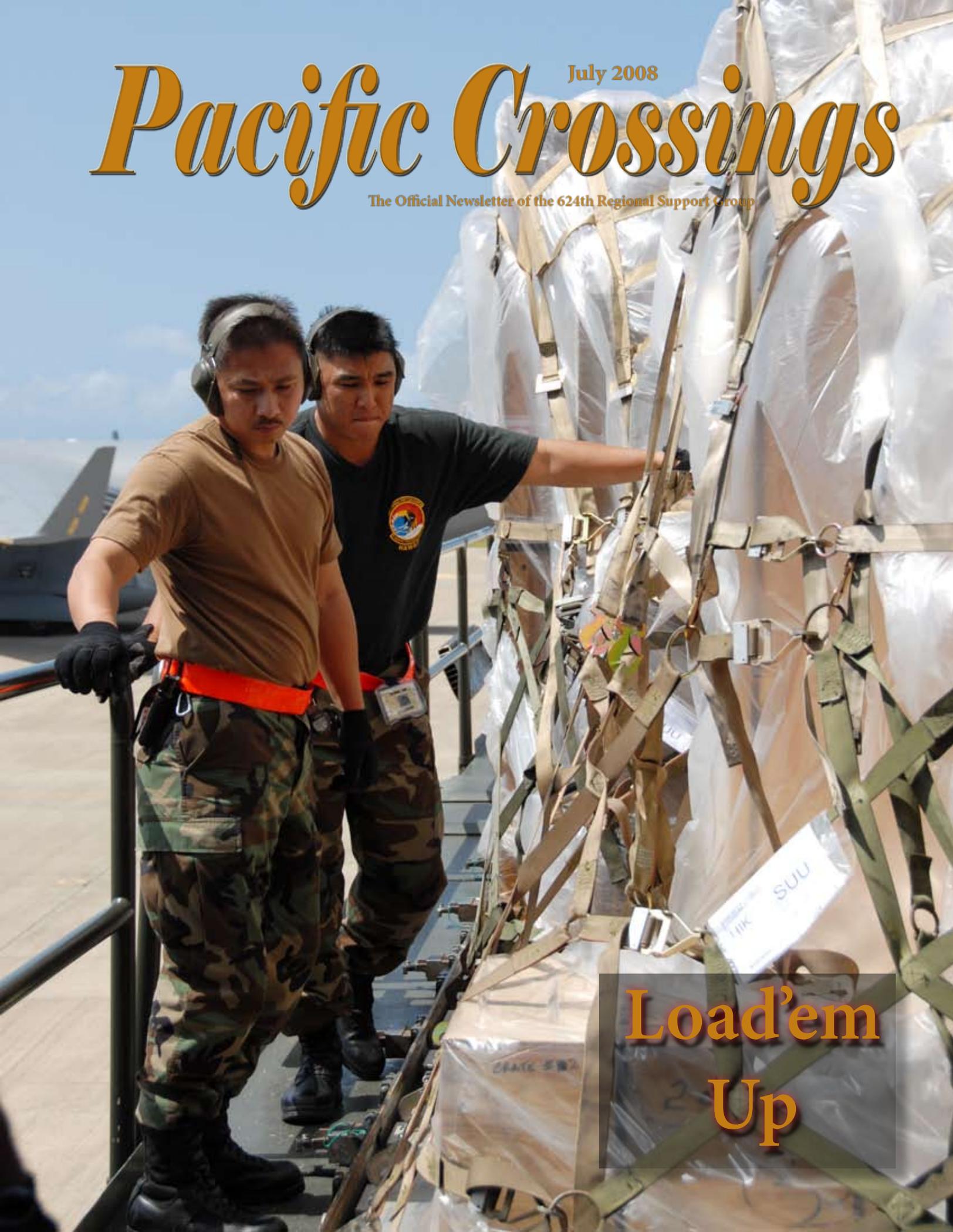


Pacific Crossings

July 2008

The Official Newsletter of the 624th Regional Support Group



**Load'em
Up**

Refocusing our efforts



Going back to fundamentals

By Col. John Morris
624th Regional Support Group
Commander

Since assuming command of the 624th Regional Support Group last year, I never cease to be amazed and proud of our Airmen and their accomplishments.

It is incredible how much the service asks of us in order to meet the goal of being 'Mission Ready Every Day.'

However, in the effort to accomplish everything we sometimes risk missing the forest for the trees.

Recent changes in Air Force senior leadership have led me to think hard about the need for us to step back and refocus on our operations and processes, especially with an emphasis towards safety and security.

The following are the fundamental concepts we need to concentrate on. I list these in no particular order. They are all equally important; all tie-in together and all support each other.

Wartime Deployments and Readiness: I don't think I really need to remind everyone how important this is. I know that many of you in the 624th RSG have proudly deployed in support of operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom, and Noble Eagle.

I am sure when you were in the field you fully understood our need to keep up with chem warfare and weapons skills training or fit to fight assessments.

Taking Care of Our Airmen and Families: We must make sure that our

Airmen are ready not only in their jobs but as people. Taking caring of the home front is essential to taking the fight to the battlefield.

Solid Program Management and Oversight: It's not very exciting but very necessary. For example, if we do not ensure our Airmen have valid security clearances for the level of work they need to accomplish, then they are not mission ready. Ensuring oversight over our programs helps ensure that our members are well cared for, well trained and are ready to support the mission.

Conducting operations and processes in a safe and secure manner: Keeping our situational awareness at all times, whether to avoid accidents or enemy action, is vital. I don't want anyone to regret actions that could have been easily avoided had they taken their OPSEC, COMSEC or Safety briefing to heart. Don't let your loved ones regret it either.

I can't over emphasize Operational Risk Management. It's essential that we comply with all Technical Orders and appropriate checklists. We will not take short cuts when it comes to safety no matter how long it takes!

Once again I want to let you all know what a fantastic job each and every one of you in the 624th RSG are doing every time you put on the uniform. I am proud to serve with you all.

Keep it up, keep it safe and continue the mission!

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

Staff Sergeant Samuel Bagay and Senior Airman Oliver Corpuz, 48th Aerial Port Squadron, prepare to load cargo onto an aircraft.

Photo by
Staff Sgt. Jennie Chamberlin

Prep Work

Staff Sgt. Godfrey Manera, 48th Aerial Port Squadron, tightens pallet straps as he helps to finish packing a pallet of cargo.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Jennie Chamberlin



Needle Point

Tech. Sgt. David Tateyama, 624th Aeromedical Squadron, contemplates his approach to sticking a needle into a simulated arm.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Jennie Chamberlin



Pushing it

Senior Airman Noel Moniz, 624th Civil Engineer Squadron, runs like the wind during the June drill weekend's physical training session.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Chris Robinson



The 101 Critical Days of Summer: Heat Injuries



*624th Regional Support Group
Safety Office*

Just because you are not serving out in the desert doesn't mean that injuries due to heat overexposure can't effect you.

Heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, and heat rash are possible when you become overexerted in the heat. Put your health first so you can enjoy the summer.

To prevent fatal injuries, know the signs of heat injuries and the steps to take to minimize risk.



Beating the Heat - Watching for the signs

Heat Cramps: Person experiences heavy sweating; painful spasms usually in the leg or abdomen muscles. **Treatment:** Provide cool water, shade, and monitor.

Heat Exhaustion: Person experiences nausea, dizziness, weakness, headache, pale and moist skin, heavy perspiration, normal or low body temperature, weak pulse, dilated pupils, disorientation, fainting spells. **Treatment:** Provide water, shade, elevate feet and seek immediate medical attention.

Heat Stroke: Person experiences headache, dizziness, confusion, rapid/strong pulse, and hot, dry skin, high body temperature of 106 or higher possibly leading to vascular collapse, coma, and death. **Treatment:** Move to a cool shaded area, soak victim with water and fan, elevate feet and seek immediate medical attention. This is a medical emergency.



New SecAF

6/23/2008 - WASHINGTON (AFPN) -- Michael B. Donley is the new acting secretary of the Air Force, succeeding Michael Wynne, who held the position since November 2005.

Mr. Donley was previously the administration and management director for the Secretary of Defense, a position sometimes referred to as "mayor" of the Pentagon.

The secretary is responsible for organizing, training, equipping and providing for the welfare of its nearly 323,000 men and women on active duty, 180,000 members of the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve, 160,000 civilians and their families. He oversees an annual budget of approximately \$110 billion and ensures the Air Force can meet its current and future operational requirements.

Mr. Donley has more than 26 years of experience in the national security community, including service in the Senate, White House and the Pentagon. During his career he has been involved in strategy and policy-making at the highest levels and is a recognized expert in national security organization, planning and budgeting.

Briefs

GTC Transition



Citibank will succeed Bank of America Nov. 30 as provider of Air Force government travel card services.

Air Force members and civilian employees don't need to take any action

other than ensuring their mailing address with Bank of America is correct. Citibank will use that information for its card distribution, which starts in mid-August.

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/outprocessing, 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/outprocessing and pre-deployment review requirements are met. An automatic suspense is already established through the vMPF for annual member review.

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

Hele On Here Again

The 15th Airlift Wing will be conducting its annual kids deployment Operation Hele On, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Aug. 15 at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii.

The all-day event is designed to give military children a sense of what their parents go through preparing to deploy.

The event is open to children of active duty, reserve and guard families ages 9-14 years old.

624th Regional Support Group members who would like their child or children to attend need to contact Senior Master Sgt. Corinna Seitz no later than Aug. 1 at (808) 449-3393.

Members who would like to volunteer at the event as an Military Training Instructor or chaperon, need to contact Sergeant Seitz by July 20.

AIRMEN LOOKING OUT FOR AIRMEN

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS

Trouble eating or sleeping
Drastic change in behavior
Withdraws from friends >
Gives away possessions
Makes out a will
Preoccupied with death
Takes unnecessary risks
Had a recent severe loss
Lost interests in personal appearance
Increased use of alcohol or drugs
Loss of interests in hobbies, work, school, etc.

1-800-SUICIDE

Air Force News Agency

WWW.AF.MIL

Preventing Suicide

By Tech. Sgt. Ben Gonzalez
Airman Magazine

The prospect of having to leave her special-needs son when she deploys to Iraq was almost too much to deal with. The mother, an Air Force sergeant and single parent, worried. She didn't know what to do, or where to turn. The stress ate at her.

There were so many things going through her mind she couldn't focus. Plus, she had just moved to a new home and ended a long relationship. Friends and co-workers knew something was wrong — that she was stressing out.

"A friend of mine, who noticed I was going through a tough time, suggested I call and make an appointment with mental health," the cryptology linguist at Fort Meade, Md., said.

"I called my doctor for a referral and that was it," she said. "I definitely needed to talk to someone because I wasn't getting any better on my own."

The sergeant is one of thousands of American servicemembers facing similar problems with anxiety, stress and depression. The stress associated with deployments to fight the war on terrorism can compound existing problems, said Lt. Col. (Dr.) Steven Pflanz, the Air Force Surgeon General senior psychiatry policy analyst.

Defense Department leaders are aware of the problem. In a 2005 department survey of health-related behaviors, 28 percent of Airmen reported "a lot of stress at work, and 16 percent reported a lot of stress in their personal lives," Colonel Pflanz said.

The most frequent stressors for Airmen include relationship issues, legal problems, mental health problems, work situations and financial difficulties. Airmen are more aware of the avenues for dealing with stress open to them.

Deployments are now part of the way the Air Force conducts business. Still, some Airmen may feel the stress of having to ship off to spots around the world to fight the war on terrorism.

"The Air Force is providing continuous integrated support to Airmen and
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their families throughout the deployment lifecycle," Colonel Pflanz said.

Support begins with predeployment briefings. Airmen also get help while deployed. Then there are post-deployment briefings and questionnaires Airmen fill out that tell health care providers of stress factors associated with deployments. Family members can take advantage of medical, spiritual and mental health care and direct unit support during the entire period.

As stress continues to build, some people might opt for suicide as a way out. That's why knowing the signs a person is contemplating suicide is vital.

"A person who seems isolated, talks about dying, gives away prized possessions, has a change in work performance, or calls to say goodbye is showing all the classic signs he or she is considering suicide," said Maj. (Dr.) Matthew Faubion, psychiatry department chair at Wilford Hall Medical Center, Lackland AFB, Texas. The Air Force's suicide prevention program has helped reduce the service's suicide rate by 28 percent since the program began in 1996, Colonel Pflanz said.

The aim of the suicide prevention program is to teach Airmen the skills they need to recognize and intervene with those at risk for suicide or suffering from stress.

Over the last five years, the Air Force has had the lowest average suicide rate of any of the services.

A dozen years ago, the Air Force suicide rate was 13.8 per 100,000. Today, it is about 10 per 100,000, Colonel Pflanz said. The Air Force rate is lower than for a comparable population of American civilians, which is 18.6 per 100,000, when adjusted for age and gender.

And help is just a phone call away. Mental health appointments at military clinics do not require referrals from a primary care manager. Tricare beneficiaries can even make appointments with civilian mental health providers without a referral.

Still, the stigma that seeking mental health help could affect a career persists.

As a matter of fact, 97 percent of Airmen who seek mental health help experience no negative career impact, Colonel Pflanz said. In 90 percent of the cases, the person's unit never knows. Commanders are contacted only when a problem may impact safety or the mission.

Mental health clinics are not the only source of help. Some people seek out chaplains or the base health and wellness center. And the Airman and Family Readiness Center, legal office, services, morale, welfare and recreation, family member programs chiefs, family advocacy outreach manager, health promotion manager or the family support center director also help.

In addition, the Air Force's new frontline supervisors training course is helping increase stress and suicide awareness.

The course helps supervisors "be better at connecting with their Airmen, recognizing when their Airmen are in trouble and knowing how to hook them up with whatever service they need," Colonel Pflanz said. "Good supervisors look out for all their people."

After three months of counseling the sergeant from Fort Meade said, "I learned that having someone to talk to is helpful." Health care providers "know what path to follow to help you realize your problem."

Things are looking up.

The sergeant said providers helped her find a better way to see things and not be so negative or stressed out about things.

"Since I began counseling, I'm more calm, focused and productive," she said.

Colonel Morris's note - Suicide prevention is the responsibility of each and every Airman in the Air Force and the 624th Regional Support Group. Please be aware of the signs, keep in touch with your Airmen and leave no one behind.



Grad Night

Congratulations to Tech. Sgt. Phil Ada, 44th Aerial Port Squadron, for graduating from Non-commissioned Officer Academy May 21, 2008, at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. Sergeant Ada is joined by Senior Master Sgt. Vanessa Smallsbryant, NCOA commandant.

44th APS courtesy photo

UTA Schedule

Hickam

July 12-13
August 2-3
September 6-7
October 4-5

Andersen

July 26-27
August 23-24
September 20-21
October 18-19



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

While in uniform, standing or walking with hands in your pockets is unauthorized.

Hands are only allowed to be placed in your pockets briefly to retrieve or insert a personal item.