

April 2008

Pacific Crossings

The Official Newsletter of the 624th Regional Support Group



**Practice
makes
perfect**



“I didn’t know that!”
and
other things I want
to share with you
before I go

By Ms. Jolene Meyer
624th Regional Support Group
Financial Manager

As I wind down on my time here and prepare for my move to Virginia, I would like share with all some lessons learned during my tenure with the 624th Regional Support Group.

As your budget analyst, I have dealt with a lot of different situations and it always bothered me when I heard the words “I didn’t know that.”

Our world is flooded with information, however there are certain things a member of the Air Force must know and understand or they will run into problems, some with dire consequences.

Here are some stories I would like to share.

When it comes to your Government Travel Card, bottom line is if you can’t claim it on your travel voucher don’t use the card. I have seen some missteps and some mistakes with the use of the GTC.

I’ve seen people use their card for “extend a paycheck” endeavors. What I mean is they will withdraw a couple of hundred dollars from the ATM to get them through a dry spell. They think if they pay the money back quickly no one will be the wiser. Wrong! All ATM transactions on the

GTC card are monitored monthly by your organizational point of contacts and the Group financial manager. Such missteps can lead to a letter of counseling or worse.

I’ve seen people use or attempt to use their cards for inappropriate purchases. The GTC process has built in safe guards that will block purchases from certain vendors. This is designed to keep cardholders honest and protect those that might have accidently presented the wrong card from their wallet. In reviewing past month’s reports, there were several mistakes that require that dreaded visit to the first sergeant’s office to explain what occurred.

One member tried to buy music online about twenty different times. Each time the purchase was blocked and recorded on an incident report. You would think after the first ten times they would have figured out that it wasn’t going to work.

Another member bought airline tickets for themselves and another person. The transaction went through as it was an authorized vender but the problem was twofold. The member wasn’t on orders and members can’t use their card to purchase tickets for another. This member had grabbed the wrong card out of their wallet because he had

FAREWELL continued page 3

Pacific Crossings

This Air Force Reserve newsletter is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military. Contents of Pacific Crossings are not necessarily the official view of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Air Force.

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.

Staff

Col. John Morris
Commander
Lt. Col. Deric Wong
Deputy Commander
Master Sgt. Daniel Nathaniel
Public Affairs, NCOIC
Staff Sgt. Jennie Chamberlin
Public Affairs, Editor

Pacific Crossings is a monthly newsletter published online at www.4af.afrc.af.mil/units/624rsg. Submissions may be sent to Daniel.Nathaniel@hickam.af.mil or Jennifer.Chamberlin@us.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) 448-3652 or DSN [315] 448-3652.

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 rsgactionline@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, and others will be answered by phone.

On the Cover

Tech. Sgt. Rich Kamikawa directs Tech. Sgt. Michael Gameng as he drives a forklift for a cargo rodeo held by the 48th Aerial Port Squadron during the March training weekend.

Photo by
Staff Sgt. Jennie Chamberlin



While it may look tempting, do not, absolutely do not, use your government travel card to make that non duty related purchase.

FAREWELL continued from page 2

two Bank of America accounts and the cards looked similar. That can happen. A good tip is to mark your government card so it stands out. If such a mistake ever does happen, try to get the vendor to reverse the charge if you are still there or at the very least pay the bill immediately and notify your unit.

I've seen a member leave the unit but fail to turn in his card during outprocessing. He then took a trip to Las Vegas and attempted to use the card at every casino from Circus Circus to Tropicana. Luckily, the unit deactivated the card as soon as the member left. The urban legend is that if you are out of the military the government can't come after you for the funds.

Wrong! They can and they will and their reach is broad. Not only will your credit rating be affected but they will eventually track you down.

Some members try to "game the system." They make a payment to get themselves off the overdue payment list. As soon as the payment is made, they turn around and cancel or reverse it. They think that just because they got out of one month's bad boy report that they are in the clear.

Wrong! All payment reversals are reviewed by your unit P.O.C. and the member will probably end up with a letter of reprimand on top of the additional reversal fee charged by the bank. Don't do it. It is a no-win situation.

Members can legally use their cards for ATM cash advances if in a per diem status.

The problems here fall into two categories, too much or too little. People will be unsure of what they are authorized

and take too large of a cash advance, spend the money and then have difficulty paying the money back.

I remember one member who explained to me that they read their orders and the Per Diem block said X. Since Per Diem means per day, they thought they were authorized that much money a day and hence way over spent. News flash! Per Diem does translate from Latin as per day, but in the case of orders that figure is your total entitlement including food, room and incidentals.

If you are unsure of your entitlement, ask your unit before you make that trip to the bank. The second mistake that people make is taking too little and returning to the ATM repeatedly because they only took out \$20 or \$40 dollars. Each time we withdrawal money from an ATM, the bank machine that you are using is charging us a fee AND the charge card company is tacking on their fee of an additional \$5-\$15.

The government is now paying probably \$25 for you to get your \$20. If you do this repeatedly it really adds up and eats your unit's funds. Try to limit your ATM withdrawals. Know how much you are authorized and need then only make limited withdrawals. I know you need to balance this with safety and tour lengths but just being conscious of this can really save some money.

I want to thank each and every one of your for your support and friendship. I have truly enjoyed working here and will miss all of you.

Aloha and Hafa Adai.

Safety

Safe Biking



Add a carrier to the back of your bicycle if you need to carry things.

Stop It - Always Check Brakes Before Riding

Always control your speed by using your brakes. If your bicycle has hand brakes, apply the rear brake slightly before the front brake. Always keep your brakes adjusted. If you cannot stop quickly, adjust your brakes.

Consult your bicycle owner's manual or have a bicycle shop adjust the brakes. When your hand brake levers are fully applied, they should not touch the handlebars. Each brake shoe pad should wear evenly and never be separated more than one eighth inch from the rim.

In wet weather it takes more distance to stop - ride slowly and apply your brakes earlier.

See and Be Seen

Wear clothes that make you more visible. Always wear neon, florescent or other bright colors when riding a bicycle.

Avoid Biking At Night

It's far more dangerous to bicycle at night than during the day. Most bicycles are equipped for daylight use and need to be adapted for nighttime use.

If you must ride at night, you should do the following:

- Ride with reflectors that meet CPSC's requirements. These should be permanently installed on bicycles for daytime use also. If a carrier is added, make sure the rear reflector remains visible.
 - Add the brightest lights you can find to the front and rear of your bicycle.
 - Wear retro-reflective clothing or material – not just white or florescent – especially on your ankles, wrists, back, and helmet.
 - Only ride in areas familiar to you. Brightly lit streets are best.
- Always assume you are not seen by a driver.
Young children should NOT ride at night.

The 624th Regional Support Group Safety Office presents this important information from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission for our Airmen and their families safety.

Protect Your Head - Wear A Helmet

Never ride a bicycle without a helmet. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission recommend that bicyclists wear a helmet that complies with the CPSC standard.

Bicycle helmets can reduce head injuries by 85 percent. Select a helmet that fits snugly and sits flat on the head.

For children, use the extra padding that comes with the helmet to ensure a proper fit. This padding can be removed as the child's head grows.

Assure Bicycle Readiness - Make Sure Your Bicycle is Adjusted Properly

Make sure you can stand over the top tube of your bicycle. Adjust your bicycle to fit you. If not sure see owner's manual.

Before using your bicycle, make sure all parts are secure and working well. The handlebars should be firmly in place and turn easily. Your wheels must be straight and secure.

BIKING continued page 5



BIKING continued from page 2

Stay Alert - Always Keep A Lookout for Obstacles in Your Path

Stay alert at all times. Watch out for potholes, cracks, expansion joints, railroad tracks, wet leaves, drainage grates, or anything that could make you fall.

Before going around any object, scan ahead and behind you for a gap in traffic. Plan your move, signal your intentions and then do what you planned. If you are unsure, or lack the skill to handle an especially rough area, pull off to the right side of the road and walk your bicycle around the rough area.

Be especially careful in wet weather and when there could be ice or frost on your path.

- Cross all railroad tracks at a 90 degree angle and proceed slowly.
- Use special care on bridges.

Go With The Flow - The Safe Way is The RIGHT Way

Ride on the right side in a straight predictable path. Always go single file in the same direction as other vehicles. Riding against traffic puts you where motorists don't expect you. They may not see you, and may pull across your path, or turn into you.

Young children, typically under the age of nine, are not able to identify and adjust to many dangerous traffic situations and therefore should not be allowed to ride in the street unsupervised. Children who are permitted to ride in the street without supervision should have the necessary skills to safely follow the "rules of the road."

Check for Traffic. Always be Aware of The Traffic Around You

Over 70 percent of car-bicycle crashes occur at driveways or other intersections. Before you enter any street or intersection, check for traffic. Always look left-right-left, and walk your bicycle into the street to begin your ride.

If already in the street, always look behind you for a break in traffic, then signal, before going left or right. Watch for left or right turning traffic.

Learn Rules of The Road - Obey Traffic Laws

Bicycles are considered vehicles. Bicyclists must obey the same rules as motorists. Read your state drivers' handbook and learn and follow all the traffic signs, laws and rules for operating a vehicle on the road.

Always signal your moves. Be courteous to pedestrians and other vehicle operators.

Never wear headphones while riding as they impair your ability to hear traffic.

Become familiar with the accommodations that are available for bicyclists in your area, including bicycle lanes, routes and off-road paths. Take advantage of these whenever possible.

Don't Flip Over Your Bicycle - Wheels Should Be Securely Fastened

If your bicycle has quick release wheels, it is your responsibility to make sure they are firmly closed at all times and to use the safety retainer if there is one.

Check your wheels before every ride, after any fall, or after



transporting your bicycle. Read your owner's manual for instructions and follow them. If you are even slightly confused about what "firmly closed" means, talk to your bicycle dealer before you ride your bicycle.

Remember

- Read your bicycle owner's manual thoroughly before operating your bicycle.
- These recommendations are not meant to replace owner's manual instructions.
- For more information on safety and rules of the road, consult your State Department of Motor Vehicles.



Checking the fit

Master Sgt. Diane Marques and Staff Sgt. Wilma Landingin watch as Senior Master Sgt. Greg Boyer checks the seal of Master Sgt. Steve Yim's gas mask for proper fit and placement on his face and head. This is done to ensure the mask will effectively protect the individual from harm. Fit testing was conducted for the Group by the 48th Aerial Port Squadron during the March UTA.

Photo by Master Sgt. Daniel Nathaniel



Graduation Day

Chief Master Sgt. Brian Wong, 624th Regional Support Group command chief, celebrates with Tech. Sgt. Mae Estoy, 724th Aeromedical Staging Flight, upon her graduation from Noncommissioned Officer Academy at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, March 28, 2008. Sergeant Estoy is the first member of the 724th ASTF to attend NCO Academy.

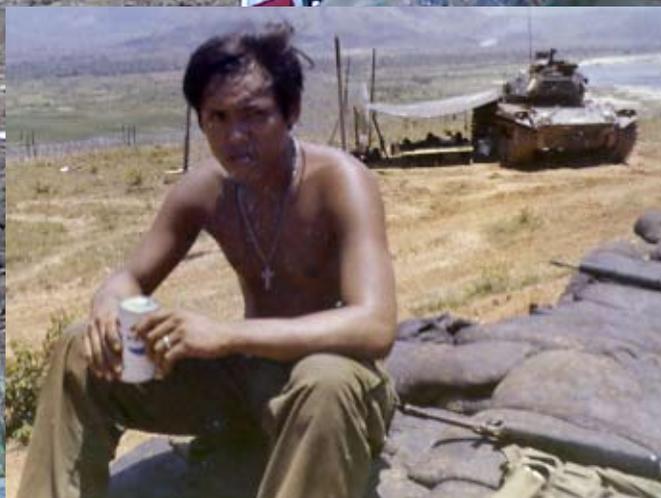
724th ASTF courtesy photo

Happy Trails

Mariano Baliares Jr. joined the Army in July 1970 as a crew chief mechanic, but when he arrived in Vietnam for a one year tour he discovered he had been reclassified as infantry. He rounded out his active duty at Ft. Hood, Texas, and then switched to Army National Guard for ten and a half years as a heavy equipment operator. In 1985 he made the jump to the Air National Guard and in 1988 he made the final leap to the Air Force Reserve and what is now the 624th Civil Engineer Squadron. Here he would rise to the rank of Master Sergeant in the Utility Systems career field. For the retired sergeant the key to his success was to "Take care of the guys below you," he said.

Photos

Right - Balikitan Exercise 2005, Philippines
Below - Basic Training 1970, Ft. Ord, Calif.
Bottom - Vietnam 1971



624th RSG PACAF Winners



SrA Michael Pascua
HQ PACAF Outstanding Airman of the Year



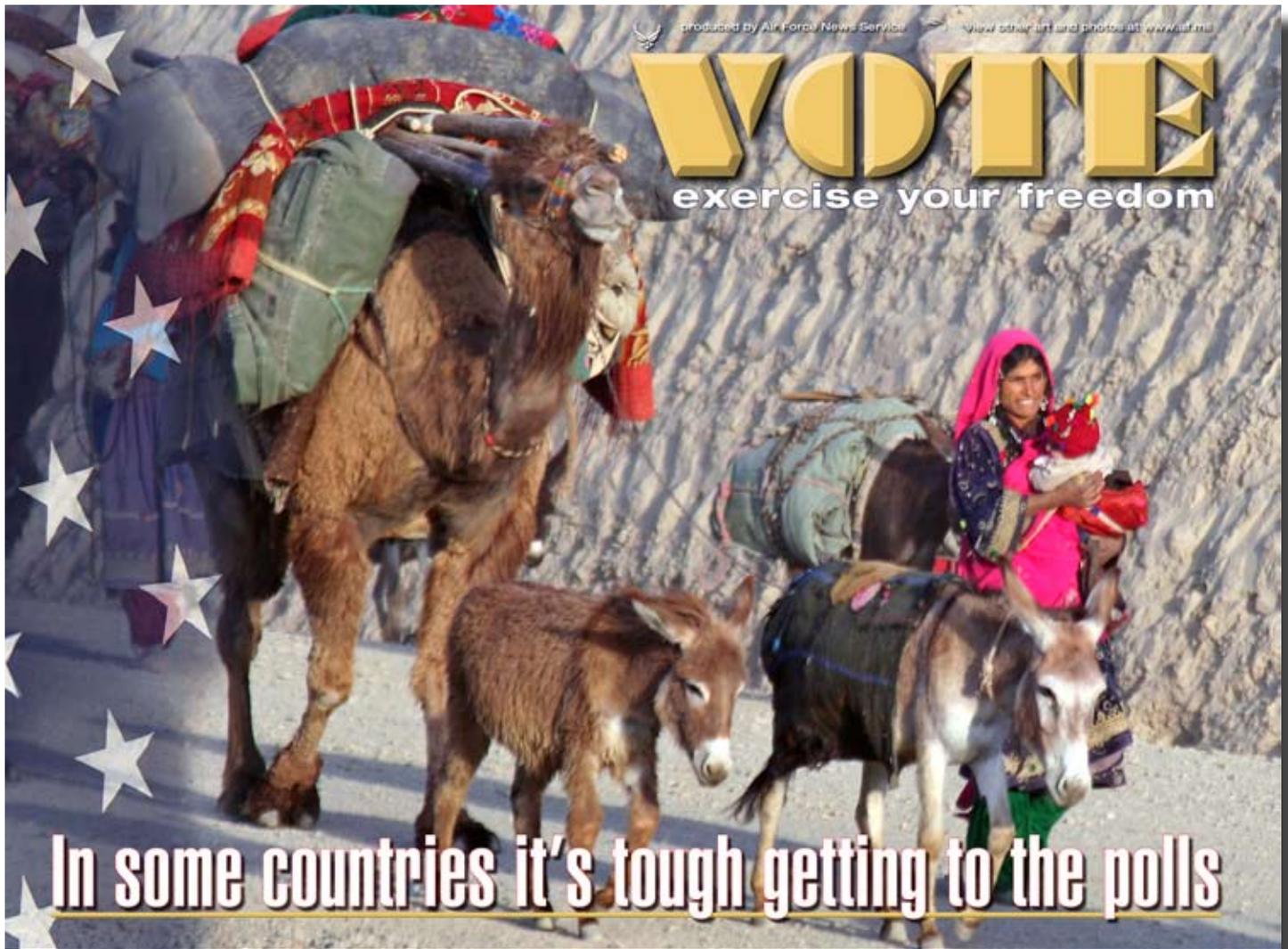
TSgt Daniel Elvenia
HQ PACAF Outstanding NCO of the Year
4th AF ARC Air Transportation NCO of the Year



MSgt Leony Macapagal
HQ PACAF Outstanding 1st Sergeant of the Year



SMSgt Saturnino Erolin
HQ PACAF Outstanding SNCO of the Year



By Senior Master Sgt. Merian Almosara
 624th Regional Support Group
 Voting Assistance Officer

Elections for the President, Congress, and local government officials are just around the corner. As Voting Assistance Officer for the 624th Regional Support Group I am here to help if you need information about out-of-state voting or absentee voting.

Each unit also has their own voting representatives available to assist you. If you would like to search for the voting information yourself, there is a Federal Voting Assistance Program website on the Internet at www.fvap.gov.

Important dates from Absentee Voting Guide Book 2008-2009:

Hawaii: www.hawaii.gov/elections
 State Primary Registration Deadline:
 Aug. 21, 2008

April 2008

Ballot Request if Registered:
 Sep. 13, 2008
 Ballot Request Not Registered:
 Aug. 21, 2008
 State Primary Date Ballot Return:
 Sep. 20, 2008

General Election Registration Deadline:
 Oct. 6, 2008
 Ballot Request if Registered:
 Oct. 28, 2008
 Ballot Request Not Registered:
 Oct. 6, 2008
 General Election Date Ballot Return:
 Nov. 4, 2008

*Hawaii does not have a Presidential Primary.

Guam: www.guamelection.org
 State Primary Registration Deadline:
 Aug. 27, 2008
 Ballot Request: Sep. 3, 2008
 State Primary Date Ballot Return:
 Sep. 6, 2008

General Election Registration Deadline:
 Oct. 24, 2008
 Ballot Request: Oct. 31, 2008
 General Election Date Ballot Return:
 Nov. 4, 2008

*Guam is not eligible to vote for President.

As the Federal Voting Assistance Program Slogan says:
BE SMART, DO YOUR PART – VOTE!

Points of Contact:
624th RSG/DPM - Senior Master Sgt. Merian Almosara, (808) 449-6520
48 APS - Capt. Jon-David Chun, (808) 448-0212/4864
624th ASTS – Capt. Richard Yenke, (808) 448-7803
624th CES – Lt. Allence Ribao, (808) 448-4207
44th APS/724th ASTF – Maj. Richard J. Rosario, DSN 366-4769



Keeping in focus

Capt. Todd Nakagawa, 624th Aeromedical Staging Squadron optometrist, uses a pencil and a ruler to test the muscular function and focusing ability of a patient's eyes. This test is part of a standard physical conducted at the Hickam Clinic during the March training weekend.

Photo by Master Sgt. Daniel Nathaniel

UTA Schedule

Hickam

April 5-6
May 3-4
June 7-8
July 12-13

Andersen

April 26-27
May 17-18
June 21-22
July 26-27



*By Master Sgt. Leony Macapagal
624th Civil Engineer 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 Enlisted Performance Report and decide if you want to be the person that "complies" with standards or "exceeds" standards. Supervisors, 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.