

A firefighter in a silver heat-reflective suit stands in front of a large fire burning through a window. The firefighter is wearing a full protective suit, including a hood and gloves. The fire is intense and bright orange, filling the window. The firefighter is holding a hose, and the scene is set in a dark environment, possibly a fire station or a training facility.

Pacific Crossings

February 2008

The Official Newsletter of the 624th Regional Support Group

Into the Inferno

Training gets hot for
624th CES firefighters



Triathlon Tips

*or learning
to transition
through
change*

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

*If God invented marathons to keep people from doing anything more stupid, the triathlon must have taken Him completely by surprise.
~P. Z. Pearce*

Yes, I'm a triathlete. The longest race I've completed was a half Ironman consisting of a 1.2 mile open water swim followed by a 56 mile bicycle ride followed by a 13.1 mile run for a total of 70.3 miles.

The race took me nearly six hours to complete, 5:58:31 to be exact. One of the keys to completing a triathlon is the transition from the swim to the bike (T1) and the transition from the bike to the run (T2).

Being able to transition, or adapt to change, in today's Air Force is also key to success.

*If you're in a bad situation, don't worry it'll change. If you're in a good situation, don't worry it'll change.
~John A. Simone, Sr.*

Embracing and understanding change -

During any multi-sport event you need to realize you must change from

one sport to another. What a shock it would be to come out of the water, run across the beach to T1 and suddenly realize that everyone else is changing and hopping on to bicycles and riding off while you didn't understand how a triathlon was completed so you didn't have a bike. Your race would be over at that point – DNF (Did Not Finish) next to your name on the race results!

We cannot ignore change. Locally, we receive new commanders in our squadrons and for the RSG and they bring change to our units.

Hickam and Pearl Harbor are slated to become a Joint Base per the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure law and that may change the way we train.

We may face personal change such as marriage, children, a new job, or, my favorite - moving to a different state for a new job while trying to adopt a child.

Our first step is to ask questions and understand what the change means and embracing rather than resisting the change.

What does the new commander want to know before he lets me perform an MPA or AEF tour? Will there be an impact on our ability to train and upgrade our CE Airmen on a Joint Base?

How can I be engaged in the process to ensure the best possible result

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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 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

Fire fighters from the 624th Civil Engineer Squadron practice putting out a simulated aircraft fire during the January drill weekend

Photo by Staff Sgt. Jennie Chamberlin



Whom do you trust?

Senior Master Sgt. Erolin Saturino, 624th Civil Engineer Squadron, takes a fall to find out whether his fellow Airmen have his back. The exercise was part of the Air Force Reserve Command's Senior Noncommissioned Officer Leadership Course held at Hickam Air Force Base during the January training weekend. The two-day course is designed to help Senior NCOs to better understand their own leadership styles so as to better mentor, manage and motivate those they supervise.

Photo by Master Sgt. Daniel Nathaniel



Time to cut the grass

Staff Sgt. John Ballesta and Senior Airman Corinna Manzanares are part of a team of volunteers from the 44th Aerial Port Squadron, Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, who took time out to help their local community by maintaining the lawns at Pedro C. Lujan Elementary School on Jan. 20, 2008.

The 44th APS took up the cause when the school's Parent Teacher Organization made it known that there was inadequate funding for grass maintenance. The project took the volunteers seven hours to complete. The payoff for all of this hard work is that the students of Lujan Elementary can now play in their school yard again.

44th APS courtesy photo

TRIATHLON continued from page 2

for my unit? If we don't embrace the change we risk a DNF as the result.

Prepare or Manage Change.

Once we embrace the change we need to prepare and manage the change. Before a triathlon I find out where T1 and T2 are located, sometimes they are located at the same place and sometimes they are miles apart.

At T1 I rack my bike, lay out my shoes, socks, helmet, some water, and maybe some food. If it's a long race, like the half Ironman, I find out if there's a changing tent so I can change from a swim suit to bike shorts. If there's no changing tent, I alter my plan and wear "tri-shorts" for the swim and bike. Similar to T1, I also prepare my area at T2 for the change from the bike to the run.

Once we understand the change and the final outcome we need to prepare

for the change. None of us wants to take a new job and have our boss think it was a mistake to hire us so we prepare to succeed. If we're interested in an MPA or AEF tour we look at the 13 questions the Group commander wants us to answer (understand the change), then we take steps (prepare) to answer those questions so we can submit our request.

Once the Joint Basing impacts become clearer, we may need to budget for more training funds to get our training accomplished. If we don't prepare for the change we risk a DNF or a very disorganized transition as the result.

Change! If we have done the first two steps, then the actual change is not overwhelming. We understand what is going to happen, we've prepared a plan and taken steps to make the plan work. We adapt our plan if

something isn't working right. We already have people preparing for MPA tours – they adapted to the change and took the steps necessary to gain approval.

To complete my triathlon story - in the last 100 meters of the swim I start rehearsing my transition in my head (out of the water, run up to T1, know exactly where my bike gear is located) I change, run out of T1, hop on the bike and take off! As I complete the bike I take my feet out of my shoes and leave the shoes clipped onto the bike, I coast up, dismount, run into T2, rack the bike, I change, run out of T2 and onto the run course.

I understood the change, I prepared for the change, I changed – I finished the race! After I've settled in Texas, adapted to my new job and adopted that second child, maybe I'll do a full Ironman...

624th CES waves Silver Flag high at Kadena, AB

*By Master Sgt. Daniel Nathaniel
624th Regional Support Group
Public Affairs*

Every 45 months, the members of the 624th Civil Engineer Squadron, Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, need to have their wartime skills evaluated. To accomplish this, Lt. Col. Richard Parkinson, 624th CES commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Robert Torres, led a team to Kadena Air Base, Japan to participate in the Silver Flag exercise Jan. 13-19.

Silver Flag is a seven-day event which prepares civil engineers, personnelists and services specialists with the skills needed to support air operations anytime, anywhere.

Training on Day 1 includes building tents, providing power, and preparing the site to support the team. The next few days are in preparation for an evaluation on Day 6. Day 7, the site is cleaned and reconfigured for the next group.

Kadena AB, under the direction of Detachment 1, 554th Red Horse Squadron, is one of only a handful of facilities in the world which has all the proper airfield, facilities, equipment, and qualified cadre in order to train students on actual contingency tasks under realistic conditions using the same resources they could expect in a real contingency at a deployed location.

For some members like Senior Airman Harry Shin the ex-



perience was the first time they were able to put to the test their training.

"The hands on experience was the best part for me," Airman Shin said.

The Silver Flag instructors recognized Senior Airman Joshua Sarsona, fire fighter, as an outstanding performer with honorable mentions going out to the 624th CES Operations Management and Engineer Assistance for best teams.



Above - Staff Sgt. Tommy Anduha is compacting the fill material on the practice crater hole.
Top right - Senior Master Sgt. Rolando Belong is briefing the training cadre on beddown plan for the Base Support Plan class.

Right - 624th CES Firefighter completing the fire confidence course.

Photos by Tech. Sgt. Henrico Santa Maria

Chop shop

Sometimes rescuing a person in a trapped vehicle requires a rescuer to take expedient measures. 624th Civil Engineer firefighters got a chance during the January drill weekend to use the 'jaws of life' to open a car door.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Jennie Chamberlin





4th's Chief goes forth

Airman 1st Class Faatupu Faamuli meets Chief Master Sgt. Patricia Thornton, 4th Air Force's new command chief.

Chief Thornton visited 624th RSG Hickam-based units during the January drill weekend. During this time she took the opportunity to meet with Airmen and discuss their questions and concerns. Chief Thornton actively stressed the importance of enlisted leadership as the backbone and key component in making things happen in the Air Force.

Personnel Briefs

Dashboard brings new look to vPC-GR

Air Reserve Personnel Center officials launched the Dashboard which developers said will ease the flow of information throughout the chain of command.

The Dashboard is the new front-end of the on the virtual Personnel Center - Guard and Reserve.

"Many of the links previously found on the front page have moved inside the vPC-GR Dashboard," said Senior Master Sgt. Melody Mohigh, Reserve personnel services delivery transformation change manager at ARPC. "Airmen need to log in to complete their transactions and placing the links behind the Dashboard provides extra security while making it possible for local units to conduct associated actions."

To find the new links, Airmen can click on the "Action Requests" tab once they log into the Dashboard.

Some of the links that moved include: requesting a 20-year or mortgage letter, submitting awards and decorations, correcting duty history, changing or correcting military service dates, and submitting letters to the officer promotion board.

"Our hope is that every customer that uses our online resources will be able to quickly navigate and utilize the resources available through the vPC-GR Web site," said Lt. Col. Doug Ottinger, director of ARPC's directorate of future operations and integration.

Airmen can access a tutorial on how to use the Dashboard from ARPC's PSD page.

What does this mean for members of the 624th Regional Support Group?

"Because of this new Dashboard concept, ALL reserve members are required to create a vPC-GR account during their February drill weekend," said Senior Master Sgt. Corrina, 624th RSG Military Personnel Programs.

"The previous version of the vPC-GR required that email addresses be input for actions that needed coordination. With the new Dashboard, by creating a vPC-GR account, you will be able to select a new versus typing an email address."

SERE 100 training due by April

624th RSG members will be required to complete SERE 100 training by the April drill weekend. The computer based training on the Advanced Distance Learning Service can be found through the Air Force Portal or at <https://golearn.csd.disa.mil>.

If you have problems accessing this site or have problems completing the SERE 100 training got to the Join Knowledge Online website at <https://jko.jfcom.mil> and follow the directions for an account.

Please allow four hours to complete the training.

There's always time for dental hygiene...

*by 624th Aeromedical Staging Squadron
Dental Health*

Maintaining proper dental hygiene is an extremely important part of everybody's health. For Airmen, it is imperative that they maintain their teeth with the same diligence that they apply to all other aspects of their career.

This becomes critical for members who can expect to be deployed.

While most deployed locations will have a medical clinic of some sort, there is less guarantee there will be proper den-

DENTAL continued page 9



Above - Dr. (Maj.) Kurt Nishiguchi examining airman using proper infection control and loops.

Right - Dr. (Lt. Col.) Robert Baysa informing his patient of the diagnostic findings of his digital 'x-rays'

Photos by Master Sgt. Daniel Nathaniel





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tal care. Having a dental emergency while deployed can be serious business.

The 624th Aeromedical Staging Squadron's dental team of doctors Lt. Col. Robert Baysa and Maj. Kurt Nishiguchi recommend the following American Dental Association approved practices for all:

- Brush your teeth twice a day with an ADA-accepted fluoride toothpaste.
- Replace your toothbrush every three or four months, or sooner if the bristles are frayed. A worn toothbrush won't do a good job of cleaning your teeth.
- Clean between teeth daily with floss or an interdental cleaner. Decay-causing bacteria still linger between teeth where toothbrush bristles can't reach. This helps remove plaque and food particles from between the teeth and under the gum line.
- Eat a balanced diet and limit between-meal snacks.
- Visit your dentist regularly for pro-

fessional cleanings and oral exams.

- Antimicrobial mouth rinses and toothpastes reduce the bacterial count and inhibit bacterial activity in dental plaque, which can cause gingivitis, an early, reversible form of periodontal (gum) disease.

- ADA-Accepted antimicrobial mouth rinses and toothpastes have substantiated these claims by demonstrating significant reductions in plaque and gingivitis. Fluoride mouth rinses help reduce and prevent tooth decay. Clinical studies have demonstrated that use of a fluoride mouth rinse and fluoride toothpaste can provide extra protection against tooth decay over that provided by fluoride toothpaste alone.

- Fluoride mouth rinse is not recommended for children age six or younger because they may swallow the rinse. Consumers should always check the manufacturer's label for precautions and age recommendations and talk with their dentist about the use of fluoride mouth rinse.

- Talk to your dentist about what types of oral care products will be most effective for you. The ADA Seal on a product is your assurance that it has met ADA criteria for safety and effectiveness. Look for the ADA Seal on fluoride toothpaste, toothbrushes, floss, interdental cleaners, oral irrigators, mouth rinses and other oral hygiene products.

- Finally, for members only - do not forget to complete your Annual Dental exam DD form 2813 in the five-month window preceding your birthmonth.

Not doing so in a timely matter can hurt you worse than a toothache.

Information for this article came from the American Dental Association's website at www.ada.org

Above - Tech. Sgt. Tara Gerard, dental technician taking digital records for a Reservist during his Military Physical process at the Hickam Medical Clinic.

Photo by Master Sgt. Daniel Nathaniel



Crossing over

Officer Trainee Kenny Ruggles, center, and his fellow classmates show their mettle before tackling the obstacle course at Officer Training School at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala. After completing the arduous 12-week training, the former senior master sergeant is now a second lieutenant.

UTA Schedule

Hickam

February 2-3
March 1-2
April 5-6
May 3-4

Andersen

February 23-24
March 29-30
April 26-27
May 17-18



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

Unless men have a shaving waiver, sideburns will be neatly trimmed and tapered; be straight and of even width (not flared); end in a clean-shaven horizontal line; and not extend below the lowest part of the exterior ear opening.