



January 2008

Pacific Crossings

The Official Newsletter of the 624th Regional Support Group

**Happy
New Year!
2008**

'Welcome to the desert' or not quite fit to fight

By Master Sgt. Tara Corse
48th Aerial Port Squadron
First Sergeant

My story begins at MacDill Air Force Base in 1997. I was twenty years old and sure I was in great shape. My fit regiment at the time was keeping up with my other girlfriends on the south Florida dance floor. Throwing in a yearly bike test for old Uncle Sam seemed to be my only fitness contribution to the Air Force.

Fit? You betcha, I'd dance all night, breakfast at a diner, go to bed, then up for my swing shift guard mount.

Fit? Not even close.

This realization came in April after I stepped off of the C-5 in Prince Sultan Air Base, Saudi Arabia. This was my first deployment as a puppy pusher. The heat was sweltering, and I instantly began to sweat. I was immediately ordered, by my supervisor, to put on my required equipment, helmet, weapon, ammo, flak vest, and web belt with attached gas mask, and many other cumbersome things. After watching me fiddle with my clasps he cynically stated "Welcome to the desert."

My first shift was unbearable. My helmet cramped my neck and my flak jacket felt like it was filled with lead. My normally light and agile M-4 seemed more like the gun Schwarzenegger carried in Predator.

During my initial brief I was ordered to walk the vehicle and housing compound perimeter before I stood my assigned entry control point.

All I could think to myself was that's like four miles, with this stuff strapped to me, and did you say walk? I started on the hike and about half way I decided that was all she wrote. After a futile attempt to get my poor dog to drag me I decided to call for a patrol to come pick me up. Since I was not up to completing the task, another handler needed to complete the portion of the perimeter that I was not able to complete.

This was the first time I couldn't finish a task given to me. I was ashamed and apologetic, and more than that I was exhausted. I needed to make another person work because I was not in shape to accomplish the mission.

After my shift I never thought I could be so happy to see my cot. They next day came way too soon. My body ached, and I didn't get enough sleep. During the prior day my Kennel Master advised me to hydrate. This sent me to the bathroom tent located a billion miles away several times that night.

All I wanted to do was go home. I missed my family, my stress level was maxed and my body hurt as if I went three rounds with BJ Penn. That day

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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

Fireworks herald in the new year 2008.

Photo by
Master Sgt. Daniel Nathaniel

Ask Jolene

Financial savvy from Jolene Meyer, 624th RSG Financial Manager

Q: So what is the deal with per diem? I can't seem to keep it all straight.

A: From a FM perspective, I think the area of proportional per diem is one of the most mis-understood situations out there. Many members are under the wrong impression on what they will or will not receive for per diem when they are on a TDY. If they do read their orders they must not understand them. It is essential that a member understands what entitlements they are authorized or they may be caught short when their voucher is processed. They need to talk to their order clerks or supervisors before they leave so they know what is authorized on their orders.

Just recently I talked with a member that was upset that they would not be receiving full per diem for their home station annual tour. He felt that since he lived off island and commuted to Hickam that he would receive full Per Diem for food. Members on orders will not receive full per diem for meals UNLESS they receive a non-availability letter from Billeting and are housed off base in a hotel or the base they are visiting does not have a Dining facility (ex. March ARB). If the base has a Dining facility available that serves meals then members are expected to eat there and will be provided a reduced rate of per diem to accommodate that.

URBAN LEGEND IS BUSTED

Many military members are under the mis-belief that officers and senior NCOs are not directed to use military dining facilities while TDY. **BUSTED** – Proportional per diem is used and has been in effect since 1996. It applies to all officers and enlisted members. Military members perform temporary

duty travel to meet mission requirements. While a member is TDY they receive per diem at various levels based on circumstances. Part of the per diem they receive is for meals. Proportional per diem is a meal reimbursement option that reduces temporary duty travel costs because the proportional per diem rate is used when dining facilities provide one or two meals and the military traveler must purchase the other meal(s) elsewhere. The proportional per diem rate varies by location and is based on the average of the government meal rate (all meals provided by dining facility) and a portion of the full locality rate (no meals provided by dining facility).

What this means to the Unit

It is USAFR policy that the order specialists identify on the order one of the three options for mess usage at installations/locations on stationary (nontravel) days.

The three options are:

- All government meals are available and directed - Directs government mess usage when all meals are available at an installation/location
- Partial government meals are available and directed - Directs partial usage of mess if some, not all, meals are available at an installation/location
- Government meals are not available or not directed - The only time this option should be approved on orders is when there are no meals available at an installation, if use of government mess will adversely affect the mission, or if lodged off installation.

An example of the impact on O&M and RPA funding:

- All government meals are available and directed - Member receives \$11.30 per day at Brooks AFB for meals
- Partial government meals are



available and directed - Member receives \$29.00 per day at Brooks AFB for meals

- Government meals are not available or not directed - Member receives \$47.00 per day at Brooks AFB for meals

The proportional meal rate will be used when:

- A member (not a civilian) is lodged in Government quarters on a U.S. Installation and one or two meals are available in a Government mess on that U.S. Installation;
- A member (not a civilian) lodged in Government quarters on a U.S. Installation had the Government meal rate prescribed in the order but the mess wasn't available for all meals;
- A traveler receives one or two meals at Government expense (for example one or two deductible meals on one or more days included in a conference registration fee)
- A member isn't authorized per diem but must purchase a meal (the proportional meal rate is the ceiling against which the traveler's actual meal cost is compared - the lesser of the two being paid.)



There's no business like snow business

48th Aerial Port Squadron members Senior Master Sgt. Craig Okazaki, Senior Airman Dennis Dedicatoria, Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Fagaragan, Master Sgt. Rodney Ricafort, Staff Sgt. Wilma Landingin, Master Sgt. Nemesis Escosio and Master Sgt. Diane Marques keep their cool while deployed with the 376th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron at Manas Air Base, Kyrgyzstan.

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my Kennel Master approached me and asked how I was doing. Oh my, how I unloaded on him. He told me I wasn't acclimated and I wasn't in the best shape. I argued that I have worn the same size since I was in High School, and never failed a bike test. He laughed and told me I would understand with time. He further told me it would become easier.

Considering we lived in a tent city, and were not allowed to leave the base, my options for off-duty activity was very limited. I walked everywhere. My eating habits changed, no more midnight French toast. Certainly the Third Country Nationals were not trained by Julia Child, but the menu was Services approved. Chicken and peas I could load my magazine with, but healthy enough.

Tent City had a gym facility and my other tent mates talked me into

going. I started to go daily and with a new found interest in my own health. Just like my KM stated, it got easier. I made myself a promise I would do my best to ensure I was the person helping with the perimeter, not the one who needed the help.

When I returned from deployment I was healthier and more energetic. Issues that concerned me before didn't seem as taxing, and I was able to deal with stressful items easier and more efficient. Look around at some of the Airmen that have return from recent deployment. They look renewed, energized, and I am sure some have stories similar to mine.

As I look back on my first deployment, I can laugh and also learn. Being fit isn't just a yearly event that assures you a passing score on your evaluation. Your overall wellness influences all facets of your daily life.

How you deal with changes in your environment, work, and home life, and stress. These are all contributing factors to your overall health.

Understand we are all part of Team Air Force. Keeping yourself fit will provide you with the ability to tow the line. Ask yourself, will your current fitness status affect your buddy? If you deploy tomorrow will you be able to support your buddy no matter what?

I have requested to return to the AOR. I won't be getting pulled around by my four legged friend, but I do know I will be heavily armed with knowledge and guidance for any one that approached me looking weary and beaten, physically or mentally. I can also ensure if an Airman asks me to accompany them on a perimeter walk I will be able to say, no problem, I even know a few jokes.

AFRC Recruiting seeks new recruiters

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. -- The Air Force Reserve Command Recruiting Service is now seeking applicants to fill recruiting positions in locations across the globe.

In addition to finding qualified applicants for careers in the Air Force Reserve, a recruiter interacts with the community and serves as a representative of the Reserve 24 hour a day

"We're always looking for enthusiastic, qualified people. If you are motivated to excel, perform above the status quo, and are physically and morally fit this could be the career move you've been looking for," said Chief Master Sgt. Dave Schoch, chief of the AFRC Recruiting Service training branch.

The application process begins with a face-to-face interview with the local senior recruiter. "If you meet the qualifications you will be asked to complete a packet, to include a current physical," Chief Schoch said. "The packet will be sent to our headquarters at Robins Air Force Base, Ga., to the recruiter selection board for evaluation."

If selected, applicants attend an evaluation and selection course at the recruiting service headquarters here. Applicants are evaluated on "potential to become a successful recruiter. The course is five-days long designed to introduce prospective candidates to reserve recruiting. During this course, candidates will undergo an open-ranks inspection, participate in physical training, give speeches, and complete memorization work. Challenges are progressive. The top candidates are afforded the opportunity to attend the recruiter class.

The recruiting course at Lackland AFB, Texas, is six-weeks long.

"This is one of the most challenging technical schools in the Air Force. These six weeks will prepare you to be a mission-ready recruiter," said Senior Master Sgt. Barry Kowald, an instructor at the school. "Standards here are high."

Instruction includes Air Force Reserve benefits and entitlements, program selection criteria, advertising,



and promotion, community relations, speech, and salesmanship. Course emphasis is on student performance and practical application.

Technical Sgt. James Dock, a reserve recruiter at Tampa, Fla., said he understands the importance of his job.

"As a recruiter you will help others make decisions that will affect them the rest of their lives," Sergeant Dock said. "We're the gateway to an amazing future as Citizen Airmen."

He's been a recruiter for two and half years, and formerly served as a medical administrator at MacDill AFB, Fla. He said there's been no more fulfilling job than the one he's had as a recruiter.

"As recruiter, it gives me an opportunity to provide people some guidance in their lives and help them reach a lifelong goal," he added.

An initial recruiting tour of extended active duty can last up to four years. Tour extensions are reserved for those who "meet or exceed the highest standards of conduct, demeanor, appearance, integrity, production, and acceptance of responsibility," according to Chief Schoch.

For more, contact Senior Master Sgt. Jim Flamio, PACAF Senior Recruiter, at DSN 449-8068 or commercial (808) 449-8068. You may also contact him via cell phone at (808) 347-3893. Why not step up to the challenge?



Over there

Above - 624th Aero-medical Staging Squadron's own Maj. Jennifer Sur Watanabe, center, and Maj. Edna Higa, center right, join other members of the 386th Expeditionary Medical Group to bring island entertainment to Kuwait.

Below - Master Sgt. Dan Stone, 724th Aeromedical Staging Flight, does some sight seeing while deployed to Baghdad. Sergeant Stone is serving as 1st Sergeant for the 732nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron, Balad Air Base, Iraq.

Promotions



Photo by Master Sgt. Daniel Nathaniel

The following members were promoted Nov 07-Jan 08

CAPTAIN
Michel, Siul

MASTER SERGEANT
Saludes, Dino Dean
Weiler, Brenda

TECHNICAL SERGEANT
Aquino, Jesse
Barcinas, Cynthia
Blas, John
Brown, Robert
Cejoco, Jose
Cruz, Joey
Cruz, Patrick
Espino, Arsenio Jr.
Estoy, Mae
Isimang, Albert
Pandya, Jay
Quinchocho, Michelle
Salas, Edwin
Santos, Monica
Uyeshiro, Erin Leigh

Young, Steve

STAFF SERGEANT
Aguan, Steve
Degayo, Chester
Díaz, Norman Cruz
Dondoyano, Derek Borja
Fernandez, Melissa
Lujan, Jesse
Ulloa Cruz, Darlene Feje
Ungacta, Michele
Velez, Vinton
White, Jennifer

SENIOR AIRMAN
Aguilar, Rosemary
Aguon, Vivian
Kanagusuku, Ryan
Remigio, Gena Malia Luna
Simpliciano Kelly, Shane

AIRMAN 1ST CLASS
Pascual, Michael

So what did you get for your birthday? For 624th Regional Support Group executive officer Siul Michel it was a much awaited promotion to Captain on Jan. 3.

Personnel Briefs

Civilian Employer Information Program

It is the duty of each individual member of the Ready Reserve to comply with the requirements of the Civilian Employer Information Program. A member of the Ready Reserve who knowingly fails or refuses to provide required employment-related information or who knowingly provides false employment-related information may be subject to administrative action or punishment for dereliction of duty under Article 92, Uniform Code of Military Justice.

You can enter your employer data by going to the Defense Manpower Data Center Web site located at: <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/Guard-Reserve-Portal>. After clicking on the Web site, enter your employment status. Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve staff will not directly contact any employer about an individual reservist unless the reservist asks for assistance

with an employer issue.

We ask that you please continue to update any changes in the future.

Virtual Record of Emergency Data

Servicemembers are required to keep their Virtual Record of Emergency Data current at all times and are required 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. 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>.

Family Care-AFI 36-2908

All Air Force members with families will have family care arrangements that reasonably cover all situations, both short and long term. Single parents, dual military couples with family members and members with civilian spouses who have unique family situations, as determined by the commander or first sergeant, are required to develop a written plan (AF Form 357) to be maintained by the commander or first sergeant. It will detail and provide a smooth, rapid transfer of responsibilities to designees during the absence of the member.

Unit commanders are required to brief unit members on Family Care responsibilities yearly. Those that currently have a Family Care plan must review and recertify these plans with the First Sergeant and/or Commander yearly.



Tops in his craft



Congratulations to Master Sgt. John Gabriel, 624th Civil Engineer Squadron utilities systems specialist, on winning the USAF Society of American Military Engineers Goddard Medal, in the Air Force Reserve Category for 2007. The Goddard Medal is named in honor of Maj. Gen.

Guy H. Goddard, U.S. Air Force. and is presented for outstanding contributions to military engineering, including military troop construction, base maintenance, and contingency engineering. The medal was first awarded in 1973. Sergeant Gabriel was initially recognized by his active-duty counterparts for his extensive support work with the 15th CES utility shop at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. He is currently deployed to Southwest Asia.

624th CES courtesy photo

UTA Schedule

Hickam

January 6-7
February 2-3
March 1-2
April 5-6

Andersen

January 26-27
February 23-24
March 29-30
April 26-27



Diamond Tips

According to Air Force Instruction 36-2903 women may carry a plain black leather or vinyl purse or bag without ornamentation, with or without plain fold-over flap with or without single-placed silver or gold-colored clasp. The bag may have up to two adjustable shoulder straps with or without buckles. It also may be patent leather or high gloss. It should not to exceed 13 x 9 x 4 1/2 inches deep.