

Pacific Crossings

December 2009

The Official Newsletter of the 624th Regional Support Group



**Saying 'thank you' to our employers:
Bosses of Hawaii and Guam Reservists take flight**

See pages 3 & 4

Happy Holidays!

*By Col. Robert "Randy" Huston
624th Regional Support Group
Commander*

We had a busy but very successful November. It began at Hickam Air Force Base with the arrival of the 4th Air Force Functional Assistance Visit team and a KC-135 Stratotanker from March Air Reserve Base, Calif.

RSG members once again set the gold standard for hospitality by helping the team get settled in to lodging. The FAV team did a thorough job of looking at our programs and offering advice and, as expected, you all shined as they looked at your programs!

That same weekend we used the KC-135 for an Employer Support Flight as part of the RSG's Employer Appreciation Day in Hawaii.

The Reserve aircrew took 14 of our employers and several of our Reservists on a two-hour flight, which included six refueling missions involving F-15s from the Hawaii Air National Guard (another great Total Force operation!)

I knew that the employers would really enjoy watching the refueling up close, but I was amazed at just how much of an impact this event had on them. The most important thing to them was that their employees had nominated them for the opportunity and that we recognized their sacrifices when supporting us as we defend this great country. It really hit home and I know we solidified their support for what we do.

On the heels of the Employer Appreciation Day in Hawaii, we kicked off our first-ever Officer Development Seminar at Hickam. Command Chief Thornton from 4th AF gave an excellent briefing to our officers on how to best utilize and take care of our enlisted force. A number of officers told me afterwards how much they learned from her briefing and many of the more senior officers said that they wish they had received that briefing while they were still lieutenants and

captains!

During the seminar, we had an enlisted panel consisting of two Command Chiefs and a First Sergeant. The officers had many questions for the panel resulting in a good deal of positive discussion and interaction. Two of our guest speakers for the seminar were Mr. Michael Ceci, managing partner of the Honolulu office of New York Life, and Brig. Gen. Terrence O'Shaughnessy, 13th Air Force Vice Commander. Mr. Ceci gave a presentation on leadership skills that included a realistic case study and General O'Shaughnessy gave an insightful presentation on leadership and his "top ten" key thoughts on the subject from his years of experience in the Air Force.

On Wednesday, I traveled with the FAV team to Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, where we continued with the inspection and hosted another round of employers for our Reservists based there. We had the same sterling results, which did not surprise me. I've come to expect nothing less than outstanding performance from each and everyone on our superstar RSG team!

As we roll into the holiday season and we get a chance to catch our breath, I want to remind everyone to be safe and to take care of your Wingmen. The holidays are full of emotion and celebrations. There are families visiting, kids anticipating Santa, and sometimes, especially for some of our single members, a holiday season alone without the support network of family. I encourage you to look out for each other and be there for all the members of our 'Ohana. Make sure that you have a designated driver plan before you go out celebrating, and in case your plan falls through have the Airmen Against Drunk Driving number: 449-RIDE in Hawaii and 366-7433 in Guam.

Thank you for all your hard work this past year and your continued service to our country. Have a happy holiday, be safe, and I'll see you all back here in January!

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 624RSG.PA@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 while others will be answered by phone.

On the Cover

Col. Robert "Randy" Huston, 624th Regional Support Group commander, leads a contingent of Reservists and their employers for the Group's first-ever Employer Support Flight at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii Nov. 7.

Story on pages 3 & 4

(Photo by
Master Sgt. Daniel Nathaniel)

Reservists' employers take flight... in Guam



Guam local business leaders and Reservists stop and pose for a group photo before boarding the KC-135 during the 624th RSG's Employer Appreciation Day in Guam. While aboard the training mission, the group received an up-close view of the tanker refueling a B-52 Stratofortress over the Pacific Ocean. (Photo by Airman 1st Class Courtney Witt)

*By Maj. Colleen Johnson
4th Air Force Public Affairs*

Twenty-five local civilian employers of Air Force Reserve members assigned to the 44th Aerial Port Squadron and the 724th Aeromedical Staging Flight, in Guam, participated in a Nov. 13th employer appreciation flight aboard a KC-135 Stratotanker.

While aboard the training mission, the group received an up-close view of the tanker refueling a B-52 Stratofortress over the Pacific Ocean.

The event marked an outreach effort by the 624th Regional Support Group, the largest Air Force Reserve presence in the Pacific, to educate the Reservists' civilian employers on what these citizen Airmen do when fulfilling their Air Force Reserve duties.

Thirteen Airmen from the 44th APS and 724th ASTF flew along with the employers as well.

The entire event, from the early morning arrival on base to the farewell luncheon, was organized and conducted by a team representing a cross-section of the Air Force Reserve Command. Em-

ployers met Citizen Airmen assigned in Guam and interacted with a consolidated aircrew from the 452nd Air Mobility Wing and 4th Air Force headquarters, March Field, Calif., 459th Air Refueling Wing, Andrews AFB, Md., and 931st Air Refueling Group, McConnell AFB, Kan.

The employers checked in at the gate that morning before arriving at the 44th APS conference room for introductions and mission briefings. Colonel Robert "Randy" Huston, 624th RSG commander, welcomed the guests and introduced them to the diverse mission of the two Guam-based units.

"Members of the Air Force Reserve are key enablers of the Air Force mission here on Guam," he said. "These folks, working both for you and for the Air Force Reserve, augment local operations, and many have participated in multiple deployments overseas."

Two Guam-based representatives from the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve welcomed the business leaders, honored them with Patriot Awards (certificates and lapel pins to recognize and honor outstanding employers) and educated them on the legal

responsibilities of both parties when an Airman is called to duty. Each employer readily gave their pledge of continued support for the Reserve mission in Guam by signing a support agreement, which serves as a symbol of the cooperative relationship the 624th RSG and other Reserve units aim to achieve with each employer.

"Working together and openly communicating will help us each achieve our mission successfully," Col Huston told the employers. "We recognize that you as employers make sacrifices, alongside our Reservists and their families, and we want to work together to minimize the impact that deployed Reservists have on your companies and the community."

After these conversations, the group headed through the passenger terminal, took a quick tour of operations there, and boarded a bus for the aircraft. Most of these employers had never flown on a military aircraft before and one could easily feel their excitement.

"We are so thrilled to get this opportu-

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Two employers of 624th RSG Reservists enjoy the view from the back of a KC-135 Stratotanker Nov. 7 as a part of the 624th Regional Support Group's first-ever Employer Appreciation Day at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. (Photo by Master Sgt. Daniel Nathaniel)

Reservists' employers take flight... in Hawaii

*By Staff Sgt. Erin Smith
624th RSG Public Affairs*

Fourteen civilian employers of 624th Regional Support Group members became part of a total force operation Saturday when they boarded a KC-135 Stratotanker and headed out on a refueling mission Saturday Nov. 7.

During the mission, a Reserve aircraft refueled six Hawaii Air National Guard F-15 Eagles while their active duty counterparts provided ground support and security on the flightline. The flight was part of an effort to educate the employers on what their Reservists do when they aren't at their civilian jobs.

Prior to the flight, the employers received a 624th RSG mission briefing from Col. Robert "Randy" Huston, 624th RSG commander. Hawaii-based representatives of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve presented each employer with a Patriot Award, which is to recognize civilian employers who go above and beyond supporting their employee in times of mobilization, thus reducing stress on the member, the unit and the family.

"You are a key enabler of the Reserve mission," Colonel Huston told the employers. "We could not serve without

your support. We recognize that it is employers, along with the Reservists and their families, who make sacrifices so that we can defend this great country."

The ESGR program is designed to protect both the Reservist and the civilian employer during times of mobilization. When Reservists and Guardsmen deploy, the impact on the local community can be significant. For this reason, Air Force Reserve commanders work with the civilian employers to help reduce the impact on local security and business operations as much as possible.

"This partnership is vital considering the number of our Reservists who have been called upon to support overseas contingencies," said Colonel Huston. "Twenty-six of our Hawaii-based aerial porters just returned from Iraq, 54 of our civil engineers are serving in Afghanistan, and another 76 of our Guam-based Reservists are headed to Iraq in the coming months."

At the conclusion of the briefings, the employers ate boxed lunches that most flight crew members receive when they go on a mission. Members of the group's 48th Aerial Port Squadron showed the employers around the

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Warrior of the Month



Melissa Fernandez

Technical Sergeant

624th Aeromedical Staging Squadron
Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii

JOB TITLE: Assistant NCOIC Medical Readiness Section

JOB DESCRIPTION: Assists in the overall assurance of deployment ready status for all members in the 624 ASTS. Ensures medical readiness training is properly documented in MRDSS ULTRA. Coordinates and schedules UTC specific training for those personnel assigned to UTCs that have formal UTC training courses. Manages the mobility folder program while supervising two junior Airmen. Assistant exercise planner which evaluates the unit's capabilities to support all contingencies, and provide oversight to training programs and requirements.

HOMETOWN: Enterprise, Alabama

FAVORITE THING ABOUT UNIT: "My favorite part about the unit is having the opportunity to work with all of the great people I have met."

FAVORITE THING ABOUT JOB: "My favorite aspect of my job as Medical Readiness Assistant NCOIC is gaining a clearer picture of the deployment process and how it affects our airmen."

SUPERVISOR SAYS: "Tech. Sgt. Fernandez is a reliable, hard working, asset of the Medical Readiness Section. Sergeant Fernandez dedicates numerous off duty hours toward exercise planning and training coordination that is vital to realistic AOR training." - Master Sgt. Jason Boquer-Wintjen.

Personnel Briefs

Civilian Employer Information

It is the duty of each individual member of the Ready Reserve to comply with the requirements of the Civilian Employer Information (CEI) 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-ReservePortal>. 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>.

MILITARY PERSONNEL FLIGHT HOURS

Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

DRILL WEEKENDS

Saturday:

Open hours: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Closed for in-processing - 7-10 a.m.

Sunday:

Open hours: 7 a.m.- 1 p.m.

2:30 - 4 p.m.

Closed for training: 1-2:30 p.m.

If an ID card is required, please call before coming to MPF to check if DEERS is up and running.

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Senior Airman Matt Oberlin enjoys a moment with an employer over the Pacific Ocean Nov. 13 during the 624th Regional Support Group Employer Support Flight. (Photo by Airman 1st Class Courtney Witt)

nity and have been looking forward to it for weeks," said Kim Young, president of Security Title, Inc., of Tamuning, Guam. Mrs. Young, along with her husband Ronald, flew for the first time on a military aircraft. "There's no way we were going to miss this," she said. The Young's employee, Airman 1st Class Angel Mafnas of the 44th APS, also flew on the mission that day.

"I've never flown on a military plane before, but my nephew told me I had to come," said Paul Shimizu, Export Manager of Ambros, Inc., of Guam. Mr. Shimizu's company employs four members of the 624th RSG as well as six guardsmen. "I'm ready to be impressed," he said.

The groups' anticipation grew as they were given a chance to survey the KC-135's exterior and discuss the planned, in-flight refueling with the aircrew.

"This is so much fun! My five boys are going to be jealous when I tell them what I did today," said 1st Lt. Margaret Gogue, 724th ASTF.

Senior Master Sgt. Ray Lewis, 18th Air Refueling Squadron boom operator, McConnell AFB, Kansas, gave a tour around the exterior of the KC-135. The group asked him many questions, wanting to know specifics such as how close the receiving aircraft gets to the tanker during refueling (approximately 20 feet), how much fuel the KC-135 can carry (200,000 pounds) and how long the boom arm reaches (20 feet when fully extended).

Once aboard, Senior Airman Matt Oberlin, 756th Air Refueling Squadron boom operator, Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, instructed the employers on safety precautions and emergency procedures while on the aircraft.

Approximately 30 minutes after take-off the tanker's rendezvous with the B-52 commenced. Twenty-five eager employers flooded to the back of the tanker to watch Airman Oberlin operate the boom. Because he made six contacts with the B-52, off-loading 1,200 pounds of fuel, everyone was able to get a clear view, take pictures and marvel at the aircraft's capabilities and the crews' skills and professionalism.

"This was the first incentive ride I've participated in where I was operating the boom in front of so many onlookers," Airman Oberlin said. "I'm pretty much solely focused on the airplane that's 30 feet behind us, so honestly I wasn't very conscious of the people watching me."

Throughout the mission the aircrew and Airmen flying with the employers answered many questions on the details of the flight and the dimensions of the tanker, but most importantly the Airmen discussed their personal experiences in the Air Force Reserve.

"Having this sort of one-on-one interaction boosts morale for the Reservists and creates greater understanding between employer and employee," Col. Huston said. "This event has been a tremendous success and we'll definitely do this again soon."

AF leadership wishes for safe holiday season

Happy Holidays! Whether you are deployed, stationed overseas or living in the U.S., each of you should enjoy the season and celebrate in your own special way.

However, we encourage you to celebrate responsibly. The Air Force needs you back at work, but more importantly, your friends and family need you in their lives.

As the Air Force observes the Year of the Air Force Family, we ask you to consider how the results of your personal risk-related decisions and actions might affect your family and friends. What better gift can you give than to arrive home safely for the holidays?

The Air Force typically loses seven Airmen to personal motor vehicle mishaps during the months of November and December.

Last fiscal year, we lost 47 Airmen to personal motor vehicle mishaps with 68 percent of those

fatalities involving reckless behavior (not wearing a seatbelt, drinking and driving, or speeding).

Many of you will travel during the holidays. Evaluate the hazards in your travel plans (fatigue, weather, pressing to get to your destination), then use sound risk management principles and discuss mitigation strategies with your commander or supervisor.

Be responsible and remember the goal is ZERO preventable mishaps.

Enjoy the holidays and thank you for your service and your commitment to the Air Force!

-- Michael Donley, Secretary of the Air Force and Gen. Norton Schwartz, Air Force Chief of Staff.



CE in Afghanistan

Master Sgt. Tara Corse, 624th Civil Engineer Squadron First Sergeant, helps pass out donations of clothing to local Afghan children. Sergeant Corse is deployed to Afghanistan with over 50 of her fellow CE Reservists serving there as the 577th Expeditionary Prime Beef Squadron. (Courtesy photo)

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military passenger terminal then assisted getting them through security and onto the KC-135. Employers took turns watching the boom operator off-load fuel to six F-15s.

“That was absolutely amazing,” said Doreen Dyer who works at the Federal Detention Center in Honolulu and employs Master Sgt. Felix Fernandez of the 48th APS.

“The best part for me was seeing their faces light up when they watched our mission,” said Master Sgt. Diane Marques, another aerial porter with the 48th who watched the aerial refueling alongside her boss, Mildred Blandamer of Kahi Mohala Behavioral Health in Ewa Beach.

“Getting to see something like the refueling of jet fighters is awesome,” said Jonathan Smith from Pacific Air Forces. “I’ve seen the briefings before but never this mission... I got to see the jet attach itself, detach itself, the pilot give a shaka and fly away. It was really cool. To describe it is impossible but to actually see it done, they make it look so easy, like it’s nothing,” he said.

Aside from the skill required and the importance of the mission, the beauty and peace of the experience were the things that made the most impact on some of the employers.

“What impressed me most was how beautiful and surreal it was,” said Dennis Rhoden, Covanta Energy, Honolulu Resource Recovery Venture. “When the flight completed refueling and [the pilot] gave a shaka - the blue sky, the ocean, the white clouds in the background, and the fighter just dropped down and coasted away... It was beautiful.”

For most, the experience was a great chance to see the Air Force Reserve mission, while for others, it went beyond that and was a chance to see some of their own heritage.

“It was such an honor,” said Jocelyn Granier, who employs two of the group’s Reservists at Kapiolani Medical Center at Pali Momi. “My dad was an active duty military pilot and the crew let me put his picture and hat in the cockpit. Everyone has been so accommodating, it means so much. I now understand why my dad loved flying. It’s completely different up there.”

As well as demonstrating the Air Force Reserve’s mission to civilians in the local community, it was educational for many of the Reservists in the 624th RSG. They got the opportunity to see how their comrades support the mission on a daily basis, but from a different angle.

“It was such a wonderful opportunity to show appreciation to the employer and what the Air Force does,” said Maj. Jennifer Sur Watanabe of the 624th Aeromedical Staging Squadron who is employed by Ms. Grainier. “But it also showed me what the refuelers do. I’m a nurse, so it was good for me to learn about and appreciate the different roles. We are all working toward the same goal, but our jobs are so diverse.”

The KC-135 used for Saturday’s Employer Support Flight is assigned to the 452nd Air Mobility Wing at March Air Reserve Base, Calif. Later this week, Colonel

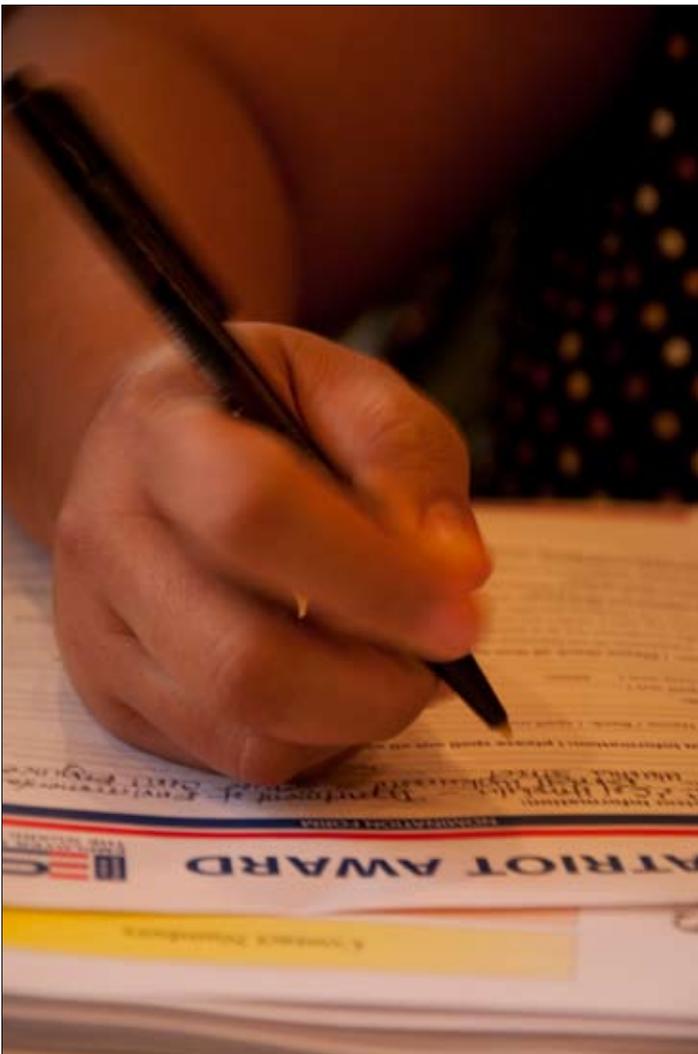


Master Sgt. Diane Marques, 48th Aerial Port Squadron, and her civilian employer Mildred Blandamer, Kahi Mohala Behavioral Health, squeeze in to watch the boom operator of a KC-135 Stratotanker refuel a Hawaii Air National Guard F-15 Eagle. (Photo by Master Sgt. Daniel Nathaniel)

Huston will travel with the KC-135 crew to Guam where they will take more than 30 civilian employers of the RSG’s Andersen-based Reservists on an air refueling mission.

“I hope we continue to do things like this,” said Sergeant Marques. “It’s such a good way to show our employers how much we appreciate them.”

At the end of the day, the Air Force may have recruited its fourteen newest members. When the employers attended the closing ceremony, the question heard around the room was, “Where do I sign up?”



Re-integrating after deployment

The 624th Airman and Family Readiness Center hosted a Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program event for recently returned members of the 48th Aerial Port Squadron at the Hickam AFB Officers' Club, Nov. 19. During the event, members of the 48th Aerial Port Squadron, who returned from Iraq in October, received briefings and support from Military One Source, financial planners and chaplains. They were also given a personnel briefing to help ensure everything is in place in their military records.

(Top) Master Sgt. Janet Hudson, 624th RSG A&FRC superintendent, goes over the reintegration event agenda, and explains the services available to the Airmen upon their return from deployments.

(Above) Ayla, 4, makes a necklace for her family while her father, Tech. Sgt. Brandon Arredondo, listened to briefings "My daddy was away in the desert for a long time," she said. "I missed him and I love him so much."

(Left) Ponciana Quindica fills out a Patriot Award Form. The Patriot Award is designed to recognize civilian bosses for their support of Guard and Reserve members. It is awarded to those who go above and beyond to support Guardsmen, Reservists and their families during deployments and in day-to-day duties.



Developing the officer corps

Thirty-five officers from the 624th Regional Support Group's Hawaii and Guam-based units attended the group's first-ever Officer Development Seminar at Hickam. Highlights of the event included guest speakers Michael Ceci, managing partner of the Honolulu office of New York Life, and Brig. Gen. Terrence O'Shaughnessy, 13th Air Force Vice Commander. Mr. Ceci gave a presentation on leadership skills that included a realistic case study and General O'Shaughnessy gave an insightful presentation on leadership and his "Top 10" on the subject. The seminar also included an enlisted panel made up of two command chiefs and a first sergeant. (Photo by Master Sgt. John Kim)

UTA Schedule

Hickam

December 5-6
January 9-10
February 20-21
March 6-7

Andersen

December 12-13
January 23-24
February 27-28
March 20-21



*By Senior Master Sgt. Leony Macapagal
48th Aerial Port Squadron
First Sergeant*

ABU and BDU shirt sleeves may be rolled up, with material matching the shirt and touching or coming within one inch of the forearm when bent at a 90-degree angle.