

October 2007

Pacific Crossings

The Official Newsletter of the 621th Regional Support Group

**Unit
Compliance
Inspection
September
2007**

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Until we meet again...

*By Col. Pamlea Milligan
624th Regional Support Group
Commander*

Farewell, Adieu, Adios, Aloha A Hui Hou

As I bid you a fond farewell, I congratulate each of you on a remarkable performance during the Group's Unit Compliance Inspection.

When the Air Force Reserve Command Inspector General wrote to General Bradley and relayed the success of the UCI as, "the best ever" and of the Group's management control program, "comprehensive," "exceptional," and "effective," I knew my job here was complete.

It has been a successful and hugely rewarding four years.

I joined the Group in 2003 with three goals: To bring the Group and all assigned units up to AFRC operational and management standards, to ensure the wartime readiness of all units and members, and to ensure that AFRC leadership knew the quality of Airmen that served in the Pacific and the potential for expansion and emerging missions.

The UCI results indicate that as a team we accomplished the first goal. We maintained high levels of morale and esprit-de-corps while we worked tirelessly toward the goal of program compliance.

Every Operational Readiness Inspection proved that our units were more than capable, more than ready...and could mobilize and get out of town better than bigger, better manned, and better resourced units.

Every assigned unit received an "Excellent" or better on the Initial Response portion of its readiness inspection. Little by little and victory by victory, the 624th RSG is making a name for itself throughout the Command. With every deployment, every inspection, every award and every recognition, the Group becomes more visible to leadership.

This recognition bodes well for the future. I can leave saying to you "mission accomplished – well done!"

I led this Group the only way I knew how...fully engaged and throttles full forward.

Our success would not have been possible without the hard work and commitment of each one of you.

I say so often that Pacific Island reservists serve with extra dedication and deeper passion than other reservists. All who visit or have the opportunity to deploy and serve with you see it too.

I attribute this to your history. A history that includes the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the occupation of Guam, and the stories told by your parents and grandparents as you were growing up.

Your heritage is engrained with the sense of duty and commitment to military service that those events instilled in you. Your history, your diversity, your service makes you better Airmen and makes the Air Force Reserve Command stronger.

Leading this Group has been joyful. I have led it using very much a woman's way of leadership...leading from the center, from a position where I could reach out and touch each of you, to know that you had what you needed to excel and to give you a pat on the back when needed. What I didn't count on is that you would reach out and touch me right back.

I have been so blessed being a part of your Ohana, of having the opportunity to work side by side with the best reservists in the command, and for having your support and respect.

These things are hard to earn and are not easy to walk away from...but I do so knowing that from my office up on the hill,

I will be watching down on you, ensuring you have opportunities to continue to be the Command's best Airman Warriors and best Airman Ambassadors.

Until we meet again, Mahalo Nui Loa, Si Yu'os Ma'āse'

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

Chief Master Sgt. Ray Sturm, Air Force Reserve Command, Office of Inspector General, Information Assurance.

Photo by Master Sgt. Daniel Nathaniel

UCI: Unit Compliance Inspection



Left - Fire fighters from the 624th Civil Engineer Squadron Fire Department transfer "victim" Tech. Sgt. Edward Lee to the waiting care of Hickam Fire Department paramedics after rescuing him during a C-17 egress exercise held Friday Sept. 7.

Below - Tech. Sgt. Steve Cruz, 48th Aerial Port Squadron, takes notes as his safety program is evaluated by an inspector.

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

A team from Air Force Reserve Command's Office of the Inspector General conducted a Unit Compliance Inspection on the 624th Regional Support Group and its units in Hawaii and Guam Sept. 4-15.

Inspectors evaluated programs ranging from Voting Assistance to Mobility Readiness to assess the Group's compliance with congressional, Department of Defense, Air Force and Air Force Reserve Command policies and directives.

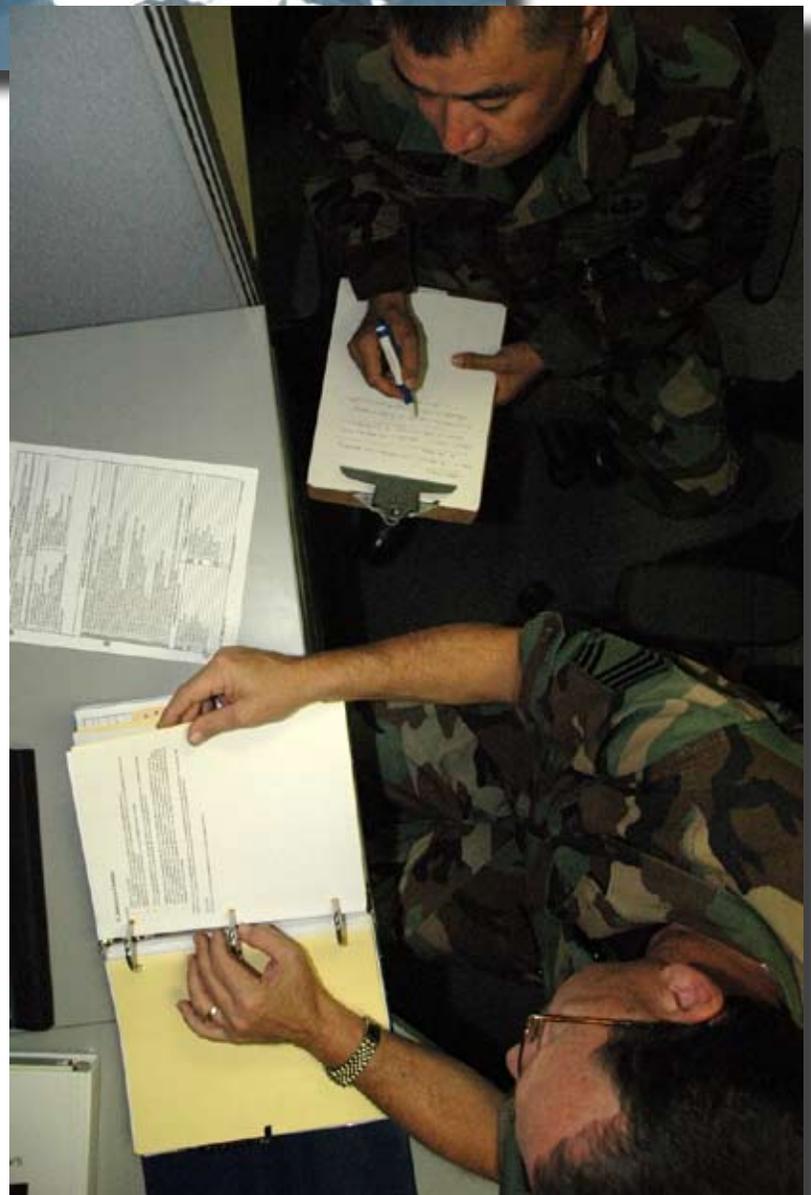
At the final out-briefing, 624th members discovered that years of hard work and diligence paid off.

"This has been by far one of the best inspections we have been on in ages," said Lt. Col. Jon Berrie, Chief, Inspections Division, AFRC/IG. "Over 160 compliances and only four minor findings."

"I have not seen such great unit cohesion and esprit de corps in probably 20 years," Colonel Berrie said.

This is reflected in the 30 members who were recognized as professional performers by the inspectors.

Programs that were regarded as strengths include Prime Beef Training and Program, Fire Protection, Operational Risk Management, Information Management, Contracting, Government



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Purchase Card, Information Security and Group Training,

Colonel Pamela Milligan, 624th RSG commander, pleased with the results, remarked that her biggest goal when first taking charge was to let the command know how extraordinary Pacific Island reservists were and how much potential for expansion into emerging missions exists in the Pacific.

The findings are also a validation of the 624th RSG Management Control Program Colonel Milligan said.

MCP is a systematic approach to oversight of all programs incorporating metrics which allows commanders the ability to know at a glance the health of said programs.

“The process of defining our programs and executing them according to regulation, verifying program management on quarterly audits, and then validating the programs

is part of our culture now,” said Colonel Milligan. “I believe that the success of this inspection will only make this group stronger. It will motivate unit members and it will make us even more compliant.”

The Inspector’s found the 624th RSG’s MCP provided “exceptional program oversight, direction, execution and documentation at all levels. A very detailed and comprehensive program... one of the best we’ve ever seen.”

“We do not believe in mediocrity here,” Col Milligan replied. “When you come back, if you just popped in unexpectedly in a year from now or two years from now you are absolutely going to find this group in the same shape you find it today and that’s because management control works. That’s our message.”

“The professionalism of the people here is the highest I have seen in the eight months I have been on the team” said Colonel Berrie. “General Bradley should be proud of them and I’ll make sure he knows.”

UCI RECOGNITIONS

The following 624th RSG members were recognized by the UCI inspectors.

PROFESSIONAL PERFORMERS

Jolene Meyer

Master Sgt. Eduardo Vallejo

Master Sgt. Marilyn Kinoshita

Senior Master Sgt. Kenneth Ruggles Jr.

Airman 1st Class Shane Simpliciano-Kelly

Master Sgt. Louise Togawa

Master Sgt. Roy Siogco

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44th APS COMMANDER’S SUPPORT STAFF

Master Sgt. Manuel Cruz

Master Sgt. Edith Mesa

Tech. Sgt. Kelly Fitzpatrick

Staff Sgt. Elyada Desyree

--

FIRE RESPONSE TEAM

Chief Master Sgt. Geoffrey Tavres

Master Sgt. Anthony Silva

Master Sgt. Scott Pires

Master Sgt. David Jimenez

Master Sgt. James McGuire

Tech. Sgt. James Balgas

Tech. Sgt. Edward Lee

Tech. Sgt. Guy Desilva

Tech. Sgt. Desmond Yogi

Staff Sgt. Randall Manalias

Staff Sgt. Joshua Sarsona

Staff Sgt. Dominic Ahnee

Staff Sgt. Dale Alejandro

Staff Sgt. Jeremy Rhode

Staff Sgt. Jonathan Mauricio

Senior Airman Kaweo Andreas-Feeney

Senior Airman William Mahaulu

Senior Airman Jonathan Onekea

Senior Airman Matthew Kaea

--

OUTSTANDING COURTESY, DRESS AND APPEARANCE

Tech. Sgt. Rosemary LeClair

Tech. Sgt. Jonathan Bussey

Master Sgt. John Kim



Death Gratuity

Section 3306 of Public Law 110-28, enacted 25 May 07, amended the hierarchy of Death Gratuity beneficiaries specified in 10 U.S.C. § 1477 by permitting the service member to specify one beneficiary to receive up to 50 percent of the total payment.

The balance of the amount of the DG shall be paid to or for the living survivors of the service member in accordance with existing law and regulation.

Currently, service members may use the DG section on the vRED to designate beneficiaries of death gratuity in instances where there is no surviving spouse or child upon the service member's death.

The additional authority issued under this policy memorandum does not change existing guidance or methods for making such designations.

Service members may make an optional DG beneficiary election under this new authority by entering the beneficiary designation in the vRED remarks section.

Making such a designation is strictly voluntary and will result in the person so identified receiving the percentage indicated up to a maximum of 50 percent, with the remaining per-

centage of death gratuity being paid in accordance with the hierarchy set forth in 10 U.S.C. § 1477.

Designations must be in 10 percent increments, not to exceed 50 percent. Utilizing the vRED remarks section to designate death gratuity beneficiaries does not preclude its use for other existing purposes.

The current version of vRED is being modified to allow automatic updating of an optional death gratuity beneficiary.

When the modification is completed, death gratuity information will be moved from the remarks section to a new, more detailed death gratuity designation area.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How is the Death Gratuity benefit paid?

A: Unless otherwise designated, a surviving spouse, or if no surviving spouse, then child(ren) automatically receive the full DG benefit (currently \$100,000). The law now allows the DG amount paid to your spouse, then child(ren), to be reduced by up to 50 percent if you choose to elect an

optional DG beneficiary. This optional DG beneficiary does not have to be a relative, but can be anyone of your choosing and may receive up to 50 percent of the DG, to be designated in 10 percent increments up to a maximum of 50 percent.

Q: Are there any premiums for the death gratuity?

A: No. The death gratuity is a tax free, lump sum, gratuitous payment made by the Air Force to eligible beneficiaries and individuals designated by the active duty service member (includes Reserve or Guard members who die on Active Duty, AD Training or IDT, or full-time National Guard duty).

Its purpose is to help the survivor(s) in their readjustment and to aid them in meeting immediate expenses incurred.

Q: Is Death Gratuity and Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) the same program?

A: No. SGLI is life insurance and an optional election by service members. DG is a separate death benefit.

Comply or ...

*By Master Sgt. Steve Adachi
624th Regional Support Group
Safety Office*

Traffic accidents continue to be the leading cause of premature deaths for people in the armed forces, and for all Americans.

During this last "101 Critical Days of Summer" the Air Force experienced 19 fatalities. As in the past years, motor vehicle fatalities accounted for most of our losses.

Some of the factors in these mishaps included speeding and not using seatbelts or helmets.

"Seat belts are the single most effective safety device," said Elaine Weinstein, director of safety recommendations at the National Transportation Safety Board. When used properly, seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injury by 45 percent. Best of all Weinstein added, "It doesn't cost anything."

Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) 291-11.6, which requires no person shall operate a motor vehicle unless the person operating the vehicle and all passengers are properly restrained by an occupant restraint system (seat belt).

Penalty for not wearing a seatbelt is a mandatory 92 dollar fine. Guam has a similar law which enforces seat belt use as a primary means of traffic citation, 70 dollar fine.

In accordance with Air Force Instruction 91-207 3.4.1.1, all persons listed in paragraph 1.1.1. operating or riding in motor vehicles, shall wear installed safety belts as prescribed by the manufacturer.

Individuals shall not ride in seating positions where safety belts have not been installed, have been removed or have been rendered inoperative.

Active duty or military members on

orders may lose their driving privileges for one year. Civilians will be cited a 75 dollar fine and the violation will be submitted to the district court.

On 16 September 2007, 624 Regional Support Group Safety conducted a seat belt spot check on vehicles arriving for the physical fitness test.

The conditions at the time were less than ideal. It was raining and the sun was just rising, therefore the roads were slick and the visibility poor.

Of the 74 occupants observed, 17 were not in-compliance.

To the members of our unit who attempt to exercise their own personal judgment concerning their or their occupant's personal safety, buckle-up already.

It has been over five years since Hawaii and Guam have adopted the mandatory primary seat belt law. This means that an officer can pull drivers over just because you are not wearing a seat belt.

If you are driving on-base without a seat belt know this - you could lose a lot more than just your base driving privileges, you could get seriously injured or killed.

To sum it up;

1. You are more likely to die in a motor vehicle accident than by any other means of tragedy.
2. Seatbelt usage reduces the risk of fatal injury by 45 percent.
3. State and Territorial laws enforce a significant fine if you or one of your occupants is not wearing a seatbelt.
4. Hickam Air Force Base imposes penalties on violators to include monetary loss and/or loss of base driving privileges.
5. Nearly 25 percent of RSG personnel were observed arriving at Fit to Fight without seat belts.

So when it comes to seatbelts "Comply or You May Die - Buckle Your Seat Belt Already."

Play Ball!



The 'baseball that travelled around the world' is one of the unique celebrations honoring the Air Force's 60th Anniversary. After passing through all of the AF's theaters of operation, the ball was then used as the ceremonial first pitch at an Atlanta Brave's game on Sept. 18. Three members of the 624th Regional Support Group had the honor of videoing segments for broadcast at the game.

Above: Staff Sgt. Angela Everhart
Upper Right: Master Sgt. John Kim
Right: Tech. Sgt. Jonathan Bussey

Video Operator - Senior Airman Michael Lanza, 439th Air Wing
Public Affairs.

Blues at the Beach



Senior Airman Elbert Tejano, 48th Aerial Port Squadron, is recognized by Maj. Gen. Edward Rice, Pacific Air Forces vice commander, at a ceremony held at Waikiki Beach Sept. 15. Airman Tejano was one of five Airman from PACAF honored during the ceremony, which was held during the final day of Air Force Week.

AIR FORCE ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

Capt. Michael A. Fernandez
Capt. Ronnie R. Guerrero
Master Sgt. Vincent B. Perez Sr.
Master Sgt. Richard D. Spence
Master Sgt. Clifford T. Watanabe
Tech. Sgt. Luis F. Cabuhat
Tech. Sgt. Alex F. Champaco
Tech. Sgt. Linda L. Hamill
Tech. Sgt. Robert E. Johnson
Tech. Sgt. Ameurfina B. Natuel
Tech. Sgt. Rhodel V. Sevilla
Tech. Sgt. Danny A. Thomas
Tech. Sgt. Edward V. Villanueva
Staff Sgt. Jesse Vincent B. Aguino
Staff Sgt. Jesse Q. Aquino
Staff Sgt. Samuel D Bagay Jr.
Staff Sgt. Buenvenido P. Barcinas
Staff Sgt. Tammy K. Castro
Staff Sgt. Bryan J. Cruz
Staff Sgt. Mae E. Estoy
Staff Sgt. John D. Hernandez Jr.
Staff Sgt. Edward M. Superales
Senior Airman Steve John Q. Aguino
Senior Airman Tiana Marie B. Duenas
Senior Airman Adam Jon S. Grey
Senior Airman Kerry T. Guerrero
Senior Airman Nathan C. Habana
Senior Airman James R. Invencion

Senior Airman Jesse S. Lujan
Senior Airman Lorna Lynn M. Manglona
Senior Airman Corina B. Manzanares
Senior Airman Jesse S. Mateo
Senior Airman Eric N. Naz
Senior Airman Ronald T. Nesbitt
Senior Airman Roy C. Pablo
Senior Airman Melissa T. Pangelinan
Senior Airman George E. Repollo
Senior Airman Randolph F. Rivera
Senior Airman Alex S. Santiago
Senior Airman Dionne J. Santos
Senior Airman Paul L. Sekine
Senior Airman Amon L. Tayama
Senior Airman William J. Topasna
Senior Airman Ivylee C. Torre
Senior Airman Michele T. Ungacta
Senior Airman Vinton H. Velez
Airman 1st Class Gabrielle J. Conway

AIR FORCE COMMENDATION MEDAL

Lt. Col. Gene M. Odom
Master Sgt. Josephine T. Sanz
Master Sgt. Daniel H. Nathaniel III
Master Sgt. Celia B. Casemmartinez
Tech. Sgt. John A. Mabayag
Tech. Sgt. Antonio S. Gumataotao
Tech. Sgt. Gregorio T. Uncangco

Tech. Sgt. Peter F. Leonguerrero
Tech. Sgt. Rickey G. Iglesias
Tech. Sgt. Daryl S. Diras
Tech. Sgt. Crispin B. Bensas
Tech. Sgt. Jesse C. Bamba
Tech. Sgt. Jesse J. Cruz
Tech. Sgt. Ronny A. Barcinas
Tech. Sgt. Leonardo O. Sagun
Tech. Sgt. James N. Lewis
Staff Sgt. Albert E. Isimang
Staff Sgt. Bryan S. Galarpe
Staff Sgt. Monica M. Santos
Staff Sgt. Cynthia C. Barcinas
Staff Sgt. Raymond P. Jardon
Staff Sgt. Ignacio P. Campos
Staff Sgt. Frankie R. Cruz
Staff Sgt. Malcolm O. Lockhart
Staff Sgt. Kristy S. Turner
Senior Airman Raymond P. Ichihara
Senior Airman Benjamin Ray M. Tedpahogo
Senior Airman Jessip M. Jesus
Senior Airman Jeremiah J. Ignacio

MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL

Lt. Col. Reynold Tagorda
Lt. Col. Kraig E. Hankins
Master Sgt. Daniel Stone

Spotlight On



Lt. Col. John Morris
In-coming commander
624th Regional Support Group

My fellow Air Force Reserve Command Airmen of the Pacific, HUAH!

I am Lt Col John M. Morris, and I consider it a privilege to have been selected by Major General Duignan, 4th Air Force Commander, to be your new commander. I look forward to serving with my fellow airmen of the 624th Regional Support Group.

First, I congratulate all of you on your highly successful AFRC UCI inspection! A job well done!

My wife, Josie, is Filipina and was born and raised in Misamis-Oriental Province, Mindanao, Republic of the Philippines. Josie and I met while I was stationed at Clark Air Base and were married at the Philippine Air Force chapel. We just celebrated our 18th wedding anniversary on 19 September. Josie and I have two wonderful daughters who we are very proud of; Michelle, who is 17, and Sarah, who is 12.

We were also stationed at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, from January 1991 to May 1994 and thus we are very happy to come home to the Pacific region once again.

I consider myself a warrior airman, and I proudly claim a family military heritage that predates the start of the Revolutionary War. I believe in teamwork and that it takes all of us working together as a team to successfully meet and fulfill our mission requirements.

I do not plan to make any initial major changes. I want to visit with our units and talk to my fellow airmen and senior leadership and see how things are going, and then when we are ready, convene our senior leadership and plot our future course together.

My vision is very simple. As a team, we will continue to protect and defend our country, our fellow citizens and our allies; be ready to deploy in support of AEF or other higher headquarters taskings while maintaining our mission requirements at home; continue to proudly represent 4th Air Force and Air Force Reserve Command in the Pacific region; continue to take good care of our airmen; maintain a safe, secure working environment for our personnel and treat each other with the professional dignity and respect we deserve as members of the armed forces of the United States of America.

Again, I look forward to serving with all of you as we work together as a team to serve, protect and defend our country during America's Global War on Terrorism.

Hispanic Heritage Month



Several members of the 624th Civil Engineer Squadron gathered together to celebrate their Hispanic heritage through cooking authentic Mexican cuisine. Lily Rangel, student hire, (crushing chilies in a molcajete), Tech. Sgt. Rose LeClair (kneading tortilla dough), Tech. Sgt. Julia Walther (preparing guacamole), Staff Sgt. Alicia Jimenez and Staff Sgt. Angela Everhart (chopping cilantro.) Sergeant LeClair learned how to make tortillas from her great-grandmother at the age of 7. "Since then, making homemade tortillas with my grandmother and mother has been a tradition among the women in my family," said Sergeant LeClair. "This is a tradition that I intend to carry on with my future children and grand-children." Hispanic Heritage Month runs from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 this year.



Desert Deployers

Staff Sgt. Jason Tugade, Maj. Jennifer Sur Watanabe, Master Sgt. Russell Johnson, Maj. Edilbert Castro, and Maj. Edna Higa currently represent the 624th Aeromedical Staging Squadron while deployed in Kuwait.



Belles of the Ball

Senior Airman Corina Manzanares and Airman 1st Class Jo Majeed, both with the 44th Aerial Port Squadron, meet up with the performing group the American Belles at Andersen Air Force Base's 60th Anniversary Air Force Ball.

UTA Schedule

Hickam

October 13-14
November 3-4
December 1-2
January 6-7

Andersen

October 27-28
November 17-18
December 15-17
January 20-21



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

Rings will be worn at the base of the finger and will not be worn on the thumb. People cannot wear more than three rings. Wedding sets count as one ring.

Source: 97th Air Force Uniform Board