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"Produce Pilots, Advance Airmen, Feed the Fight"

Vol. 36, Issue 51 | Columbus Air Force Base, Miss. | December 21, 2012

Upcoming Inspection

44 Days until the CUI

3 Excellents
3 Zeros
100% Accountablilty

News Briefs

Wing Commander's Calls

There will be three Commander's Calls during the second week of January. The Enlisted Call will be Jan. 8 at 3 p.m. in the Kaye Auditorium. The Civilian Call will be held Jan. 10 at 3 p.m. in the Kaye Auditorium. The Officer Call will be held Jan. 11 at 4 p.m. at the Columbus Club.

Upcoming Holidays and Family Days

Dec. 25 and Jan. 1 are Federal holidays and Dec. 24 and 31 are AETC Family Days; most base offices will be closed. For a full list of holiday hours and closures see page 6.

Enlisted Promotions

The Enlisted Promotions ceremony will be held Jan. 3 at 9:30 a.m. in the Columbus Club.

Dress code

Effective immediately, the 14th Flying Training Wing duty uniform is the utility uniform every day, Monday through Friday. Commanders can require blues as required by mission or other needs.

Inside

Feature 10

College education opportunities for military members are highlighted in this week's feature.

Happy holidays to Team BLAZE

Col. Jim Sears
14th Flying Training Wing Commander

The holiday season is now upon us, giving us a chance to rest and recuperate. This year we have many accomplishments to be proud of. Our mission would not be possible without each of your outstanding contributions to Team BLAZE. This year we produced over 400 total students from all flying training programs and we graduated our 12,000th pilot since 1971. We continue to advance Airmen and you have already racked up an impressive set of awards recognizing your 2012 accomplishments, such as the Outstanding Air Education and Training Command Civil Engineer and Contracting squadrons and seven individual AETC award winners. Also, we have fed the fight by deploying over 170 Airmen to over 18 countries including such places as Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Saudi Arabia. Let me take the time to thank you all for your efforts throughout the past year and for your time spent in preparation for the upcoming Combined Unit Inspection. This holiday period is a well deserved rest for all of you, and I hope you rejuvenate yourselves before returning in the New Year ready to work hard and show AETC how well we accomplish our mission every day.

Our mission is dependent on each and every Airman at Columbus Air Force Base, so take care of yourselves over the holidays and make sound decisions. Whether you are traveling to see loved

See HAPPY HOLIDAYS, Page 2

Courtesy photo

Col. Jim Sears and Vikki Sears wish all of Team BLAZE a happy holiday season and encourage everyone to be safe and rest up in preparation for the Combined Unit inspection to show that Columbus Air Force Base is home to world's premier pilot training wing and community developing the world's best Airmen.

Columbus AFB Training Timeline

Phase II

Squadron	Senior Class	Squadron Overall	Track Select
37th (13-12)	7.93 days	-4.90 days	Jan. 16
41st (13-13)	0.98 days	-5.80 days	Feb. 12

Phase III

Squadron	Senior Class	Squadron Overall	Graduation
48th (13-04)	0.60 days	0.37 days	Jan. 25
50th (13-04)	2.22 days	1.95 days	Jan. 25

IFF

Squadron	Senior Class	Squadron Overall	Graduation
49th (13-DB)	0.68 days	1.07 days	Jan. 30

Wing Sortie Board

Aircraft	Required	Flown	Annual
T-6	1,555	1,289	5,704
T-1	551	559	2,454
T-38	594	605	3,294
IFF	189	144	913

The graduation speaker is Lt. Gen. James Kolwaski, Commander, Global Strike Command.

14TH FLYING TRAINING WING DEPLOYED

As of press time, **59 TEAM BLAZE members are deployed** worldwide. Remember to support the Airmen and their families while they are away.

Security and policy review

Did you know that as a military member you must coordinate all information relating to speeches, presentations, Academic papers, multimedia visual information materials and information proposed for release to a publicly accessible Worldwide Website with exception of Air Force publications through the 14th Flying Training Wing Public Affairs Office? For more information contact the 14th FTW/PA at 434-7068.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

(Continued from Page 1)

ones or staying local, celebrate with care while you relax. Many of you will be taking various excursions in the next few weeks so it is important to apply the same risk management off-duty as you do on-duty. Be sure to take into consideration how long you will be traveling, the possibility of poor weather and the traffic on the road. Safety should be a primary concern; it is important that you prepare carefully for any travel, make a plan and follow it.

Although the holiday season is regarded as a loving, cheerful time, it can be a tough period for many of our Airmen. Those that may not be able to go home, or those with family members deployed, may have difficulty missing their loved ones. December can be one of the most stressful times of year and this stress is compounded with the addition of the approaching CUI. Ask for help if you need it. Columbus AFB has a network of people all willing to make your holiday the best it can be. If you need someone to talk to, please reach out to your friends, family, first sergeant or one of the many support agencies we enjoy such as the chapel or our mental health specialists. Airmen take care of Airmen, so keep your wingmen and their families in your thoughts and do not hesitate to reach out to others.

Vikki and I would like to wish you a truly happy holiday season. Every Airman is a critical part of Team BLAZE and we cannot continue to accomplish our mission without all of you. The well being of each individual Airman is important to the well being of the unit, so make smart decisions. Always have a designated driver, always have a back-up plan. Take time to recuperate and refresh. Focus on yourself and your family and building back up after working so hard on a daily basis. January brings a new year, and an intense few weeks of preparation for the CUI. Come back from the break with a fresh attitude, excited for the opportunity we have. We need everyone to return in January to show the Inspector General that we are the world's premier pilot training wing and community … developing the world's best Airmen.

December

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat/Sun
24 **AETC Family Day,** Most base offices closed	25 **Christmas Day,** Most base offices closed **Holiday Break for SUPT Flying (25th - 1st)**	26	27 **Fly Day**	28	29/30
31 **AETC Family Day,** Most base offices closed	1 **New Year's Day,** Most base offices closed	2	3 **Enlisted Promotions,** 9:30 a.m. @ Club	4 **Class 13-04 Assignment Night,** 5:30 p.m. @ Club **14th FSS CoL Ceremony,** 10:14 a.m. @ Club	5/6

Long Range Events

Jan. 8: Hearts Apart
Jan. 8: Enlisted Call
Jan. 10: Civilian Call
Jan. 11: Officer Call
Jan. 15: Newcomer's Orientation
Jan. 16: Class 13-12 Track Select
Jan. 17: Dorm Dinner
Jan. 21: Martin Luther King Holiday
Jan. 25: Class 13-04 Graduation
Jan. 30: Enlisted Promotions
Feb. 1: Class 13-05 Assignment Night
Feb. 4-8: CUI begins
Feb. 12: Newcomer's Orientation
Feb. 12: Class 13-13 Track Select
Feb. 12: Hearts Apart
Feb. 15: Class 13-05 Graduation
Feb. 21: Annual Awards Ceremony

SILVER WINGS

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Submission Deadline

The deadline for submitting copy for next week's SILVER WINGS is noon Monday. Articles may be dropped off at the public affairs office or e-mailed.

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The SILVER WINGS staff reserves the right to edit or rewrite all copy submitted when necessary. All photos are U.S. Air Force photos unless otherwise stated.

Submit all advertising to the Columbus, Miss., Commercial Dispatch advertising department one week prior to desired publication date. The advertising department can be reached at (662) 328-2427.

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F-15E WSO

2nd Lt. Michael Lynch
F-15E WSO

2nd Lt. Jonathan O'Neal
F-15C

IFF 13-CBC Graduates

49th Fighter Training Squadron

The 49th Fighter Training Squadron graduated Introduction to Fighter Fundamentals Class 13-CBC on Dec. 19. Eight members completed this phase of their training on their way to becoming fighter pilots and weapons systems officers in the Combat Air Forces.

The 49th FTS is responsible for Active Duty, Guard, Reserve, and International flying training in the T-38C IFF aircraft. The 49th FTS provides training to fighter pilots and weapon system officers entering Air Force major fighter weapons systems, which include the F-16, F-15C, F-15E, F-22, and A-10C.

The nine-week course begins with tactical formation flights and then introduces pilots to basic fighter maneuvers and air-to-air employment in offensive, defensive, and high aspect fight scenarios. Students bound for aircraft with an air-to-ground attack capability then move on to surface attack and low-altitude tactical navigation phases learning to employ ordnance against ground targets. The skills learned during IFF directly translate to the fighters these students will soon fly in their follow-on training and one day employ in combat.

Congratulations to our newest fighter wingmen!

Commander's Action Line

434-7058

The Commander's Action Line is your direct line to the commander for comments and suggestions on how to make Columbus AFB a better place. Although the Commander's Action Line is always available, the best way to resolve problems is through the chain-of-command.

The Commander's Action Line phone number is 434-7058. Callers should leave their name and phone number to receive an answer. All names will be kept confidential. Message may be answered in the Silver Wings without names.

Written questions may also be brought to the PA office in the Wing Headquarters building, BLDG. 724, suite 210. Questions and answers may be edited for brevity and style.

Moorhead assists in setting career focus

Airman 1st Class Charles Dickens
14th Flying Training Wing Public Affairs

Retired Lt. Gen. Glen "Wally" Moorhead, United States Air Force visited Columbus Air Force Base Dec. 14 to speak at the graduation of Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training Class 13-03.

Moorhead spoke to the audience about the importance of maintaining focus on the correct things throughout a career and enjoying the experiences along the way.

"Be sure throughout your career that you're focused on the right things at the right times," said Moorhead. "There are times to play, there are times to have fun, but there are also times to work very, very hard, and that hard work will pay off."

The retired lieutenant general praised SUPT Class 13-03 for their accomplishment of completing their training, but also gave a word of advice to the future pilot training classes to help them excel.

"I think the most important thing is that in a year from now when you leave, to not look back and say 'I wish I would have worked harder'," said Moorhead. "It's a hard, fun and challenging year and hopefully you will take advantage of the base, city, instructors and the training you're here for."

Moorhead also stressed to focus on the job at hand and to allow the long-term career dreams to work themselves out because doing well on the current assignment sets the foundation for success in the future.

U.S. Air Force Photo/Airman 1st Class Charles Dickens

Retired Lt. Gen. Glen "Wally" Moorhead, United States Air Force speaks to the audience attending the Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training Class 13-03 graduation. Moorhead gave the newest pilots advice on how to keep focus on the important aspects of their future careers.

He additionally wanted to ensure the newest Air Force pilots and those still in training, that no matter what their next assignment, it will be an amazing journey. Along the journey Airmen may not receive the assignment or plane that they were hoping for but it will be an enjoyable experience nonetheless.

"There are no best airplanes, they are all wonderful and you will all have great experiences," said Moorhead. "Cherish it because it goes by way too fast."

Feed the fight

Courtesy photo

Master Sgt. Eric Gray and Tech Sgt. Tobias Ellis and Maj. Bryan Ferrari, 838 AEAG Det 1's new MRAP drivers, arrive in Camp Arena, Herat on Dec. 2. Prior to deploying to Afghanistan Ferrari was the 14th Flying Training Wing Exercise Evaluation Team Chief, he is now the Commander of Detachment 1, 838 AEAG at Camp Arena, Herat, Afghanistan on a 365-day TDY. If you have a photo of a currently deployed Team BLAZE Airman you would like featured in Feed the Fight, send it to SilverWings@Columbus.af.mil.

White top returns

U.S. Air Force Photo/Airman 1st Class Charles Dickens

The 14th Flying Training Wing commander's Ford Fusion now has a distinguished "White Top" to allow Airmen to more easily recognize the vehicle for rendering courtesies. When occupied with a rank plate displayed the vehicle should be saluted by junior ranking servicemembers until the salute is returned or the vehicle has passed.

Don't spike your career with alcohol this holiday

14th Flying Training Wing Judge Advocate Office

With the holiday season in full swing, members of Team BLAZE will soon be slowing down to spend time with family and friends. Because some holiday activities will involve alcohol, now is the perfect time to think about your holiday safety plan. Don't let a lack of planning ruin your holiday season!

First, if you're attending an event where alcohol will be served take time in advance to pre-plan a safe trip home. Use a designated driver and always have a backup plan. Remember to carry the phone number of a trusted friend that you can call if your designated driver falls through. Of course another option is to call 434-RIDE. Columbus AFB has seen its share of DUIs this year: Seven members of the BLAZE Team have faced disciplinary action for driving while intoxicated in 2012. That is seven too many! It's just not worth risking your career, or, more importantly, your safety and the safety of others by getting behind the wheel while under the influence of alcohol. A simple plan makes your holidays more enjoyable. If you are a designated driver, don't drink at all—why risk it? Be a strong wingman for your friends, so they can have a great time with the confidence that you will get them home safely.

Second, if you are drinking remember that moderation is the key, even when you've made arrangements for a designated driver. We have seen a host of disciplinary actions resulting from poor judgment brought on by too much alcohol. This past year, excessive drinking has led to fights, theft, property destruction and public intoxication. Conduct like this reflects poorly on Team BLAZE. Don't let a great time derail your career; remember that you are an Airman twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. One of the best ways to prevent trouble with alcohol is to have a wingman when you are out drinking to ensure you don't do something embarrassing, criminal or simply out-of-bounds.

Finally, it's important to remember that if you are hosting a party, it's your responsibility to ensure that underage guests do not drink alcohol. Providing alcohol to minors is a crime. Columbus AFB has a long-standing zero tolerance policy for underage drinking. In short, if you are underage don't drink alcohol. As the host, also be careful to ensure that folks who are driving home can do so safely. If they've had too much to drink, take the keys and find them a safe way home.

The consequences of DUI and other alcohol-related misconduct can be severe, including Article 15, court-martial or conviction in a civilian court. Alcohol related offenses can result in referral EPRs or OPRs, Unfavorable Information Files, red-lining of an upcoming promotion and loss of on-base driving privileges. In many ways, these consequences are trivial compared to the possibility of getting hurt or hurting someone else.

Have a joyous holiday season, and remember a great plan will keep you safe and sound into the New Year. Drink responsibly and please help the BLAZE Team achieve its goal of zero DUIs and zero alcohol-related incidents this holiday season!

Air Force pilot provides critical communication during pilot's mid-flight emergency

Senior Airman Scott Saldukas
47th Flying Training Wing
Public Affairs

LAUGHLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — During a two-aircraft formation flight Dec. 5, a T-6A Texan II instructor pilot with the 85th Flying Training Squadron here demonstrated poise and composure when faced with a situation he had yet to come across in his career.

Air Force Capt. James Kareis was flying back from Fort Worth Alliance Airport when he heard distress calls from an aircraft experiencing engine malfunctions.

"I turned my radio to an emergency frequency used by civilian aircraft to hear the transmissions better," Kareis said.

The distress calls came from call sign 2252 Juliet who explained his situation to Kareis. His engine was failing and he was looking to land in a nearby field.

While in contact with the aircraft, Kareis a Pittsburgh, Pa., native, maintained constant communication with air traffic controllers in Houston, Texas, who were in touch with the distressed aircraft before losing communication.

"I was constantly letting the gentleman know we were here, and we were going to help anyway we could with the situation," Kareis said. "He updated me with his coordinates frequently and I passed them directly to Houston so they always had an idea where he was.":

After 20 minutes of communicating back-and-forth, the distressed aircraft's engine failed, but the pilot managed to land safely in a field unscathed.

Kareis, a graduate of Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, passed along the final coordinates so emergency personnel could respond to the downed aircraft as soon as possible.

"Fortunately for this gentleman we just so happened to be in the right place at the right time," he said. "I guess you could say preparation met opportunity in this case."

While the entire ordeal lasted less than 30 minutes, the scenario was unlike any other he had faced to this point.

"We brief about scenarios like this before every flight but it is very uncommon for it to happen like it did," Kareis said. "I am just glad everything happened the way it did, and he was able to have peace of mind knowing we were there to help him."

U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Scott Saldukas

Capt. James Kareis, 85th Flying Training Squadron instructor pilot, poses for a picture in front of a T-6A Texan II aircraft at Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas, on Dec. 12, 2012. During a routine return flight from Fort Worth Alliance Airport, he heard distress calls from an aircraft experiencing engine malfunctions and acted as a liaison between the aircraft and air traffic controllers in Houston, Texas. Kareis helped to ensure responders had accurate coordinates of his location after landing in a field safely.

Operation Christmas Drop: tales from the tail

U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Samuel Morse/Released

Senior Airman Timothy Oberman, 36th Airlift Squadron loadmaster, waits to drop a bundle of humanitarian aid during Operation Christmas Drop, Dec. 13, 2012. Timing is essential for low-cost, low-altitude air drops, often offering a window of only one or two seconds for the navigator to tell the loadmaster to drop the bundle once the drop zone is reached.

U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Samuel Morse/Released

Loadmasters and aircrew from the 36th Airlift Squadron look out over a drop zone after delivering humanitarian bundles to the island of Ulal as part of Operation Christmas Drop, Dec. 11, 2012. Due to the additional donations received that year, riggers with the 374th Logistics Readiness Squadron had to adjust the way the bundles were built, making it possible to drop more supplies than ever before, and achieving a 100 percent success rate with the adjusted rigging.

AETC declares Eglin ready for F-35 training

Maj. Karen Roganov
Team Eglin Public Affairs

EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. — Following an independent evaluation of Eglin's capability to conduct F-35A Lightning II pilot training, Air Education and Training Command announced Dec. 17 that the 33rd Fighter Wing can do so starting January 2013.

"The preliminary results provided by the Joint Operational Test Team show the F-35A aircraft and its pilot training and sustainment systems, are robust enough to conduct the planned pilot transition and instructor upgrade courses," said Air Education and Training Command commander, Gen. Edward A. Rice Jr.

AETC will initiate syllabus training in order to meet Air Force-defined requirements. A deliberate process will be used that continues to validate the training system's effectiveness through advancing training blocks as they are made available by the military's F-35 Program Office and Lockheed Martin.

The Operational Utility Evaluation, which started Sept. 10 and was slated to last 65 days, encompassed intensive classroom and simulator training along with six flights, for four primary and two backup upgrading student pilots.

With favorable conditions to include "good weather, an accomplished maintenance team and talented instructors to train the pilots, the OUE process lasted only 46 training days," said Col. Andrew Toth, 33rd Fighter Wing commander, an F-35A instructor pilot who spearheads the joint and international F-35 efforts at Eglin.

"You are here making a lasting impression on how the team will execute F-35 both flying and maintenance training over the next 50 years," he said during conversations to wing members following the successful OUE.

During the OUE, experienced pilots transitioned from the F-16 and A-10 aircraft, to the world's first multi-role stealth fighter. Two pilots, Maj. John Wilson and Maj. Matthew Johnston were from Eglin's 58th Fighter Squadron and two, Lt. Col. Brian O'Neill and Maj. Joseph Scholtz and were from operational test units at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., and Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.

"Their performances were superb ... that smile each student had after landing his first flight showed they were well prepared and the jet was easy to fly just as I had experienced with my first flight," said Lt. Col. Lee Kloos, 58th Fighter Squadron commander, who is charged with overseeing the squadron's daily flying operations. He is also the first non-developmental test pilot to fly the F-35.

Courtesy photo

Following an independent evaluation of Eglin's capability to conduct F-35A Lightning II pilot training, Air Education and Training Command announced Dec. 17 that the 33rd Fighter Wing can do so starting January 2013. Pictures here are two F-35 Lightning II joint strike fighter aircraft from Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.

The OUE was initiated by the Joint Strike Fighter Program Executive Officer based in Wash. D.C. and was intended to best arm the AETC commander with comprehensive data from an independent source so Rice could decide how to proceed with future F-35A pilot training at Eglin.

"The OUE showed the men and women at Eglin are ready," said Rice. "I'm very proud of both those in uniform and the contracted support who put in years of hard work. The culmination of those labors was successfully demonstrating the Integrated Training Center can conduct safe and effective flying operations in addition to academic training."

Training is slated to begin Jan. 7 with four 58th Fighter Squadron pilots and two operational test pilots.

The focus of the OUE evaluation team was on the ability to conduct pilot training but leadership agree they couldn't do it without their maintainers.

"The maintainers are the backbone of the flight operations. Had they not performed the way they did, we could not have finished the OUE about two weeks ahead of schedule," said Toth pointing to his skilled team in the 58th Aircraft Maintenance Unit and Lockheed Martin contracted logistics support.

With RFT declared, the wing's integrated training center gets closer to running at full capacity of 100 military pilot students a year along with the 2,100 maintenance students.

"We look forward to 2013 as we integrate the Navy's 'Grim Reapers' and F-35C into our flying operations along with our international partners, the Dutch and UK. The pace of operations will not slow as we continue to grow and we are ready for the new challenges next year will bring to wing personnel and it's F-35 Integrated Training Center."

Approximately 36 Air Force pilots are expected to go through the training program next year.

"The team at Eglin went through a rigorous process to lead the way for F-35A training. We look forward to starting off the new year with more history in the making as they put the JSF Integrated Training Center to task to provide a world class training program," said Rice.

AETC Chaplain visits Columbus

U.S. Air Force photo

Chief Master Sgt. Keller Benningfield, Air Education and Training Command and Chaplain (Col.) Steven Schaick, AETC Command Chaplain converse with Chaplain (Maj.) Leslie Janovec, 14th Flying Training Wing Chaplain and Tech Sgt. Nikki Frontz, 14th FTW Chapel on Dec. 14. The AETC Command Chaplain visited Columbus Air Force Base Dec. 12-14 to get a better understanding of chapel mission here.

CUI team prepares for Columbus

U.S. Air Force photo

Col. Jim Sears, 14th Flying Training Wing Commander welcomes the Combined Unit Inspection Advance Eschelon team on Dec. 19. The advance team ensures the logistics for the supporting the CUI team is set prior to the inspection on Feb. 4, 2013.

Base medical clinic to see improvements

JE Dunn Construction

Major facility improvements are underway for Columbus Air Force Base Koritz Medical Clinic. When complete, the 65,500 square foot, $23.6 million modernization will result in increased energy efficiency and improved building systems. The medical clinic building, Building 1100, was constructed in 1959 and originally designed as a 35 bed inpatient healthcare facility. The scope is to renovate the clinic in its entirety to better accommodate the services offered by the 14th Medical Group. This project will also include relocating the dental clinic, Building 1004, into the medical clinic in Building 1100. This renovation will greatly increase operational efficiency and provide better access of different departments for our patients. This will be a two phase construction project with some departments moving to a temporary facility while the construction is underway inside the medical clinic. The team will provide details regarding specific departmental moves in the coming months. All services will continue to be available either in the clinic or the temporary facility.

The design-build team of JE Dunn and HWA has met with staff to review all space requirements, furnishings and equipment that will be required to design a state-of-the-art outpatient clinic.

The project is scheduled to be complete mid-2015. Important project milestones dates are:

- Temporary Facilities constructed early July 2013
- Construction of Phase 1 to begin August 2013
- Project Complete July 2015

JE Dunn Construction graphic

The holidays and your oral health

Maj. (Dr.) Marie-Antonette Brancato
14th Medical Operations Squadron Dental Flight Commander

It's that time of the year again, the holidays! Everywhere you turn there are baked goods and sweets all around. Now, you might be thinking about watching what you eat because of the weight you might gain but something else to keep in mind is all the sugar in those sweets and how will it affect your oral health.

Dentists are concerned when patients consume high amounts of sugar-filled sodas, sweetened fruit drinks, and non-nutritious snacks, such as candy, cookies and pastries that affect their teeth. These items generally have little if any nutritional value and over time they can affect your teeth.

So now the question is, how does eating and drinking those sugar filled items affect my teeth? The process begins when you place the food or drink in your mouth. The item being ingested meets the plaque and bacteria that is already in your mouth. Bacteria welcome sugary food particles because they use sugar to produce acids that can destroy the hard surface of the tooth, called enamel. Each time you eat foods containing sugar, the teeth are attacked by acids for 20 minutes or more. It is very important to watch what foods or drinks you are consuming, not only because of its nutritional value but because of the amount of sugar that can affect your teeth.

"How do I choose foods that are good to consume?" you may be thinking. Even foods that you would least expect such fruits, milk, bread, cereals and vegetables, contain some sugar — so be sure to ration the amounts you eat. If you do snack, choose nutritious foods such as cheese, raw vegetables, plain yogurt, or a piece of fruit. Foods that are eaten as part of a meal cause less harm. More saliva is released during meals, which helps wash foods from the mouth and helps lessen the effects of acids. The key to choosing foods wisely is not to avoid these foods, but to think before you eat. It's not only what you eat but when you eat makes a big difference in your oral health. Eat a balanced diet and limit between-meal snacks.

For good dental health, keep these tips in mind when choosing your meals and snacks. Here are some other helpful tips to maintain excellent oral hygiene. Try to drink water instead of sugary beverages you may usually drink. This will help limit the amount of bacteria that can attack food particles. Brush thoroughly twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste and floss daily to remove plaque that you don't see from under the gums and between your teeth. Try keeping a food diary for a week. Record every item you eat and drink, including hard candies or chewing gum that contains sugar. Compare the diary to the food pyramid recommendations. Overall, just try to maintain a healthy diet and along with brushing and flossing, your oral health will be great!

So remember, the holidays can be a time of joy without worrying about your diet and oral health. If you follow these recommendations, you can still enjoy some of those holiday goodies, have better nutrition and be less likely to have the start of cavities. Happy Holidays!

Holiday hours and closures on Columbus AFB

Main Exchange
Monday Dec. 24: 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Tuesday Dec. 25: Closed
Tuesday Jan. 1: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Express
Monday Dec. 24: 7 a.m.-6 p.m.
Tuesday Dec. 25: Closed
Monday Dec. 31: 7 a.m.-8 p.m.
Tuesday Jan. 1: 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Subway
Monday Dec. 24: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
Tuesday Dec. 25: Closed
Wednesday Dec. 26: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Monday Dec. 31: 7 a.m.-5 p.m.
Tuesday Jan. 1: Closed

Taco Bell
Tuesday Dec. 25: Closed
Wednesday Dec. 26: Closed
Monday Dec. 31: 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Tuesday Jan. 1: Closed
Wednesday Jan. 2: Closed

Barber Shop
Monday Dec. 24: 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Tuesday Dec. 25: Closed
Wednesday Dec. 26: Closed
Monday Dec. 31: Closed
Tuesday Jan. 1: Closed

Beauty Shop
Tuesday Dec. 25: Closed
Wednesday Dec. 26: Closed
Tuesday Jan. 1: Closed

Optical Shop
Monday Dec. 24: Closed
Tuesday Dec. 25: Closed
Wednesday Dec. 26: Closed
Monday Dec. 31: Closed
Tuesday Jan. 1: Closed

GNC
Tuesday Dec. 25: Closed

Library
Open: Dec. 17-28: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Closed: Dec. 24, 25 and 31, Jan. 1

Personnel/Manpower
Military Personnel: Closed Dec. 24, 25 and 31, Jan. 1
Civilian Personnel: Closed Dec. 24, 25 and 31, Jan. 1
Manpower: Closed Dec. 24, 25 and 31, Jan. 1
NAF HRO: Closed Dec. 24, 25 and 31, Jan. 1

Child Development Center
Monday Dec. 24: Closed
Tuesday Dec. 25: Closed
Saturday Dec. 29: Closed
Sunday Dec. 30: Closed
Monday Dec. 31: Closed
Tuesday Jan. 1: Closed

Airman & Family Readiness Center
Monday Dec. 24: Closed
Tuesday Dec. 25: Closed
Monday Dec. 31: Closed
Tuesday Jan. 1: Closed

Youth Programs
Monday Dec. 24: Closed
Tuesday Dec. 25: Closed
Wednesday Dec. 26: 7 a.m.-6 p.m. SAP and 1 p.m.-5 p.m. Open Recreation
Thursday Dec. 27: 7 a.m.-6 p.m. SAP and 1 p.m.-5 p.m. Open Recreation
Friday Dec. 28: 7 a.m.-6 p.m. SAP and 1 p.m.-5 p.m. Open Recreation
Monday Dec. 31: Closed
Tuesday Jan. 1: Closed
Wednesday Jan 2: 7 a.m.-6 p.m. SAP and 3 p.m.-7 p.m. Open Recreation

A&C/Auto
Dec. 20-Jan.2: Closed

Bowling
Monday Dec. 24: Closed
Tuesday Dec. 25: Closed
Sunday Dec. 30: Closed
Monday Dec. 31: Closed
Tuesday Jan. 1: Closed

Golf
Monday Dec. 24: Closed
Tuesday Dec. 25: Closed
Sunday Dec. 30: Closed
Monday Dec. 31: Closed
Tuesday Jan. 1: Closed

ODR
Monday Dec. 24: Closed
Tuesday Dec. 25: Closed
Wednesday Dec. 26: Closed
Thursday Dec. 27: 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Friday Dec. 28: 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Saturday Dec. 29: 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Sunday Dec. 30: 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Monday Dec. 31: Closed
Tuesday Jan. 1: Closed
Wednesday Jan 2: Closed

Club
Dec. 24-Jan. 1: Closed

Lodging
Open 24 hours everyday

Fitness
Monday Dec. 24: Closed
Tuesday Dec. 25: Closed
Wednesday Dec. 26: 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Monday Dec. 31: 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Tuesday Jan. 1: Closed

Commissary
Monday Dec. 24: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Tuesday Dec. 25: Closed
Monday Dec. 31: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Tuesday Jan. 1: Closed

Air Force leaders issue holiday message

WASHINGTON — Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III and Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James Roy send the following holiday message to the Airmen of the U.S. Air Force:

The holiday season is a perfect time to celebrate the many blessings that we enjoy in our country and spend time with the people who are most important in our lives. As we gather around those we love, we encourage you to strengthen the relationships that enrich your life and sincerely thank those who steadfastly support your service to our Nation's Air Force.

To those who will spend this special time of year far from family and loved ones, our thoughts are with you. The sacrifices you make earn the deep and abiding respect of your fellow Airmen and Americans. For those Airmen and members of our sister Services engaged in combat operations around the globe, we look forward to your safe return.

To those of us with the opportunity to celebrate the holidays at home, remember our deployed Airmen and extend heartfelt thanks to the family members and loved ones who miss them. We ask that you reach out to the families and friends of our deployed Airmen, and in the spirit of giving and support that defines our Air Force family, welcome them into your holiday celebrations.

In the many joyous ways we celebrate this holiday season, we wish you and yours the very best during this special time and throughout the New Year.

AF tests 24/7 fitness centers

Debbie Gildea
Air Force Personnel Center Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, Texas — Six installations will implement 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week fitness center access this and next month as part of an Air Force Services Transformation Initiative test concept, Air Force Personnel Center officials announced today.

The Office of the Secretary of Defense Military Communities and Family Policy director and Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs approved the Services Transformation initiative to test unsupervised fitness and sports center after-hours use.

Test installations include Fairchild Air Force Base, Wash., Scott AFB, Ill., F.E. Warren AFB, Wyo., Tinker AFB, Okla., Little Rock AFB, Ark., and Joint Base Andrews, Washington D.C., said Capt. Matthew Dunn, AFPC Services Transformation deputy chief.

The after-hours fitness center test is one of several initiatives underway, or on the horizon, intended to transform how the Air Force provides morale, welfare and recreation programs and services, said Ms. Margaret Treland, Air Force fitness and sports chief.

Services acquired an entry access and surveillance system that was installed at Fairchild and Scott the second week of December. F.E. Warren began installation Dec. 12, and Tinker and Joint Base Andrews will begin Dec. 17. Little Rock installation is slated to begin Jan. 13, Dunn said. Equipment installation takes 7-14 days, and all test installations are expected to be up and running by the end of January.

"Test guidelines are clear and focused on Airman security and safety," said Dunn. "Facilities must have controlled access, security monitors and emergency capabilities and equipment, including defibrillators, first aid kits, phones with emergency number lists, and clear procedures for fire department access."

In addition, test installation commanders must conduct and document operational risk management assessments, develop applicable wingman policy, and post written standards for unsupervised use of the facility. This guidance will help ensure Airmen who use the facility after hours understand safety requirements, and address facility security, Dunn explained.

One of several Services Transformation Initiative programs, the initiative has great potential to better serve Airmen, he said. Testing will provide more information, though.

"Fitness centers are critical to Airman fitness and resiliency, but most centers have fixed hours, unlike the Air Force which has a 24/7 mission," Dunn said. "Airmen who work unusual hours may not be able to get to the fitness center during routine operating hours."

While 24-hour fitness center access may be an obvious answer, manpower authorizations and budget restrictions prevent round-the-clock manning, he explained.

"Unmanned fitness centers are not uncommon outside the gates, so test results from the participating installations will help us determine if the practice will work for Air Force fitness centers, as well."

Test installations will monitor and collect information on use, utility cost increases, damage to the facility or equipment, and injuries or incidents, to determine viability to further expand this program across the Air Force.

Visit www.usafservices.com or www.myairforcelife.com for more information about this and other quality of life programs. For information about Air Force personnel issues, visit the myPers website at https://mypers.af.mil.

Employment website teams with Joining Forces

From a Department of Commerce News Release
American Forces Press Service

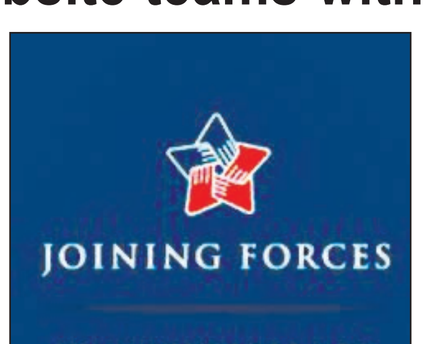
WASHINGTON — Employment website Monster.com is collaborating with the White House's Joining Forces campaign and will contribute to the initiative's goal of hiring or training an additional 250,000 veterans and military spouses by the end of 2014, Acting Commerce Department Secretary Rebecca M. Blank announced here yesterday at the National Veteran Employment Summit hosted by Monster and Military.com.

Joining Forces is a comprehensive national initiative led by First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden, to provide service members and their families with the opportunities and support they have earned. One of the effort's main focuses has been connecting America's veterans and military spouses with careers that match their skills, experience and dedication. To date, Joining Forces has worked with more than 2,000 companies to hire or train 125,000 veterans and military spouses.

During the summit, officials said, human resource leaders from the public and private sector engaged with veterans, senior military and government officials, and respected nonprofit organization leaders about the most effective ways to prepare, support, and connect veterans with employers.

"All of us at the Commerce Department and throughout the administration have made hiring veterans a priority," Blank said. "Whether it's by making improvements in how the military transitions service members from the battlefield to the workplace, ensuring the post-9/11 GI Bill stays strong, or through the efforts of the Joining Forces initiative, President Obama and this administration are taking steps to ensure that veterans can find job opportunities when they return from service."

"We are proud to support the efforts of the private sector —and companies like Monster and Military.com — in hiring the men and women who have bravely served this nation," Blank added.



Employment website Monster.com is collaborating with the White House's Joining Forces campaign and will contribute to the initiative's goal of hiring or training an additional 250,000 veterans and military spouses by the end of 2014, Acting Commerce Department Secretary Rebecca M. Blank announced here yesterday at the National Veteran Employment Summit hosted by Monster and Military.com.

"Through Joining Forces we're working to show military families that they live in a grateful nation," said Navy Capt. Todd Veazie, executive director of the Joining Forces initiative. "Over the past year we've asked Americans to step up and show their support. Everyone we've met has exceeded our expectations not only by making commitments but also by raising their goals even higher. I saw that same energy today from Monster and Military.com, companies that are dedicated to helping military families connect with jobs and training opportunities. We're eager to continue working together in the months and years ahead."

"Through Joining Forces we're working to show military families that they live in a grateful nation," said Navy Capt. Todd Veazie, executive director of the Joining Forces initiative.

With a local presence in more than 40 countries, Monster connects employers with quality job seekers at all levels, provides personalized career advice to consumers globally and delivers vast, highly targeted audiences to advertisers. The Military Skills Translator, Veteran Virtual Career Fairs, Veterans Talent Index and today's Veterans Employment Summit are indicative of Monster's commitment to serving the full spectrum of veteran employment needs. The company provides employers with tools that help them attract veteran talent on a regular basis, including veteran friendly job postings, veteran power resume search tools and access to the Military Career Ad Network.

"We were honored to bring together human resource leaders from the private and public sectors, veterans, senior military and government officials and respected nonprofit leaders to participate in today's Veterans Employment Summit here in Washington," said Sal Iannuzzi, Chairman, President and CEO for Monster. "Throughout the day, these leaders addressed what programs and best practices their organizations are doing to prepare, support and connect veterans. Teaming with the Joining Forces initiative furthers Monster's commitment to help connect veterans to those employers who want to hire them."

Military.com, a business unit of Monster Worldwide Inc., is the nation's largest online military destination serving over ten million members, including active duty personnel, reservists, guard members, retirees, veterans, family members, defense workers and those considering military careers.

Department of Defense releases 2013 BAH Rates

Department of Defense

Washington — The Department of Defense released today the 2013 Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rates, which take effect Jan. 1, 2013. Overall rates will increase an average of 3.8 percent this year.

For members with dependents, average increases in BAH are approximately $60 per month. A typical E-6 with dependents, for example, will find his/her BAH about $60 per month higher than last year, while an O-3 with dependents will receive about $55 more than last year.

In areas where rates will decrease, the decrease will only apply to members newly reporting to those locations. Members are protected by individual rate protection which ensures that those already assigned to a given location will not see their BAH rate decrease, however, they will receive the increase if the rate goes up. This assures that members who have made long-term commitments in the form of a lease or contract are not penalized if the area's housing costs decrease.

Three components are included in the BAH computation: median current market rent; average utilities (including electricity, heat, and water/sewer) and average renter's insurance.

Total housing costs are calculated for six housing profiles (based on dwelling type and number of bedrooms) in each military housing area. Basic Allowance for Housing rates are then calculated for each pay grade, both with and without dependents. An estimated $20 billion will be paid to more than 1 million service members in 2013.

For more information on BAH, visit https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bah.cfm

Fostering teamwork: It's not about you

Maj. James Bartran, flight commander
36th Student Squadron,
Squadron Officer College

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Al —Henry Ward Beecher once stated, "No man is more cheated than the selfish man." Individualism, entitlement, self-servitude and egotism well ingrained in our personalities are cancers to team development. The cure rests in selflessness, genuine caring of others and a strategic mindset.

The implementation of these traits requires thought.

A great team is greater than the sum of its parts. How do you build such a team? How do leaders foster team development and cohesiveness?

Great teams take time, work, and most of all, strong relationships ... real relationships. However, in today's anti-analytical, distant culture that demands instant gratification; we expect results to just happen.

We should approach team development in a way that is less like social media, where one has a sense of control and can manage social interactions, and more like a friendship with all its intangible imperfections and unexpected synergies. What follows are thoughts on fostering this type of team.

It's not about you

We all have a propensity to think we live in a bubble. You don't.

As a leader, this truth carries more importance for you. Whatever your career ambitions, personal problems or insecurities, fostering teamwork demands equality. Each person or role has its place, and they are self-defined based on the team dynamic, creating balance.

Great teams take time, work, and most of all, strong relationships ... real relationships. However, in today's anti-analytical, distant culture that demands instant gratification; we expect results to just happen.

This holistic mindset closely matches "the long grey line," as stated by Gen. Douglas MacArthur. All players have a place where they add the most value. This balance requires a degree of selflessness, and our mission sets require us to hold true or risk failure as a nation, Air Force, team and individually.

Walk the walk

Your actions speak louder than your words, and this truth is no less relevant while fostering teamwork. When leading a team, remember the importance of holding high standards from the simplest of requirements, such as uniform wear, to the demands of highly detailed missions.

No one can truly know your mindset, your motivations, aspirations and thoughts, but they can know how you chose to behave, dress and act and your true character. This becomes the bedrock for fostering teamwork. This leaves little mystery as to where people stand, which in turn allows them to branch out and begin their journey as a team. Finally, this helps the team in role clarity, eliminating the individual mindset. In its place, individuals begin thinking they are part of something bigger than themselves.

Relationships mean everything

During the most adverse encounters a team will ever face, the foundational relationships and friendships between its members bind them together. Organizations pale in importance to the brothers and sisters beside you during hardship. This identification, in turn, serves to strengthen the team even more.

Imagine for a moment that your commander orders you to take on a highly undesirable task. Imagine the differences in your willingness to take on this task based on your loyalty to the people you serve. Trusting one another and, in turn, developing real relationships will inevitably lead to teams that will overlook individual motives in place of team objectives.

Simply put, interaction fuels action. The most important leadership behavior to remember: you must uphold and foster trust between you and your team members. Failing to do so will result in breaking that trust and the team.

Vision is important

Without vision, your people will lack direction, focus and purpose. Vision takes one's eyes off of individual concerns and focuses the team, giving them confidence. This fosters teamwork on a number of levels.

While seemingly attainable, a true vision lies just beyond achievable. When the team accomplishes things it didn't at first believe possible during its journey to achieve the vision, everyone's confidence is boosted and team development is furthered.

It also puts the team on the same page and focuses efforts. This in turn demonstrates that everyone desires the same thing, creating buy in.

Through Airmen's Eyes: The Journey back to normal

Master Sgt. Rebecca Corey
97th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs

ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE, Okla — *(This feature is part of the "Through Airmen's Eyes" series on AF.mil. These stories focus on a single Airman, highlighting their Air Force story.)*

Between August 2009 and March 2010, I lost myself during my deployment to Afghanistan. I remember coming off the airplane and seeing my family and knowing that my world would never be the same again. It took me more than a year to put my life back together.

My family and coworkers greeted me coming out of the secure area of the airport and as I went to hug my son, I looked into his eyes and could tell he no longer had any idea who I was.

He ran from me to his father. I knew there was no real coming home and I felt that life as I knew it was over.

A stranger at home

Right then, things were different — I had returned home to a failing marriage, a son who no longer recognized me, and orders to a new duty assignment.

Everyday activities became overwhelmingly difficult. About a week after I came home, I made my first commissary trip and about 10 minutes into my trip I had a panic attack. In Afghanistan, the day was planned out for me, meals were planned and prepared for me. Here, there were so many choices, so many decisions to make — it was overwhelming. I didn't know what my son liked anymore, or even what I liked anymore.

Life at home with my husband went from bad to worse. I slept on the couch for the first several weeks of being home while struggling to fit back into my family. We constantly argued and fought over everything. One instance was over something petty and I couldn't calm myself down. I begged him to stop. I felt out of control and filled with rage. Unable to resolve our issues, we soon divorced.

In July 2010, I took my son to visit my mother. While we were there, I was quiet and withdrawn and longed to sleep and unwind, but I couldn't settle down long enough to have a quiet thought.

When we visited extended family, I felt socially awkward and no longer knew how to have small talk. I didn't open up to anyone because I knew they wouldn't understand where I was coming from. I sat there watching everyone else play catch-up and be happy while I longed to be back in Afghanistan, where I would fit in and be around people who could understand.

Before Afghanistan, I used to pride myself on not being an angry person. It used to take a lot for me to get mad, but here I was now, fighting and getting angry all the time. I didn't know how to handle it, how to stop the anger

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JOURNEY BACK

(Continued from Page 7)

from consuming me.

I lost sight of who I was while deployed. The harsh environment and combat conditions of Afghanistan had become my new normal, and I failed to balance my home life with my work. While I was deployed, I didn't feel connected to home or anything happening back in the United States.

Downrange extremes

As a public affairs photographer, it is my job to document everything ranging from change-of-command and promotion ceremonies, to "feel-good" events happening on base like an Earth Day flower-planting or a monthly luncheon. In a deployed location it's a different story. In Afghanistan, I photographed the very extremes of human endurance and suffering: abused children, death and injury, the harshness of life there and most importantly, our mission.

On my first mission, our convoy struck an improvised explosive device. As I dismounted to document the damage, with every step I thought, "If there is one IED, there are most certainly two." I walked in the footstep of the security forces soldier in front of me; somehow I felt that would make me safe.

On Oct. 16, 2009, I lost two friends when their Humvee rolled over an IED. Two members of the team were killed in action, and two others were wounded. One of the team members killed was an Army specialist with two young children. He was my security detail on missions. The other was an Army sergeant, who was driving the Humvee at the time of the incident.

As soon as I heard the news, I collapsed.

I photographed the dignified transfer of their remains. I actually knew these guys; had gone on missions with them. I was supposed to have gone on that mission, and felt guilty in some measure that I wasn't there. Some people would call that lucky, I guess — not me. I should have been there.

I often think of the loss of my two friends and hope their families know how much they loved them, and pray they'll find peace. Documenting their dignified transfers and capturing their memorial service are still the saddest and most tragic events of my deployment.

The daily grind

When I arrived at my home station at Lajes Field, Azores, everything seemed so trivial, mundane and unimportant, compared to what I did downrange. I felt I did not belong here anymore, I belonged back in Afghanistan. I couldn't help but feel useless and struggled to find purpose in my job.

So much had changed. Life had moved on without me. I didn't fit in at home or work and I didn't recognize the music on the radio, shows on TV or movies in the theater. I struggled to find my place in the world to which I had returned.

I knew I needed help and made an appointment with my primary care manager. Prescribed an anti-depressant, I was told it would help with my feelings of rage, sadness, and hopelessness. But I had no idea what I was supposed to do after that.

About a month from my permanent change of station, I felt that going to the mental health clinic at that point would be useless since I would have to leave and start over again when I got to my new duty station anyway.

PTSD is not this dramatic symptom-driven state of being as it is portrayed in movies and on television. In general, people with PTSD do not show symptoms all the time. We have become masters at appearing normal and, for the most part, are highly functioning members of society. It is only when we can no longer operate under "normal" that we reveal ourselves and seek help. Even at my worst I was not exhibiting symptoms all the time.

I know things happen for a reason and my PCS back to Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, D.C., only reinforced this. Before being stationed at Lajes Field, I was stationed at Bolling AFB. Once I received my orders and read "Bolling," I became very upset. Why would they send me back to where I just was, why PCS me at all then? Being stationed at Bolling was the best place to be, come to find out.

I PCS'd to my new duty station and put on a happy face, looking forward to a new beginning. Pretending I was not bothered, yet inside I was overwhelmed and still filled with rage and sadness.

The facade didn't last long. I began to have angry outbursts at work. My Airmen would see me crying in my office and when they would ask why, I would just explain how I felt so sad and angry all the time, and apologize. Recognizing that this was not normal, I sought therapy at the base mental health clinic, and shortly thereafter, I was given the preliminary diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder.

My therapist offered me a choice between intense counseling on base or the trauma recovery program at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

With Christmas a few weeks away and my son coming to visit me, I didn't want to chance not seeing him and opted for intense counseling. My therapy was emotionally charged, and there were uncomfortable conversations about my deployment and the feelings that came along with it.

Shortly before my son's visit, I confided to my therapist that I understood the mentality of why people kill themselves over this condition. I spent the rest of the visit reassuring him that I was not suicidal.

My therapist met with me every week for four weeks until my son arrived. My son is my world, and like any non-custodial parent, looked forward to this visit with all my heart. While I enjoyed our time together, inside there was guilt and sadness that I could not see him every day and the visit made me more regretful for not being totally engaged with him.

Hitting rock bottom

I had overcome other obstacles in life, just like anyone else. Why was this time so different, why couldn't I make myself right? I never wanted to go out and I found happiness in nothing. I spent most nights talking myself out of drinking the bottle of liquor in my kitchen and when that became too much, I slept.

I wanted to feel something different, anything but this. Thoughts of the deployment and the feelings of sadness, anger, depression and pain never ended. I was desperate to feel something different.

After I dropped my son off to his father, a thought entered my mind. I would drive my car into a guardrail along I-295 — not to kill myself, but to feel something different. I cried all night once I got home and called my therapist first thing in the morning. I was no longer functioning — I had hit rock bottom.

I made it to my therapist's office the next morning, and right away he could see I was in trouble. It didn't take much coaxing to decide I needed to be admitted to the in-patient psychiatric ward.

PTSD is not this dramatic symptom-driven state of being as it is portrayed in movies and on television. In general, people with PTSD do not show symptoms all the time. We have become masters at appearing normal and, for the most part, are highly functioning members of society. It is only when we can no longer operate under "normal" that we reveal ourselves and seek help. Even at my worst I was not exhibiting symptoms all the time.

My first sergeant was called and I was escorted home to pack a bag and be taken to Walter Reed's Ward 54. I remember feeling very tired when I arrived. Everything had hit me at once, and sapped all my energy. My first day in Ward 54, I met my treatment team and was asked a multitude of questions about my past and my deployment before being put on additional medication to go along with my anti-depressant.

Three-and-a-half days as an in-patient allowed for decompressing and opening up about what I had been feeling since coming home. For the first time in a long time, I didn't feel alone, and relished being around other Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines with similar experiences.

There was a certain comfort in being there. The staff treated us with respect and compassion and didn't make us feel "crazy." It's in that kind of atmosphere that you feel free to open up and let go of some of the anger, rage and sadness. Along with PTSD, I was diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder. Apparently, depression is common with people diagnosed with PTSD. My medication was adjusted and felt I was beginning my journey to feeling normal again.

I was soon released to the out-patient trauma recovery program, a four-week program designed to help members deal with and handle their post-deployment issues. I was constantly asked what kind of thoughts I was having. Initially, I couldn't put into words what my thoughts were because there were so many.

Learning to deal with "Her"

Finally, I began personifying my thoughts, referring to them as "she" or "her." There were days when "she" would behave and let me be an active part of my day — those were my good days. "She" was there, but quiet and behaving "herself." On bad days, "she" would run around in my head and wreak havoc on my concentration, anger control and my overall mood. "She" was like a tornado running through my mind and I was there in the middle trying to hang on to whatever I could until I could get "her" under control, which was mentally and phys-

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Base News

Tax Volunteers

The Columbus AFB Tax Center will open in late January and we are looking for volunteer tax preparers and center assistants. All of our volunteers play a critical role in assisting service members, retirees and dependents complete and file their tax returns. This service helps our clients obtain the refunds they have earned! We welcome volunteers with special skills or training, and would appreciate your expertise. However, training will be provided on the latest tax preparation forms and software, so prior experience is not required. Great volunteers are individuals who have prepared their own tax returns; are comfortable with computers; are willing to learn; and enjoy working with people. If you want to become a trained tax preparer or volunteer in any other way, please contact Capt Wells in the legal office at 662-434-7030 to register.

Retiree Affairs Coordinator Needed

Volunteer needed 2 to 3 days per week to assist with advising military retirees on benefits are provided The Retiree Affairs office is established to coordinate, establish and staff an office on an active-duty, reserve or guard base through command channels that will assist retirees with myriad actions. These actions include: serving as information center for space-available travel, Tricare, base services, etc.; offering referrals for financial-assistance and pay matters; counseling active duty Airmen nearing retirement; and providing literature on retirement issues. Another major activity involves working with base agencies to conduct Retiree Activity Day events. If interested, contact Linda Dodson at 434-2314 or linda.dodson@columbus.af.mil

The Base Thrift Shop

The Base Thrift Shop is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Consignments until noon. The Thrift Shop is non-profit and all proceeds benefit CAFB Community. It is located in building 530. Phone: 434-2954.

Airman's Attic

The Airman's Attic is open Tuesdays/Thursdays 10 a.m.-2 p.m. and Saturdays 10 a.m.-noon. The Attic serves junior enlisted members (E-1 through E-5) with uniforms and basic household items at no cost. Donations of uniforms, household goods, family clothing, maternity, infant care items and furniture are welcomed. Please coordinate furniture or other large donations with the staff during business hours. The Attic is located in building 530, across from the Thrift Shop. For any questions, please call 434-1614.

Contraceptive Counseling Class

There are currently many safe and effective options for preventing or delaying pregnancy. The staff of the 14th Medical Group, wants to make sure you have the information you need to make your best choice. The Family Health Clinic is now offering a Birth Control Counseling Class covering topics ranging from natural family planning to tubal ligation. The class is offered once a month and taught by a Women's Health Provider and a Registered Nurse. Classes will be held at the Koritz Clinic, the last Friday of each month from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Please call the clinic appointment line at 434-2273 to reserve your spot in the next Birth Control Counseling Class.

FREE Computerized CLEP Exams

Computerized CLEP testing is available at the Mississippi State University Assessment and Testing Center (http://www.ats.msstate.edu/testing/). Military members will NOT be charged a fee for the first-time administration of any CLEP exam. However, retakes of CLEP exams must be paid for by the military member. DANTES (DSST) paper-based exams will continue to be administered in the CAFB Ed Office. Please call 434-2562 or 434-2563 for more information.

LGR Mobility Individual Protective Equipment Element closed for Training

The 14th Logistics Division, Mobility and Individual Protective Equipment Element located in the Walker Center, building 1030 will close for training Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. beginning Thursday, May 10, 2012. All appointments must be scheduled around these days/times to avoid delays and inconveniences. Walk-ins are no longer accepted. All appointments must be scheduled in advance by calling 434-7305, 7306, 3363 or 3364. For more information, please call 434-7212 or 434-7306.

Airman and Family Readiness Center

(Editor's note: All activities are offered at the Airman & Family Readiness Center unless otherwise specified. For more information about any of the activities listed, call 434-2790 or email afrc@columbus.af.mil.)

Military and Family Life Consultant Program

MFLC consultants provide a non-medical counseling to help Airmen, (both single and married) their spouses and other family members to cope with stressful situations created by deployments, reintegration, and life challenges, such as martial issues, parenting, career stress and anger. All consultants are licensed mental health providers. Consultants can meet either on or off base. There is no charge for services and appointments can usually be made within one to two days. To contact the MFLC call 364-0504.

Self-paced Tutorials

Available on MS Office 2007 Suites; Access, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, Word and Windows Vista. Set your own learning pace at your AFRC.

Relocation assistance

Weekly workshop on programs, services and resources available through the Airman and Family Readiness Center held every Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. Topics of discussion include preparing for a move, environment/cultural issues or needs, adaptation and community awareness.

Employment Workshop

Workshop on local and base employment opportunities, held every Wednesday at 1 p.m.

Sponsorship training

An electronic version of sponsorship training called eSponsorship Application and Training (eSAT) is now available. It can be found on the MilitaryINSTALLATIONS homepage http://www.militaryinstallations.dod.mil, under "Are You a Sponsor?"

Survivor-Benefit Plan

One of the best feelings about retiring from the military Service is to know you are guaranteed a lifetime income as the result of a successful career. What about your spouse or dependent children? If you die, what guarantees do they have? Enrolling in the SBP prior to retiring will ensure they will have guaranteed income after your death. Additional details are available by calling your SBP Counselor Jamey Coleman at 434-2720.

Pre-Separation Counseling (DD Form-2648)

Mandatory briefing for personnel separating or retiring. Briefing should be completed at least 90 days prior to separation and may be completed up to 12 months prior to separation or retirement. Counseling held daily at 8:30 a.m. and takes approximately 30 minutes.

Pre and Post Deployment Tour Brief

Mandatory briefings for active duty personnel who are deploying or returning from deployment or a remote tour. Briefings are held daily at the AFRC; Pre-deployment at 9:30 a.m. and post-deployment at 1:30 p.m.

Computer workshops

The cost is $30 each if taken at the Golden Triangle campus. They are free and taught here on base at the AFRC. We need a minimum of six, maximum of 11. We currently have two in each. If we do not get enough students, EMCC cannot provide an instructor, and we may not be able to offer these workshops in the future.

Volunteer Opportunities

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the Airman & Family Readiness Center. We have volunteer opportunities located throughout the base for a one-time event, special events, or on a continual basis. Volunteers are needed on base at the Youth Center, Child Development Center, Library, Golf Course, Medical Clinic, the Chapel, Airman Attic, Thrift Store the Retiree Activities office and many others".

Air Force Aid Society's Gen. H.H. Arnold Education Grant

Online applications for the 2013-2014 academic year will be available from the Society's website, www.afas.org, after Nov. 1. Please visit their website for details on eligibility and requirements.

Volunteer Orientation/Training

Jan. 2, 10-11 a.m. Discuss volunteer job description, brief overview of the base volunteer program. Training to include confidentiality, ethics and avoidance of conflict of interest. Call 434-2790 to register.

Tap Workshop

Jan. 7-11, 7:30 a.m. Mandatory for all personnel separating, pre-separation counseling is required before attending. Seminars on: transition, military occupational code crosswalk, financial planning, health benefits, Miss. Department of Employment Security, Department of Veterans Affairs, disabled TAP, Department of Labor TAP portion. Spouses are encouraged to attend with their sponsor. To register call 434-2790.

Wing Newcomers Orientation

Jan. 15, 8 a.m.-1 p.m., for newly arrived Active Duty and Civilian personnel. Spouses are encouraged to attend. Held at the Columbus Club, for more information call 434-2839.

Chapel Schedule

Catholic Community

Sunday:
3:45 p.m. – Religious Education, grades K-9, Chapel Annex
4 p.m. – Choir Practice, Sanctuary
4 p.m. – Confession
5 p.m. – Mass
Thursday:
4:15 p.m. – Choir Practice
Saturday:
Theology on Tap meets monthly. Please call 434-2500 For More Information.
Tuesday, Dec. 25:
10 a.m. – Christmas Mass

Protestant Community

Sunday:
9 a.m. – Sunday School for Adults, Chapel Library
10:45 a.m. – Traditional Service
Tuesday:
5 p.m. – Officer Christian Fellowship Bible Study, Chapel Library
Wednesday:
4:30 p.m. – Choir Practice, Sanctuary
5 p.m. – Potluck Dinner
6 p.m. – Pioneer Clubs
6 p.m. – Adult Bible Study, Sanctuary
6 p.m. – Adult Bible Study, Chapel Library
No Wednesday activities until after Jan. 9
Monday, Dec. 24:
7 p.m. – Candle Light Service

A wide variety of fun activities are offered to base families

Columbus Air Force Base FSS Rocks

Make sure to join our Facebook page at CAFB FSS Rocks, Twitter at CAFBFSS, or our website at www.cafbfssrocks.com to keep up to date with all the great events happening around base!

Certified Aerobics Instructor

The fitness center is in need for a certified aerobics instructor. If that describes you, make sure to call the Fitness for more information at 434-2773.

Youth of the Year

Do you have an exceptional child? If so, sign them up for the "Youth of the Year" competition so they may be recognized! State and regional winners receive scholarships. Children ages 13-18 are eligible to apply. Sign up by Jan. 3. The competition takes place on Jan. 7 at 4 p.m. Visit www.bgca.net or call 434-2504 for more information.

Fine Arts Competition

Take that work of art of the fridge and enter it into the CAFB Youth Center "Fine Arts Competition". This event will take place on Jan. 10 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. This event is available for youth between the ages of 6-18. The piece of art must be submitted by Jan. 8. For more information call 434-2504.

MLK Celebration

Come celebrate the life of an American Icon. Enjoy games, displays, videos, and guest speakers. Join us on Jan. 18 at 3:45 p.m. at the Youth Center. For more information call 434-2504.

AIR'-OBICS Step Class

Take a step into fitness with the Air'-Obics step class. It's held every Monday and Wednesday at 4:45 p.m. For more information call 434-2772.

Columbus Club Hours

The Columbus Club is open Tuesday – Friday for lunch from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. They offer a full menu and daily buffets. Save $1 on meals by becoming a member!

New Year's Eve Casino Trip

Join the fun, and bring in the New Year at the Casino! The bust will be departing the Exchange/Shoppette parking lot by 5 p.m. There must be at least 20 participants with a maximum of 30. The cost is $25, but the casino will put $25 on your player's card. Give your email to Outdoor Rec to get an additional $5. RSVP today by calling ODR at 434-2505!

Prove Yourself!

Do you have what it takes to be a racquetball champion? Sign up for the racquetball tournament by Jan. 13. The tournament takes place on Jan. 14. For more information call 434-2772.

Horseback Riding Lessons

Learn how to ride the mode of transportation of the past, horses! Lessons are available for ages 6 and up in the ways of English and Western Riding. Lessons are ongoing through the winter months! Sign up at Outdoor Recreation or for more information call (972)822-7585.

New Years 5k Run

Bring in the New Year with the New Years 5k. This run will take place on Jan. 11 at 6 and 7 a.m. Commander's trophy points are awarded. For more information call 434-2772.

Wee Babies!

It's baby fun time! Bring your kid(s) ages 0-4 to the Library for rhythm, kinesthetic, body awareness, and song and dance activities! This event occurs on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month. For more information call 434-2936.

Child Care for Holiday Shopping

Let the CDC provide care for your children while you get your shopping done for the holidays! Get three or four others together to plan an outing then call the CDC at 434-2479 to keep your children happy and entertained while you shop!

Mothers Happy Time!

The Child Development Center presents Mothers Happy Time! Let the CDC provide care for your children while you enjoy some "Happy Time" with friends. Get three or four mothers together and plan an outing. Available Tuesday and Thursday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. For more information call 434-2479.

Sunday Lunch N Bowl

Lunch N Bowl on Sundays, for each adult combo purchased at the Bowling Center receive two free games of bowling, must pay for shoe rental. For more information contact 434-3426.

Are you feeling lucky?

Information Ticket and Travel offers monthly casino trips every first Friday of each month. With more than 5,000 slot machines, 115 table games and 14 poker tables including the wildly popular Texas Hold'em, you will not be bored at the Silver Star Casino in Philadelphia, Miss. Join the fun for only $25 which includes transportation and receive $25 in bonus bets! Contact 434-2505 for more information.

Green Plate Special

The Pro shop at Whispering Pines offers a special for lunch Tuesday through Friday. The price is $6.95 which includes a side of chips and a drink.

Instructional Classes at Youth Center

Youth Programs is offering piano lessons, guitar lessons, tumbling classes, dance classes and martial arts instruction. Time and ages vary for all classes. Call 434-2504 or stop by the Youth Center for more information.

Need a Break from the Kids?

Parents, contact the Child Development Center for information on the Parents Night Out/Give Parents A Break program, 434-2479.

Affordable Tickets at ITT

The Information, Ticket and Travel office has discounted tickets for Disney World, Universal Studios, Dollywood, Sea World, Busch Gardens, and Six Flags over Georgia, the Memphis Zoo, Alabama Adventure, Dixie Stampede, Geyser Falls, Schlitterbahn Water Park, and more. Call 434-2505 434-7861 for more information.

Massage Therapy is Back!

Massage therapy is available by appointment only at the Fitness Center. Swedish massage is just $35 for 30 minutes, $60 for 60 minutes and $90 for 90 minutes. Therapeutic/deep tissue massage is $45 for 30 minutes, $70 for 60 minutes and $100 for 90 minutes. Reflexology is $35 for 30 minutes, and a chair massage is $1 per minute. Call Terrance Bonner at 251-9255 for an appointment.

Daily Fitness Classes Available

Columbus AFB Fitness and Sports offers a variety of heart-pumping, sweat-inducing classes throughout the week including Aerobics Class. Come check out Zumba every Tues. at 6 p.m. and Sat. at 10 a.m., circuit training classes on Tues. and Thurs., 5:30 a.m., spin class on Wednesdays and Thursdays at 5 p.m., and stroller fitness class on Tuesdays at 9 a.m. For more information, call 434-2772 or go online to www.cafbfssrocks.com and click on the link to the Fitness page.

Car Maintenance on Base

Don't forget you can get your general automotive maintenance and repairs at the Auto Hobby Shop right here on base and even while you work. If you are a do-it-yourselfer or shade-tree mechanic, Auto Hobby offers a wide array of tools and equipment. For more information and pricing, drop by Auto Hobby or call 434-7842.

Hot and Easy to Use - FSS Gift Cards

These gift cards are available in increments of $5 to fit any budget. They can be used at most FSS facilities (golf, bowling center snack bars, clubs) at Air Force installations WORLDWIDE…and they never go out of style. FSS gift cards can be purchased at Whispering Pines Golf Course, Strike Zone Lanes or at the Youth Center.

Get off the Couch and Play!

Columbus AFB has an 18-hole disc golf course across the street from the Fitness Center. The course's layout includes par threes, fours and fives plus lots of trees making it great for beginners or pros alike. So grab your friends or family and a disc and have some fun! Disc sets are available for check out at the Fitness Center.

It's Like FREE Money!

Single Airmen returning from deployment and families of deployed members can receive up to $500 in special discounts and rewards through participating FSS facilities and programs. Get discounted trips at Information Tickets and Travel, rent equipment from Outdoor Recreation, play a round of golf, participate in a golf clinic, or go bowling with a friend. These are just some of the offerings through the PLAYpass program. To find out if you are eligible for a PLAYpass card, visit www.MyAirForceLife.com or call the AFRC at 434-2790.

Space A Lodging

The Magnolia Inn usually has openings for Space A family and single units. Contact the lodging desk at 434-2548.

JOURNEY BACK

(Continued from Page 8)

ically exhausting.

I could no longer hide my feelings and had to confront them head-on, which was challenging for me, to say the least. I had to open up to people I didn't know and trust that no one would gossip or judge. I was quiet in the beginning and didn't speak much, but listened and soaked up everything.

In therapy, patients are taught coping skills to deal with whatever issues they may have. Many of us had anger issues, and struggled with ways to deal with them. Of all the coping skills I learned about, what seemed to work best for me was positive self-talk, which allows me to replace all the negative thoughts with positive ones. This was not easy and took a lot of practice and determination. When something triggers me to feel anxious, I stop myself and take a minute to gain perspective. I try to stay in the moment and talk myself through whatever it is I am feeling.

Toward the end of my four-week stay at Walter Reed, I realized that I hadn't prepared myself to go back to work. I'd been so focused on healing my past, I hadn't thought about how to deal with the present.

I hadn't left work on the best terms. My supervisor and I hadn't gotten along, and I was not a good supervisor when I left. I was going to have to deal with going back to fix the mess left behind.

My leadership stood behind me through the entire process and when I returned, I was welcomed back and allowed to take my time easing back into things.

I continued my therapy with base mental health. There are various treatment options available to deal with PTSD and depression. My therapist elected cognitive therapy for me. Cognitive therapy deals with my feelings and emotions now as I relate to events during the deployment and building coping skills to deal with them. The focus wasn't on the deployment itself but the effects of the deployment.

To say I was ready to jump into therapy would be false. I wanted to get better but was mentally exhausted from the time I spent at Walter Reed. Trying to change your mind set is not an easy task and takes great patience, from everyone. There were weeks I wouldn't do my homework and that would hinder my progress. I'm lucky that my therapist was more stubborn than me and she gently coaxed me along during the harder sessions. Eventually I finished therapy. It took 11 months and I am a better person for it.

One year later I am happy and have reintegrated back into my life.

U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Jesse Lopez

Master Sgt. Rebecca Corey holds her most important tool, the camera, at the flightline on Altus Air Force Base, Okla., Dec. 6, 20120. After her 2009 deployment to Ghazni province, Afghanistan, as a combat photographer, Corey struggled with life-altering post-traumatic stress disorder. Today, she is the NCO in charge at the 97th Air Mobility Wing.

U.S. Air Force photo

Then-Tech. Sgt. Rebecca Corey smiles as she holds a child while visitng a woman's vocational school in Ghazni province, Afghanistan, during her deployment in 2009. The child was about the same age as Corey's son at the time and the women at the school were surprised that she had a child back at home but was deployed to Afghanistan.

U.S. Air Force photo

Then-Tech. Sgt. Rebecca Corey smiles for a rare moment in front of the lense in the streets of Afghanistan during her deployement in 2009. Corey's mission was to document the efforts of the provinial reconstruction teams, working in the region.

I have found purpose and feel hopeful about my future, personally and professionally. The struggle was worth it and made me the person I am today, and for that I am thankful.

I still have bad days but they are few and far between and although I will struggle with some things for the rest of my life, I am confident that I can cope and manage and not let them control me.

I have bonded with my child and realize how truly blessed I am that he is growing up on U.S. soil. He will never know poverty, hunger, or war. I can give him a childhood that Afghan children will never know. I see him smile and play and can't recall ever seeing an Afghan child smile or play during my time there.

For anyone struggling, I beseech you to get help. Tell your supervisor, first sergeant, chaplain or someone in the mental health profession. Help is there and asking for it is not a sign of weakness — it's a sign of strength.

For family members of someone coming home from deployment or struggling now — don't rush them. Be an ear and a shoulder, when they're ready to talk, listen, and when they need help, be by their side.

I feel no shame and don't want people to feel sorry for me or treat me any differently. I am still a valuable and proud member of this Air Force and I believe in our mission.

But, I'm not the same person I was before I deployed and I miss her. It took me a long time to like the new me and be comfortable in my skin again. I've changed and that's okay because I'm okay, I'm better than okay. The new me carries parts of my old self but I'll never be that woman again.

If you need to talk to someone, there are resources that offer help. Visit your base mental health clinic; call the Defense Centers of Excellence Outreach Center at 1-866-966-1020 for psychological health and traumatic brain injury information and resources; call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) and press "1" for crisis intervention; or log on to https://realwarriors.net or www.afterdeployment.org for wellness resources for the military community.

College education opportunities for military members

Senior Airman Chase Hedrick
14th Flying Training Wing Public Affairs

U.S. Air Force photo

Senior Airmen Erin Leon, 14th Operations Support Squadron air traffic controller, listens during a class held Jan. 12, 2011 at the education center. Airman Leon said that she is particularly impressed with the wide range of classes offered on base.

To many people college education has traditionally been thought of as a full time endeavor at a fixed location, something not readily available to military members with jobs and unexpected moves.

However opportunities to improve academically while maintaining military responsibilities abound for those in the Air Force who seek to excel.

Every member of the Air Force who has received their first duty assignment is already on their way towards their degree, said Curtis Donald 14th Force Development flight Chief and acting chief of education and training.

Upon completing many types of military education such as basic training, technical school, and many other types of professional military education college credits are automatically added with the Community College of the Air Force.

"Once you complete tech school and basic training you have already started accumulating credit hours towards your CCAF," said Donald.

Undergraduate level credit hours can also be added towards a degree without taking any classes at all. CLEP and DANTES tests can be taken at the Education Center or Mississippi State University.

"Instead of taking a course military members can take college level exams that if they pass can obtain college credits to the CCAF or civilian colleges," said Curtis Donald 14th Force Development flight Chief and acting chief of education and training.

"Instead of taking a course military members can take college level exams that if they pass can obtain college credits to the CCAF or civilian colleges," Donald.

He continued that the education center offers test titles covering a variety of subjects including math, social sciences, and humanities that are all free for military members the first time the each test is taken.

Donald also noted that three colleges maintain offices on Columbus Air Force Base, Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, Saint Leo University and East Mississippi Community College.

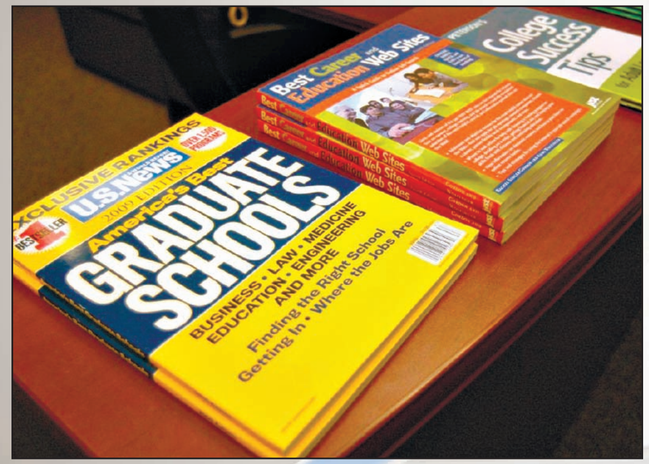
Donald said that evening classes on are available base for Airmen working during normal duty hours though especially ambitious students can sometimes combine their lunch breaks with a short class.

For Airmen who work shifting hours and may not be able to consistently attend classes at a specific time, Donald suggested online courses which can be as flexible as the Airman needs them to be.

"First you're not tied to being in the classroom at a certain time during the day, you have the freedom to do your class-work any time during the week," said Donald. "It's great for Airmen with rotating schedules or those need classes at 8 a.m. during the week when they normally couldn't get off."

Donald said that in addition to scheduling flexibility, online courses also provide a greater range of flexibility with location. This allows Airmen who become or are on temporary duty or deployed to continue their classes as they fulfill their military duties.

Aside from personal development, new doors can be opened by completing degrees and learning new things. Donald noted that for enlisted promotions to senior master sergeant and chief master sergeant requires a CCAF degree, and a bachelor's degree can open up commissioning opportunities. For officers master's degrees are highly encouraged for promotions to major and above. Assignments under heavy competition sometimes also are decided by a service member's degree.



U.S. Air Force photo

The Education Services Center offers advice and assistance with numerous degree seeking programs and college-level tests.

U.S. Air Force photo

The Education Center offers 16 test titles under the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support program better known as DANTES to give Airmen the opportunity to gain college credits by taking course. The Education Center also helps Airmen take the College Level Examination Program known as CLEP at Mississippi State University for other college credits.

U.S. Air Force photo

The Education Services Center offers numerous testing options to help Airmen supplement their education, including CLEP, DANTES and Excelsior college-level examinations.

U.S. Air Force photo

The Embry Riddle Aeronautical University and Saint Leo University maintain an office in building 926, also known as the Old Personnel Building, at the end of the signs in the main hallway. Three colleges maintain offices on Columbus Air Force Base, and East Mississippi Community College.