



# 944th Fighter Wing Monthly SnapShot

www.944fw.afrc.af.mil

June 2013

## 944 FW KEY LEADERS

### **Commander**

Col. Kurt J. Gallegos

### **Vice Commander**

Col. Chris Yancy

### **Command Chief**

CMSgt Thomas Brandhuber

## Mission

**Train and provide Combat-Ready Citizen Airmen in support of our national objectives.**

## UTA Schedule

Jun. 1-2, 2013

Jul. 13-14, 2013

Aug. 3-4, 2013

Sept. 7-8, 2013

## **944th Fighter Wing Monthly SnapShot:**

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The SnapShot wants to highlight you and/or your unit. If you would like to submit an idea, article, or photo for the SnapShot, please e-mail 944fw.pa@luke.af.mil or call 623-856-5388.

## Thank you for all your hard work

*By Colonel Kurt J. Gallegos, 944th Fighter Wing Commander*

Well we made it past Memorial Day weekend without any mishaps. Thanks for doing your part in staying safe.

This month I want to hit on something I have already talked about but has come back to the forefront, Sequestration and Furloughs. This week we handed out the pre-furlough notice letters to our all our civilian employees and Air Reserve Technicians. Next week the actual furlough letters will be sent out notifying every one of their furlough days.

There is some good news, the furlough days have been reduced from 22 days to 11 days. This is still a huge impact to those who are taking the cut but hopefully it will not be as bad.

What this means to the Traditional Reservist is that from July to September you can expect some disruption of services. We have developed a calendar that recommends which days are furlough days and you can expect those days to have minimal staff available. The calendar can be found SharePoint at [https://afrc.eim.us.af.mil/sites/10th\\_AF/944FW/SitePages/Home.aspx](https://afrc.eim.us.af.mil/sites/10th_AF/944FW/SitePages/Home.aspx).

Our Air Force and Department of Defense leadership done everything they can to avoid the furloughs but with the shortfalls the DoD is facing it was unavoidable.

Thank you for all the hard work and sacrifice each and every one of you makes for your country.



## Do you have what it takes?

The Air Force Reserve Command is looking for Traditional Reservists, Staff Sgt. (with two years time in grade) to Master Sgt., who are interested in filling Military Training Instructor positions at 433rd Training Squadron, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

Currently, 40 Air Force Traditional Reserve members from around the country serve as MTIs. The 433rd TRS is in search of high-quality Airmen to fill 76 MTI vacancies. Some of the requirements are: Excellent military image and appearance, minimum fitness score of 80 on last two PT tests, ability to speak clearly, total Air Force military service of less than 16 years, minimum score of 49 in general area on ASVAB.

If you have what it takes to give back to the next generation, recruiters will be at Luke Saturday, June 1, 2013 at the Aeromedical Staging Squadron conference room from 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.. A brief presentation will be given at 11:00 a.m. For more information on the program you can contact Tech. Sgt. Terri Taylor-Trapp at DSN 473-7336/2410, commercial (210) 671-7336/2410 or send an e-mail to 433trs.recruiting@us.af.mil.





## Chief's Commentary

If you are looking for the commentary written By Chief Master Sgt. Thomas Brandhuber, 944th Fighter Wing Command Chief email [thomas.brandhuber@us.af.mil](mailto:thomas.brandhuber@us.af.mil). You may be a lucky winner...

## Promotions:

The following members were promoted June 1, 2013:

Staff Sgt. Joseph N. Hoehn to the rank of Technical Sergeant, 944th Aeromedical Staging Squadron  
 Staff Sgt. Daniel B. Vadovich to the rank of Technical Sergeant, 944th Civil Engineer Squadron  
 Staff Sgt. Adrian M. Wigman to the rank of Technical Sergeant, 944th Aeromedical Staging Squadron  
 Staff Sgt. Ashley Sexton to the rank of Technical Sergeant, 944th Aeromedical Staging Squadron  
 Staff Sgt. Allison P. Budy to the rank of Technical Sergeant, 414th Maintenance Squadron  
 Staff Sgt. Casey B. Patrick to the rank of Technical Sergeant, 414th Maintenance Squadron  
 Staff Sgt. Thomas A. Eckler to the rank of Technical Sergeant, 944th Medical Squadron  
 Tech. Sgt. Miguel J. Gonzales to the rank of Master Sergeant, 944th Medical Squadron



## Welcome Home!!

**Master Sgt. James Martin, Force Support Squadron, returned home from Southwest Asia**

**Master Sgt. Melissa Pineo, 944th Medical Squadron, returned home from Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany**

**Master Sgt. Nicole Breseman, 944th Medical Squadron, returned home from Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany**

**Maj. Brian Kilian, 69th Fighter Squadron, returned home from Southwest Asia**

## KEY NOTES:

**Triathlon Challenge:** The Soma Triathlon is scheduled for Oct. 20, 2013. The triathlon is a HALF IRON MAN meaning it is 1.2 mile swim, 56 mile bike, and a short 13.1 mile run. The organizers are offering a 50% discount to military members. To register visit <https://register.bazumedia.com/reg/form?eventID=2139> and enter the promo code: MIL50. For more information on the Soma Triathlon go to <http://www.redrockco.com/events/event-details.cfm?id=053D50CE-D086-C29F-5585A821EAF5BDB8>. If you are interested in competing and do register please call Tech. Sgt. Tymmothy Roy (623-856-9474).

**Guitars for Vets:** Join the fun and support our veterans at Alice Cooperstown on June 14th for Guitars for Vets 2013. They will be hosting a silent auction with live music and sports and celebrity memorabilia exhibits from 6pm until midnight. The golf tournament has been moved to September 6 at the Vistal Golf Course fundraiser golf tournament. Players will receive: practice balls, 18 holes of scramble golf tournament 1st, and 2nd place pro-shop awards, low cost chances at two hole in one competitions with \$10,000 cash rewards longest drive, and closest to the hole competition golf shirt to remember the event. For more information or to sign up visit <http://www.facebook.com/GuitarsForVets#!/G4VPhoenix?fref=ts>







# SecAF: Sequestration hits AF readiness, modernization

by Jim Garamone, American Forces Press Service

Sequestration has hit the Air Force particularly hard, impacting its force structure, readiness and modernization, senior Air Force leaders said here today.

Air Force Secretary Michael B. Donley and Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, the chief of staff, said Congress must provide a solid budget number so the Air Force can ground its planning in reality.

The Air Force understands it must do its part to work through the debt and deficit reduction problem, Welsh said.

"We just want to get to the bottom line or the new top-line budget ... and get on with preparing our Air Force to remain the best in the world," he said.

Sequestration has hit the Air Force hard and the effects are felt throughout the full range of accounts from force structure to readiness to modernization, Donley said during his last scheduled news conference as secretary.

On April 26, Donley announced plans to

step down June 21 as the Air Force's top civilian after serving as secretary for nearly five years.

"Twelve combat-coded squadrons have stopped flying, and important training has been canceled," Donley said. "Weapon system sustainment reductions will delay maintenance, increase costs and create backlogs. The impending civilian furlough will hamper us further and will impact morale and reduce productivity across the Air Force."

Even before sequestration there was a readiness crisis in the Air Force, the secretary said. "The readiness hole that we have been trying to dig out of just got deeper, and we are facing a readiness crisis from which it will take many months to recover," he said.

And it is not just operations and readiness accounts that are at risk, said Donley, noting the Air Force needs modernization -- in aircraft, missiles, and capabilities.

"As advanced technologies proliferate around the globe, these cutbacks in modernization would put at risk the Air Force capa-

bilities this nation will need in the decades ahead," Donley said. "Despite our near-term and long-term concerns, we are working to ensure that our most significant Air Force priorities remain on track, including the fifth-generation F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, the KC-46 tanker, and the long-range strike bomber."

Aircraft must support the warfighters, but budget cuts mean that airmen cannot train for full spectrum operations, Welsh said.

"And our readiness continues to decline, even while calls for potential no-fly zone or air policing operations in response to Syrian violence are reaching a new crescendo," he said.

"We're still the best Air Force in the world," Welsh said. "And our great airmen will rely on experience and their unmatched dedication to succeed in any operation that we're asked to execute. But atrophied skills elevate risk, and stagnant proficiency will only grow over time if we can't restore some sense of budget normalcy. And so that's what we're hoping for."

## Hagel announces fewer furlough days for DOD employees

by Nick Simeone and Karen Parrish, American Forces Press Service

After weeks of review, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel has concluded budget cuts will require most of the department's civilian employees to be furloughed beginning in July, but that because of other efforts to deal with the shortfall, only half of the 22 days originally envisioned as temporary layoffs will now be necessary.

During a town hall meeting May 14 at the Mark Center in Alexandria, Va., Hagel told Defense Department employees that most will be required to take 11 furlough days beginning July 8, one per week, through the end of the fiscal year, Sept. 30. Click here to watch Hagel's townhall briefing.

In a statement, Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh III explained the service's efforts to reduce impacts of sequestration on personnel, but furloughs will be unavoidable.

"While the Air Force and Department of Defense have made every effort to minimize impacts to readiness and people, the resource choices we have available are now very limited, and we've reached the point where we simply can't avoid furloughs," they said.

In a memo to senior department leaders, Hagel said he had "very reluctantly" concluded that major budgetary shortfalls triggered by a \$37 billion cut in defense spending for fiscal 2013 forced a decision he said he deeply regrets, and one that he acknowledged will disrupt lives and impact DOD operations. However, he credited congressional passage of a defense appropriation bill in March in part for helping to reduce from the number of days civilians would be temporarily laid off by half.

It may be possible later in the year to "knock that back" to an even lower number, the secretary said, but he emphasized that he could not promise such an outcome.

"As Secretary Hagel stated, the Department of Defense will decide later this year whether our budgetary situation permits us to end furloughs early," Donley and Welsh stated. "In the meantime, we will

keep working to prevent actions which will further impact our people and Air Force missions."

Hagel said the furloughs will affect every military department and almost every agency, with limited exceptions. "We will except civilians deployed to combat zones and civilians necessary to protect life and property," he wrote in his memo, adding that others will be excepted if forcing them to stay off the job would not free up money for other needs.

Regardless of the exceptions, Donley and Welsh stressed how much the Air Force will be impacted due to the essential role that civilian Airmen play in ensuring a strong and ready force.

"Our civilian Airmen are critical to everything we do," they said. "We simply could not be the world's greatest Air Force without (the civilian Airmen). During this challenging time, we want you to know how much we appreciate your service. We also want you to know we will continue to look for every possible way to minimize furloughs and to prevent further any other actions that would affect you and your family in negative ways. Thank you for the great professionalism you continue to bring to the job every day. We're proud to stand beside you."

The Air Force's top two leaders said they hoped furloughs could be avoided entirely, but they noted these unprecedented times have called for tough decisions.

"This is something we had hoped to avoid," Donley and Welsh wrote. "We recognize the significant impact this action will have on our civilian Airmen, their families and our mission. But the unprecedented budget choices we've faced during this extraordinary year have forced painful decisions to avoid further degradation in our missions."

Employees set to be furloughed will begin receiving written notification May 28 to June 5.

(Staff Sgt. David Salantri, Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs, contributed to this story)



# Transition Assistance: Include measures to help Reservists

*from Staff Reports Air Force Reserve Command*

Citizen Airman/Feb. 2013 -- The Department of Defense Transition Assistance Program is undergoing some significant changes to help military members make the move to the civilian work force, start a business or pursue higher education.

"The Veterans Opportunity to Work Act and Hiring Heroes Act directed the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Labor and the Department of Defense to expand current programs to reduce unemployment among veterans," said Eddy Saunders, one of Air Force Reserve Command's TAP managers.

"The newly revised TAP will offer veterans the skills needed to explore education and employment opportunities, and translate military skills and training (to the civilian workplace), as well as provide individualized assistance to successfully register for the right VA benefits and services," said Krystal Shiver, AFRC's other TAP manager.

The updated Transition Assistance Program,

which went into effect Nov. 21, is comprised of mandatory pre-separation counseling, an individualized transition plan, VA benefits briefing and the Department of Labor employment workshop for all active-duty military members retiring or separating from the Air Force.

"Members of the air reserve component on orders for 180 consecutive days or more are also now required to receive pre-separation counseling (including an individualized transition plan) and a VA benefits briefing," Saunders said.

Reserve members are encouraged to participate in all TAP services. However, the Office of the Secretary of Defense has allowed for an exemption that gives Reservists the ability to opt out of the Department of Labor employment workshop if they already have a job or an education plan.

Reservists who need to fulfill their TAP requirements should contact the Airman and Family Readiness Center at their location.

"Members co-located on an active-duty base will accomplish their TAP requirements by

working with the active-duty Airman and Family Readiness Center," Shiver said.

The Airman and Family Readiness Center at stand-alone Reserve bases will provide pre-separation counseling, determine exemptions and help Reservists schedule their Department of Labor employment workshop attendance at a location closest to their home.

"TAP services will also be provided at the AFRC TAP hub at Robins Air Force Base, Ga., if no other installation in the member's local area is available," Saunders said.

Saunders and Shiver are currently implementing the new transition assistance program across AFRC and are standing up the new AFRC TAP hub at Robins in partnership with the active-duty Airman and Family Readiness Center.

More information is available by contacting Saunders via email at [charles.saunders.9@us.af.mil](mailto:charles.saunders.9@us.af.mil) or calling DSN 497-2088, commercial 478-327-2088; or Shiver at [krystal.shiver@us.af.mil](mailto:krystal.shiver@us.af.mil) or DSN 497-1294, commercial 478-327-1294.

## VA, veteran groups announce initiative to reduce claims backlog

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Disabled American Veterans and the American Legion today announced a new partnership to help reduce the compensation claims backlog for veterans.

The effort, called the Fully Developed Claims Community of Practice, is a key part of the VA's overall transformation plan to end the backlog in 2015 and process claims within 125 days at 98 percent accuracy, VA officials said.

The VA can process fully developed claims in half the time it takes for a traditionally filed claim, officials noted.

"VA prides itself on our ongoing partnership with organizations that represent veterans throughout the claims process," said Allison A. Hickey, the undersecretary for benefits. "A fully developed claim is the most effective way to ensure a veteran's claim never reaches the backlog and is the basis for this new initiative between VA and what we expect will be an ever-increasing number of veteran service organizations and others who represent veterans at various points of the claims process."

"DAV is pleased to be working with the VA to help improve the disability compensation system," Jesinoski said.

The American Legion officials have been working with their VA counterparts since December on its fully developed claims process, said James E. Koutz, the American Legion's national commander.

"Teams of our experts have already gone to VA regional offices in Denver, Pittsburgh, Baltimore and other cities to help identify best practices for (fully developed claims), and to further train our own service officers," Koutz said.

Claims are considered to be "fully developed" when veterans submit all available supporting evidence, such as private treatment records and notice of federal treatment records, to VA officials at the time they first file a formal claim and certify they have no more evidence to submit. This is the information that administrators need to make a determination on a disability claim, VA officials said.

The fully developed claims program supports the sharing of best practices across veteran service organizations that help thousands of veterans each year with their compensation claims, to identify up

front all evidence necessary to support a veteran's claim, officials explained. Veterans then certify that they have no additional evidence to submit, and VA can process the claim in half the time it takes for a traditionally filed claim, they said.

The American Legion and DAV are the first to step forward to work with VA on the program, officials added, and that program has led to a much more efficient process.

This is the latest effort in support of the plan to reduce the backlog. Last month, the VA announced an initiative to expedite compensation claims decisions for veterans who have waited one year or longer.

On April 19, the VA began prioritizing claims decisions for veterans who have been waiting the longest by providing provisional decisions that allow eligible veterans to begin collecting compensation benefits quickly. With a provisional decision, a veteran has a year to submit additional information before the decision becomes final.

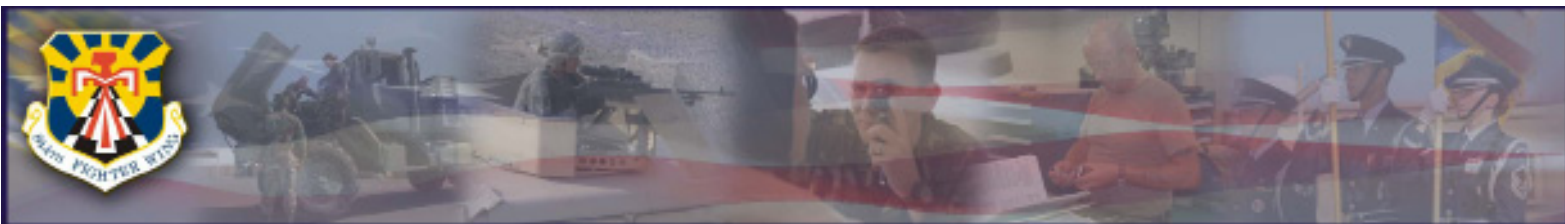
On May 15, VA officials announced that the department is mandating overtime for claims processors in its 56 regional benefits offices through the end of fiscal 2013 to help eliminate the backlog, with continued emphasis on high-priority claims for homeless veterans and those claiming financial hardship, the terminally ill, former prisoners of war, Medal of Honor recipients and veterans filing fully developed claims.

As of May 17, the paperless claims processing system known as the Veterans Benefits Management System, or VBMS, has been deployed to 46 out of 56 regional office locations, and about 18 percent of VA's current claim inventory is in an electronic format, officials said.

Claims for wounded warriors separating from the military for medical reasons will continue to be handled separately and on a priority basis with the Defense Department through the Integrated Disability Evaluation System, officials said. On average, they noted, wounded warriors separating through IDES currently receive VA compensation benefits in two months following their separation from service.

(Information courtesy of a Department of Veterans Affairs news release)





# Performance Feedback: A Process, Not Just a Date on the EPR Form

By Master Sgt. Sandra Plentzas, first sergeant, 944th Medical Squadron

You have an EPR (or OPR) due on one of your Airmen and you get to that section on the form that asks for the date of the last performance feedback session. Do you have an actual date, or do you reach for the nearest calendar and pick one? While writing the EPR, you know that this person is not a "5" and you agonize over what rating to give. You know the right thing to do is to rate him according to his actual performance, but he will probably be surprised by anything less than a "5" because you've always felt anxious about confronting poor performance.

If you are one of the few who will not relate to the above examples, consider yourself lucky. Unfortunately, these scenarios happen more often than not - even to seasoned leaders. So, how do we keep integrity in the evaluation process and help it to be less stressful for both the rater and the ratee? The Performance Feedback PROCESS! This is not just an Air Force concept. Pick up any book on leadership and you will find versions of the steps below listed in what's usually termed "performance management".

This is how it works... Whether you are a newly-assigned supervisor, or you are guiding an employee through a specific task or project, the following process works the same. Oh, and by the way, this process does NOT need to be initiated by the supervisor. If you are unclear at any time about your performance or how it will be measured, it is your responsibility to request a feedback.

1. Set initial performance expectations - Take time in the very beginning to meet and identify clear and measurable performance goals. Pay close attention to the words clear and measurable! Be certain that you both understand what the specific goals are and how they will be measured. Wrap the session up by having the individual explain in her/his own words what the performance goals are and how they will be measured.

2. Measure performance against goals - During the course of the rating period, assess the individual's performance by comparing it against the measurements identified in Step 1. Is she/he meeting the goals and objectives? Is she/he on track? This assessment happens continuously throughout the rating period!

3. Provide feedback and coaching - Again, throughout the rating period (don't wait until just before the performance report is due!), provide constructive feedback to the individual as to how he/she is doing. Let her/him know what she/he is doing right (reinforce the positives!), and provide objective feedback on what isn't going according to plan. This is the time to find out if there are any obstacles impeding progress that the individual may need your help with. Together, come up with a plan on how to keep the good work going and how to improve the areas that aren't meeting the

established expectations. Keep the coaching session positive and remind him of your confidence in his/her abilities. Again, wrap up this session by having the individual explain in his/her own words what the new plan of action is and what any newly-identified goals are and how they will be measured.

4. Return to Step 2 and continue the cycle until the rating period closes out. Then start all over with Step 1 at the beginning of the next reporting period!

Taking the time and effort to follow these steps will ensure healthy communication between supervisor and subordinate and will eliminate any surprises. It will also take the

anxiety out of counseling someone about sub-par performance. How? Because you both have worked together to establish the performance goals and how they will be measured. If the individual isn't meeting those goals, the feedback session is designed to be an objective, non-emotional meeting to establish a plan for improving performance. You may discover in this meeting that something has changed that neither of you anticipated and a goal needs to be adjusted. You may discover that the individual needs some additional training to help him/her complete a portion of a task. These are very positive discoveries that, when caught early enough, sets both the individual and the supervisor up for success. It is truly a coaching opportunity!

The only time that this does not work well is when it is not done continuously throughout the rating period -- when it is just a date on an EPR form and not a feedback process. If a supervisor waits until the EPR is due to evaluate performance and provide feedback, at what point does the individual ever get an opportunity to improve? How will the individual know what is going well and where he/she may not be meeting the standards? At what point might you find out that there is a problem that you could have assisted with?

If continual performance evaluation and feedback hasn't been part of your supervisory skill set to this point, don't be discouraged - start this UTA! Make appointments with those whom you supervise and start with Step 1. You will find that through the process you will have the added benefit of getting to know each other better as you become partners in making each other successful!

Helpful Links:

The latest changes and updates to AFI 36-2406, Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Systems (as of 29 March 2013) have been published to the Air Force e-Publishing website.

For specific guidance on the Performance Feedback Process, see Chapter 2. [http://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af\\_a1/publication/afi36-2406/afi36-2406.pdf](http://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/afi36-2406/afi36-2406.pdf)

Amn - TSgt: AF Form 931

MSgt - CMSgt: AF Form 932

Officers: AF Form 724

If continual performance evaluation and feedback hasn't been part of your supervisory skill set to this point, don't be discouraged -



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or on our web page at <http://www.944fw.afrc.af.mil/>