



944th Fighter Wing Monthly SnapShot

www.944fw.afrc.af.mil

December 2013

944 FW KEY LEADERS

Commander

Col. Kurt J. Gallegos

Vice Commander

Col. Robert Whitehouse

Mission

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

944th Fighter Wing Electronic 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.



Check us out on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/#!/944thFighterWing.LukeAFB> or on our web page at <http://www.944fw.afrc.af.mil/>

Happy Holidays!

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

Happy Holidays! This season is a time to celebrate and a time to reflect on all the accomplishments of the past year and cherish the time we have with family and friends.

We have faced some difficult challenges this year with the government shutdown and budget cuts but our wing has surpassed my expectations with its resiliency and dedication. We have renewed our focus on stewardship, accountability, and reliability. These are the hallmarks of our core values -- integrity, service and excellence. We all know that our new fiscal realities are not going away, and both our military and civilian workforces will have had to cope with reductions, reorganizations and other changes. I have no doubt that the 944th Fighter Wing will do so with amazing dedication and superb professionalism. Each and every one of you is vitally important to our success.

This is the time of year we appreciate and celebrate the people in our lives who have supported us and bring us happiness and joy throughout the year. Remember to take time out of your busy holiday schedule to spend time with them and let them know how much they mean to you. Remember our deployed Airmen and extend heartfelt thanks to the family members and loved ones who won't get to spend the holidays with them.

Finally, and most importantly, please think carefully about safety and be sure to use the wingman concept in all your plans for the holiday season. Remember that this time of year is not a happy time for everyone so offer a helping hand or friendly invitation to those who may be alone or distressed during the holidays. You are all vital to the success of our mission and to our Air Force family. Thank you for your continued dedication and support and I wish everyone a happy and joyful holiday season.



Welcome Home!!

Tech. Sergeant Larae Thompson, 944th Logistics Readiness Squadron, returned home from Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan

Tech. Sergeant Mark Joiner, 944th Logistics Readiness Squadron, returned home from Transit Center at Manas, Kyrgyz Republic



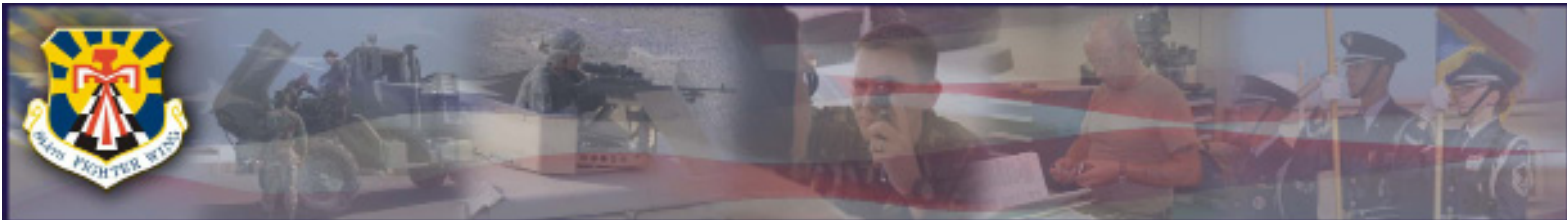
944th Fighter Wing UEI Survey

Reminder:

Take the time to accomplish the 944th Fighter Wing survey if you have not already. Deadline for the survey is Dec. 21, 2013. Completion of the survey is a direct reflection on the attitude and reputation of this great fighter wing.

The Wing survey will only take about 20 minutes to complete. Be honest with your answers; it will make the results more meaningful for our wing. All of the information you provide is protected in IG channels; none of the data will be released outside of HQ Air Force Reserve Command Inspector General or Secretary of the Air Force IG. If you are a civilian employee, please indicate you are a "Department of the Air Force civilian" at the appropriate question. Spouses are encouraged to fill out the survey as well. Visit the 944 FW survey link at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/944FW2013>





Increased Activity on Luke December 3-15

Luke Air Force Base will host Forging Sabre, an exercise involving the 425th Fighter Squadron, 428th Fighter Squadron from Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, and members of the Republic of Singapore armed forces, Tuesday, Dec. 3 to Friday, Dec. 15. Flying will also occur during the weekends of Dec. 7 to 8 and 14 to 15 at Luke AFB and the Barry M. Goldwater Range complex.

There will also be an increase in personnel on base affecting the Commissary, BX, and other base facilities.

The areas around Luke and the BMGR may experience more noise than usual as a result of the increased air activity and types of aircraft involved. Aircrafts involved will include F-16 Fighting Falcon, F-15E Strike Eagle, CH-47 Chinook and AH-64 Apache helicopters. There will be an increased military presence with military movements along Highway 85 south of Gila Bend as military position themselves within the Barry M. Goldwater range.

The purpose of the exercise is to provide the Singapore armed forces an opportunity to exercise and train their full spectrum of command, control and execution.

Promotions:

The following members were promoted 1 December 2013:

Airman Basic Alexis B. Angarica to the rank of Airman, 944th Civil Engineer Squadron
 Airman Ellyn J. Shults to the rank of Airman 1st Class, 944th Civil Engineer Squadron
 Airman 1st Class Charles M. Cabrera to the rank of Senior Airman, 414th Maintenance Squadron
 Airman 1st Class Peter W. Pope to the rank of Senior Airman, 414th Maintenance Squadron
 Senior Airman Sophia J. Cazares to the rank of Staff Sergeant, 944th Medical Squadron
 Senior Airman Jon C. Gause to the rank of Staff Sergeant, 924th Maintenance Squadron
 Senior Airman D. Hataway to the rank of Staff Sergeant, 944th Security Forces Squadron
 Staff Sergeant Jennifer L. Blocher to the rank of Tech. Sergeant, 944th Medical Squadron
 Staff Sergeant John A. Derden to the rank of Tech. Sergeant, 924th Maintenance Squadron
 Staff Sergeant Kathleen K. Garrett to the rank of Tech. Sergeant, 944th Medical Squadron
 Tech. Sergeant Todd A. Taylor to the rank of Master Sergeant, 944th Fighter Wing Staff
 Master Sergeant Jeremy N. Malcom to the rank of Senior master Sergeant, 924th Maintenance Squadron
 Master Sergeant Henry S. May to the rank of Senior Master Sergeant, 924th Maintenance Squadron
 Master Sergeant Samuel K. Rock to the rank of Senior Master Sergeant, 414th Maintenance Squadron
 Master Sergeant Adam Ura to the rank of Senior Master Sergeant, 944th Civil Engineer Squadron



Wing Quarterly Award Winners

Third Quarter

Airman of the Quarter:

Senior Airman James Hataway, 944th Security Forces Squadron

Non-Commissioned Officer of the Quarter:

Staff Sergeant Candice Bullard-Norwood, 944th Aeromedical Staging Squadron

Senior Non-Commissioned Officer of the Quarter:

Senior Master Sergeant Kenneth Fay, 944th Civil Engineer Squadron

Company Grade Officer of the Quarter:

Capt Derrick Young, 944th Force Support Squadron

Field Grade Officer of the Quarter:

Lt Col Katherine McMorris, 944th Medical Squadron

Instructor Pilot of the Quarter:

Maj Joseph White, 69th Fighter Squadron

Weapons Safety Officer of the Quarter:

Lt Col Eric Ostendorf, 307th Fighter Squadron



The Air Force Reserve recently relaunched the Get1Now referral program. The Get 1 Now Program is a great way for Reservists to keep the Air Force Reserve strong by recommending qualified people with whom they wish to serve. When your referrals join the Air Force Reserve, you get credit for an accession and become eligible for an award.

By logging in to this website, you can enter a qualified referral - someone who you believe would make a good member of the Air Force Reserve. You can also check on the status of your referrals and update your personal account information online.

To find more information about the program or to submit a candidate, go to the website www.get1now.us.

Every Reservist is a Recruiter!



Combined Federal Campaign

Information provided by Capt. Rob Bartusch, 944 Fighter Wing Staff CFC Rep.

Combined Federal Campaign kicked off in November and runs through December 9th 2013.

Here is a helpful link to the Maricopa County CFC, where you can find details on all the charities associated with our local campaign <http://maricopacfc.org/> and a link to the national CFC website <http://www.opm.gov/combined-federal-campaign/>.

Take a look at the websites and strongly consider a donation this year. Even as recent as October, these charitable organizations wound up providing assistance to the hundreds of thousands of federal employees who were furloughed due to the shutdown.

Top 10 Reasons to Support the Combined Federal Campaign

by Harv Forsgren, Federal Employee

In the spirit of The Late Night Show, here are the Top 10 Reasons to Support the Combined Federal Campaign:

10. It's non-fattening!

Give up one donut, bagel or quadruple-extra tall latte per week and donate the equivalent to the CFC organization of your choice. You'll not only support a great cause but you'll spare yourself thousands of calories this year!

9. It's environmentally friendly!

We now offer online pledging via Employee Express or CFC Nexus. Both systems are available at www.cfcnocal.com. Pledge online to save paper (also, it does the math for you and fixes your bad handwriting.) Yes, you can still do it the old fashioned way.

8. It's easy!

You don't have to attend an all-day training seminar or even call tech support to pledge via CFC.

7. It's a guilt-free alibi!

You can actually say, "I gave at the office..." and mean it!

6. It's YOUR campaign!

You choose the organizations and causes you want to support. You choose how much to give. You choose how to give (cash, check or payroll deduction).

5. It's safe!

As far as we know, no one has ever died while filling out a CFC pledge form... But seriously, there are strict accounting guidelines to make sure your pledge gets to the charities of your choice.

4. It's good Karma!

(Heaven knows some of you need it to counteract the other kind of Karma you are generating around the office.)

3. It's cost-effective!

A modest payroll contribution won't be missed, but it will add up to a meaningful annual contribution.

2. It is tax deductible!

Wow, don't we ALL need a tax break these days?

1. "iCan" (and uCan) make a difference!

We're not Warren Buffet or Bill Gates, but when we pool our collective resources our contributions add up to make a significant difference. Last year we raised \$4.7 million. Let's be that different.

AIR FORCE RESERVE PRESENTS OUR OFFICIAL

FACEBOOK

- FAN PAGE -

*** UPDATES WITH ***

RELEVANT POSTS

*** VERY OFTEN ***

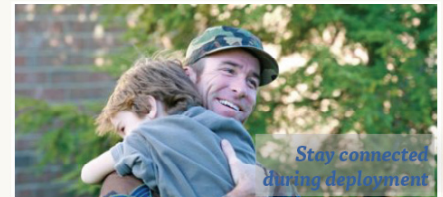
AIRMAN AND CIVILIAN NEWS
NEWS LINKS - MILITARY UPDATES
LOCAL HAPPENINGS - AF TRIVIA - DOD HISTORY
QUESTIONS ANSWERED - AF & DOD MULTIMEDIA

BECOME A FAN LIKE OUR PAGE

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Daddy Read a Book
Stories Connecting Families



Stay connected
during deployment

Daddy Read a Book connects you and your children during deployment or another long-term separation by filming you reading your children's favorite books out loud and giving that video to your family to watch at home.

As a nonprofit organization, our videos are completely free to you. During a one-hour filming session, we'll film as many books as possible, either books you bring or books from our library of classic children's books.

Luke Air Force Base Chapel

Last Monday of every month

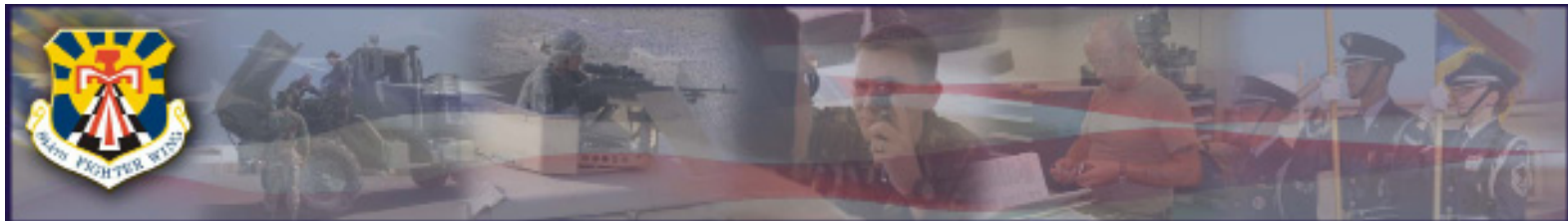
9:00 am to 2:00 pm

Contact SSgt Kenyon or Chaplain Barns



Rising Six

The Rising Six has a couple of great opportunities for volunteer hours and fundraising. Come out to the Rising Six meeting at 1300 in B993 in the area between services bays the to find out more!



Asking for help is courageous

by Command Chief Master Sgt. Thomas Mazzone 6th Air Mobility Wing

In the 1990's it was not uncommon for an Airman to hear the phrase "Suck it up!" It was also rare to find the supervisor who would encourage Airmen to seek help to work through mental health concerns. It seemed the Senior Noncommissioned Officers were worried more about maintaining the appearance of a strong and ready force. Unbeknownst to them, they were raising Airmen who would be exactly what they wanted: hard core NCOs who were afraid to show emotion, and even worse, afraid to get help. We have the opportunity to break the cycle. Are you up for the challenge?

In 2004, a Technical Sergeant found himself sitting in a corner of a darkened room in the back of his house, sobbing. He was alone, and his life had just fallen out from under his feet. For over 30 hours he sat there, cried there and slept there. He didn't eat and he didn't drink. He simply stared at the emptiness in front of him, wondering how this had happened. How had his life gone from seemingly normal to quiet chaos in less than a day? He didn't know how to ask for help.

He was in no condition to dissect his situation, as he lacked rational thought and had just sustained fresh, deep emotional wounds. Sitting in that corner, he challenged his faith; asking how his God could allow something so wicked to occur. He challenged himself, wondering if he didn't do enough to keep this from happening. The phone rang as he sat there. He thought about unplugging it, but it was too far away. He wondered about "making the pain go away", but instead he rolled over to fall asleep yet again. This time he awoke to the sound of his name being yelled in his own house. He never cried out "I'm back here, please help me!"

When they found him, he was a wreck. His legs were weak and he didn't want to move. He just wanted his life back...he wanted his family back. He wanted things to be the way they were before, even though he knew that was not possible. One person walked him to the living room couch. Another got him some water. They sat there in silence with him, waiting patiently, hoping he would say something. He was ashamed and didn't speak. He couldn't stomach the thought of people knowing about this, even if they were his friends. He felt they wouldn't be able to do anything for him, and he never asked them to find someone who could help.

One of them contacted the first sergeant, who arrived soon after. Together, they started doing things for him...simple things. They turned on the shower, they got him clean clothes, they made him a bowl of cereal and they drove him to see his commander. He sat in the office; his commander making the time to listen to nothing being said, only the sobs of a broken man. Finally, he was asked if he would like to see a chaplain or someone from Mental Health.

I said "no", because I was scared and because that's the way I was raised in the Air Force. I was taught that seeking help was a sign of weakness, that it hurt careers and it could negatively impact the mission. My commander didn't force me. Instead he made a deal with me. He made me promise to answer the door no matter what time there was a knock, and to answer the phone at any hour. He pulled me from the flight schedule to ensure my personal safety and the safety of my fellow crewmates. He knew my passion for history and instructed me to begin a research project for the unit. All the while, he reminded me constantly of my options to speak with someone, and that it was a path back to wellness. After weeks of not smiling and busy work meant to keep my mind occupied, I finally told someone I was ready to talk.

There was no pause. I was immediately driven the 15 miles to

our supporting hospital, and met with someone who wanted only to learn about what happened to make me go through the pain I felt. She gained my trust, assuring me that these steps to heal myself were courageous. It took time, but I worked through it. It took friends who legitimately cared about me, and did whatever was needed. It took a command team to let me know it was okay to expose my wounds, since that was the only way to heal them. It took more time, but I was finally back in the air, doing what I loved, safely. It took a lot of people doing a lot of things at just the right time to make sure I was cared for. They never let me feel as though I was on my own. It also took a patient and loving God to wait for me to come back, and to show me there is a purpose for everything.

Since then, I've tried hard to crush the stigma associated with seeking help for mental health issues by being an example of a compassionate leader. But it wasn't until recently that I decided the best example I could use was my own. I intend to continue spreading the message that it's okay to ask for help. After mustering the courage to seek the assistance others wanted for me, I took to the path. It led me on a journey of self-discovery and helped to rebuild my confidence. In the aftermath, I continued to earn positions of responsibility, and maintained my high level security clearance. I was screened and designated to work for a special mission unit, promoted to Chief Master Sergeant, and eventually selected to be your Command Chief.

The previous paragraph is not boastful pride. It's meant to encourage those who may be sitting in a similar dark corner, with what appears to be no place to go. I promise you there is a safe place, and I challenge you to ask for help. If I can crawl from my own hell with the help of others, I know you can too. I also have a message for the "dinosaurs" that remain entrenched in the belief that asking for help is weak: You're keeping your Airmen from reaching their full potential. That is exactly the opposite of what good leaders do. We should be inspiring our Airmen, and conditioning them to seek whatever help they need in order to succeed personally and professionally. Healthy Airmen accomplish the mission efficiently, and with pride.

There are so many men and women with whom we serve who have made a leap of faith and found fulfillment on the other side. All it takes is the courage to ask for help. Continue to be GREAT Wingmen. You are OUR most valued resource!! Thank you for your service.



It took a lot of people doing a lot of things at just the right time to make sure I was cared for. They never let me feel as though I was on my own.



CSAF launches new initiative to improve communication with Airmen

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- As part of a series of recent efforts to enhance communication with Airmen, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III released the first of a new video series called "Airman to Airman."

With all the issues facing the department over the last year, Welsh said the videos serve as an opportunity to inform Airmen on the challenges ahead, but more importantly, to help them understand the logic behind certain decisions.

"This is about keeping you informed about what the Air Force's position is on certain issues and challenges," Welsh said. "We must do better at communicating these issues with our Airmen, they need to hear the whys and understand the reasons decisions are being made."

one of the repercussions of sequestration - becoming a smaller Air Force.

"How much smaller remains to be seen... it

through the next 10 years," Welsh says in the video. "You just need to know that we're spending a lot of time and energy trying to figure out how to do this the right way."

In addition to Welsh's video messages, Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James Cody meets with Airmen for roundtables and other broadcast forums, they brought back Roll Call in September, and Welsh and Cody are both active on social media.

"Airmen have questions and concerns -- we need to be there to provide answers and address these concerns," Cody said.

The "Airman to Airman" videos will be distributed on af.mil, the Air Force Portal and various social media platforms.

To view the first video, click on the link <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bE2QhXN1hg>.



will be a balance between capability, capacity and readiness that we're going to be walking

Welsh: Budget Woes Force Cuts to Some Base Facilities

by by Jim Garamone, American Forces Press Service

In this time of sequestration, the Air Force must focus on its primary mission of being able to fight and win the nation's wars, Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, the Air Force chief of staff, said here yesterday.

Family programs that support that mission will receive funding, but "nice-to-have" facilities will be dropped, Welsh said during an interview.

"We have added a lot of family programs over the last 10 years because we could afford to," Welsh said. But the budget situation has changed, he said, and the Air Force needs to invest all possible money into its warfighting mission.

The Air Force has identified family programs that aid the warfighting mission and those will remain funded, Welsh said.

"We have already decided what our core support programs are in the Air Force and those will be funded: child and youth programs, health care for families, airmen and family readiness centers and so on," he said. "We are not going to cut those things. We decided we would pick those core things and we would invest in them and we will maintain that."

But there are other facilities on bases that will be cut. These include auto hobby chops, bowling alleys, golf courses and other facilities that are not self-supporting.

"These things have made our way of life a lot of fun for families and military members, but we cannot afford them any more," he said.

Such facilities will "fall by the wayside," the general said, and airmen and their families will have to rely on local communities and the opportunities available there.

This is not across the board. Overseas locations and some remote stateside bases don't necessarily have communities with these facilities. The Air Force will continue to fund them in those places.

Welsh emphasized that it is going to take a few years to rebalance the Air Force internally.

"We will have to cut people, we will have to cut force structure until we can rebalance and create a ready force that is at the readiness levels we think we will need to be successful," he said.

The most important thing the Air Force can do "is maintain the commitment, pride and loyalty of our airmen," Welsh said.

"We're not going to forget that," he added. "We will solve all those concerns with them on board because they are brilliant. They are incredibly dedicated and capable. If we lose them we can't do any of this."

The chief of staff also said he's concerned about how sequestration, furloughs and a government shutdown have affected the morale of Air Force civilian employees.

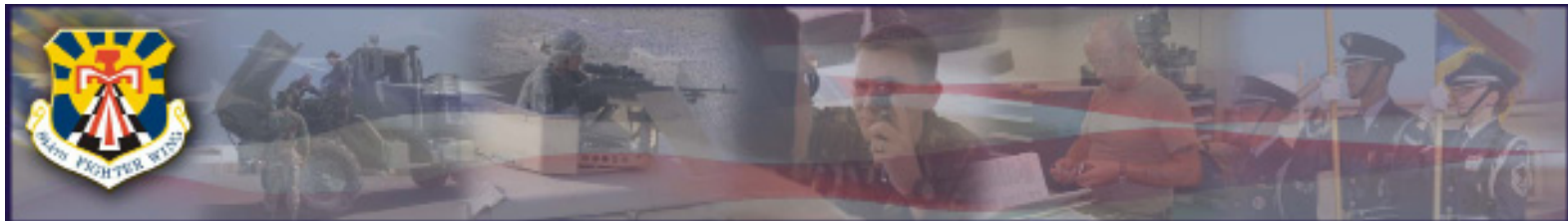
"Our civilian airmen are part of everything we do," Welsh said. "In some areas they are the mission."

There's been no pay raise for federal government civilian employees -- including those working for the Air Force -- in the past three years, the general noted.

"And after three years of no pay raise, we rewarded them with a furlough and then we threw a government shutdown on top of that just to add insult to injury," Welsh said. "It has been a very tough year for them and regaining their trust is important."

Budget Woes Force Cuts to Some Base Facilities





ESGR accepting nominations for Freedom Award

ARLINGTON, Va. -- The Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is accepting nominations for the 2014 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award.

The Freedom Award is the Department of Defense's top award for civilian employers who support their employees in the National Guard and Reserve.

ESGR encourages guardsmen and reservists, or family members acting on their behalf, to nominate employers by going to www.FreedomAward.mil by Jan. 20.

Members of the Guard and Reserve comprise nearly one-half of the nation's military force. They provide essential services to national security and humanitarian efforts at home and abroad.

Supportive employers help keep the U.S. military strong and the nation secure, said Paul Mock, ESGR national chair.

"Across the nation, employers have shown noteworthy support to their service member employees and families," he said. "Whether on routine duty, responding to natural disasters or serving in a deployed location, employers who encourage military service make it easier to serve."

"By submitting a Freedom Award nomination, a member of the National Guard or Reserve can acknowledge and thank their employer for the critical role they play in our nation's defense."

Each year the Freedom Award program honors up to 15 employers in

Washington, D.C. Since its inception in 1996, the program has recognized 190 employers.

Examples of past recipients' support include continued benefits and healthcare for deployed service members, home maintenance and child-care support and veteran hiring initiatives.

Established in 1972, ESGR develops and maintains employer support for Guard and Reserve service. It advocates relevant initiatives, recognizes outstanding support, increases awareness of applicable laws, and resolves conflict between service members and employers.

More information about the Freedom Award and ESGR is available by contacting Butch Wise at 602-629-4031 for the Phoenix and Northern Arizona area or Bruce Hamilton at 520-750-5891 for the Tucson area. Or visit www.FreedomAward.mil.



Crime Awareness Bulletin

Joint Base Lewis-McChord
Directorate of Emergency Services
Police Intelligence / Crime Analysis Unit

25 November 2013

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Call Center

SCAM ALERT: Veterans should be aware of a marketing scam targeting callers trying to reach the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Call Center or GI Bill Call Center. A marketing company has established two fraudulent numbers that differ from the two official VA call center numbers by one digit. If the fraudulent number is dialed by mistake, the answering party will offer a gift card and try to obtain personal and financial information, including credit card information, from the caller. The answering party may even transfer the caller to the VA number after the caller's information is obtained. Note that VA will never ask you for a credit card number or banking information over the phone. Before giving personal sensitive information over the phone make sure you know to whom you are talking.

The numbers to be **AVOIDED** are:

800-872-1000 (the actual VA National Call Center number is 800-827-1000)

888-442-4511 (the actual VA GI Bill Call Center number is 888-442-4551)

VA has notified law enforcement authorities to address this situation, and will provide additional information and guidance as necessary.

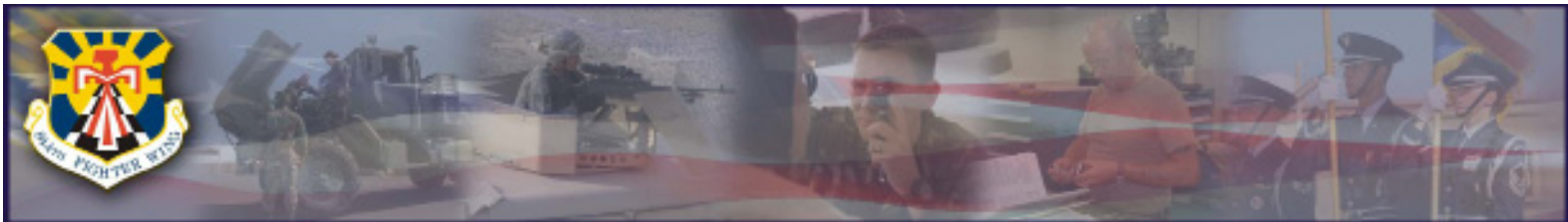


WINGMAN TOOLKIT

◊ AIR FORCE RESERVE ◊

Visit <http://afrc.wingmantoolkit.org/>

Or to get help now call 1-800-273-TALK



Leaders advise against merging Guard, Reserve

by Capt. Erin Palumbo, 439th Base Education and Training

It's no myth that people with advanced degrees, on average, make more money than people with a high school diploma. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the following average weekly earnings for 2012: high school graduate, \$626; associate degree \$761; bachelor's degree, \$1,025; master's degree, \$1,257; doctoral degree, \$1,532.

A degree is much more than checking a box in your military career progression. It provides the stability, competitiveness, and lifetime financial rewards to cover the range of lifetime employment challenges. However, consider these premises before putting the first down payment on a college education.

Look before you leap

Sometimes in the rush to obtain a degree, not enough consideration is given to which degree is the right one. The money provided to our Airmen is good for one higher education degree. If an Airman rushes to get a degree in anything, looking to check the box, and later finds out that career field has no interest, no jobs in the area, or is not compatible with their family/ military life, there's no going back. Consider a similar purchase, such as buying a house.

Before you sign the dotted line, you would spend time considering the location, your long-term plans, you would order a house inspection, and you would take time walking through the property to ensure it was the right purchase. Give the same consideration to your degree selection. Whatever you pick will have a lasting impact. There are several ways to do a pre-purchase test.

Try it on for size

Educational benefits: Look before you leap Before you purchase your degree in higher education, try it on for size. There are several good ways to get a feel for a career before investing time and money.

Consider an internship. While the pay might be minimal, the experience gained is invaluable. This is an effective way to test a career field. Job realities might be different than job expectations.

Volunteering a few hours might be flexible and might create employment opportunities. Working nights, weekends or part-time could provide a chance to see if the job matches your preference.

Obtaining an entry-level job in the field will also give you some exposure. For example, if you'd like to be a nurse, try a job as a secretary in a hospital. It'll help give you a good feel of the daily life of a nurse and general work atmosphere.

Any of these options might slow an eager Airman in the pursuit of a degree. But if the money and time of an education are weighed against the cost of a second education when the first one doesn't work out, it's a smart choice.

'Not all schools are created equal'

Do your homework before you enroll. At the 2012 DoD Worldwide Education Symposium, two members from the Pentagon's Department of Justice spoke on the growing fraud and misrepresentation in the recruiting or educating of service members. Not only are service members harmed, but the GI and Tuition Assistance money designed to help them are also not well spent. If at some point the government feels these programs are not accomplishing their mission, funding for them may be reconsidered.

Today, there are many colleges offering online degrees and claiming to be military friendly. It's worth the time to fully price shop as there can be huge differences. One college might offer the same degree for 25 percent less cost. Some colleges do not have fully credited programs. Be wary of any college claiming to be endorsed by a service.

The Department of Defense does not endorse any college or university. Schools should not claim to be approved by or use the seal of any military component. Nobody should be subjected to repeated phone calls, emails, or direct mail. Consider these aggressive marketing tactics as "red flags."

Be sure you check the school accreditation as well as credit transfer history. Broad claims such as "everyone's credits transfer everywhere" should put you on alert. Nobody's credits transfer everywhere.

However the school should have a good history of most credits being accepted at most applicable schools. Ask about the school's graduation rate and job placement record. A Chicago college promised criminal justice graduates a job with the Illinois State Police. It turned out the Illinois State Police did not accept graduates from that program. Just a few blocks down the street, a different college was offering a criminal justice major for nearly half the price. The Illinois State Police did hire these graduates.

Getting a degree is important. Equally important is taking the time to research the particular degree and school you choose. Benjamin Franklin said it best, "If passion drives you, let reason hold the reins."

For more information about education benefits contact our Wing Education office at 623-856-5318.

Armed Services YMCA presents annual art, essay contest



The 2013 Military Family Month Packet by the Armed Services YMCA is now available! Check out our great prizes like iPod Touches

and Ipads for military youth!

The ASYMCA art and essay contest allows children to express their love, appreciation and admiration for their military heroes and serve to remind us of the sacrifices our men and women in uniform, and their families, make each day for our country. Entries for the art contest depict the theme, "My Military Family."

The annual Armed Services YMCA Art and Essay Contest is officially launched every November and is open to all eligible children of U.S. active duty or retired service members.

Winners of both the art and essay contests have their winning entries displayed at 33 Armed Services YMCA Branches and affiliate locations, as well as military bases worldwide during Military Family Month in November, 2013. Winners also receive special Apple

product prizes to help youth create and express themselves.

"Our annual art and essay contest allows children to express their love, appreciation and admiration for their military heroes," said Mike Landers, CAPT, USN (Ret), and CEO of ASYMCA. "Their essays and artwork also serve to remind us of the sacrifices our men and women in uniform, and their families, make each day for our country."

Entries for the art contest depict the theme, "My Military Family." Co-sponsored by GEICO, the art contest promotes art among children in grades K-6 of active duty or retired (with 20+ years of service) members of the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard and National Guard/Reserves families. Visit www.asymca.org/programs/art-and-essay-contest/.



When The Holidays Aren't Happy



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

It's the most wonderful time of the year! At least that is our hope. However, situations in our lives can occur that take some of the happiness out of the Holiday Season. We all suffer hardships at some point in this life. If you are facing some hardships this season, please remember that your military family cares. There are many resources available to help members through difficult times - no matter what time of year.

I know it sounds cliché but the first step really is acknowledging you need help and reaching out. As First Sergeants, we are ALWAYS available to you. We have access to information and resources that we can put you in contact with. And sometimes we can help you ourselves depending on the situation.

Besides your First Sergeants, your Chaplain Corps team is also a great place to start, especially if the situation is sensitive in nature. Reaching out to a Chaplain first is never a bad idea since Chaplains are the ONLY military members who have 100% confidentiality. The Chaplain can hear whatever you have to say and provide you with information and there's no worry that anyone will find out what you talk about unless you first grant permission.

Another local resource we have available to us are the Military Family Life Counselors or MFLCs. MFLCs are trained, clinical counselors who are contracted by the Department of Defense to provide private, confidential (other than duty-to-warn situations) counseling free of charge to Service Members and our families. They keep no records and do not report their contacts with you to anyone. The difference between MFLCs and Chaplains is the MFLC's requirement to report child abuse, domestic abuse and other duty-to-warn situations.

How about financial hardships? The pressure to provide for our families during the Holiday Season can be overwhelming; especially for those of us already struggling financially. The MFLC program also provides Personal Financial Counselors or PFC MFLCs. PFCs can offer financial counseling, assist with developing budgets, and a host of other financial assistance. All you need to do is reach out!

Another favorite resource of mine is Military One Source. By

phone or on the web, you can reach out to them for a "broad range of concerns including money management, spouse employment and education, parenting and child care, relocation, deployment, reunion, and the particular concerns of family members with special-needs. They can also include more complex issues like relationships, stress, and grief" as is described on their website. I was able to utilize Military One Source to help find a long-term care facility for my mother last year. I didn't know where else to turn and they helped!

Below is a list of resources and how to get in touch with them. If you are struggling this Holiday Season, please do not go through it alone! If you are fine but notice a fellow Wingman struggling, share this information. We truly are a family and need to look out for each other.

Military One Source

<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/>
1-800-342-9647

Chaplain

944th Chaplain's Office - 623-856-5303
Luke AFB Duty Chaplain (on call & emergencies after hours) 623-856-5800

Military Family Life Counselor (MFLC)

Luke MFLC Confidential Phone: 623-238-0565
mflc.lukeaf@gmail.com
For MFLCs at other bases, contact the Family Readiness Center at the base near you for their contact information.

Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC)

24/7 Contact Phone: 623-856-4878

Air Force Reserve Psychological Health Advocacy Program (PHAP)

<http://afrc.phap.net/>
Referral 24/7 Call Center: 888-536-0626

KEY NOTES:

Reserve Tuition Assistance: For those utilizing Reserve tuition assistance (TA) AFRC will no longer allow late or after the fact requests for TA. Members need to be pro-active in requesting their TA and may apply 60 days before class begins. Since TA is paid up front, there should not be a reason a member would request it after the fact (or late) unless it is directly mandated by a higher authority (lack of current funding, government shutdown, etc). The wing education and training office is not allowed to manually submit on the members behalf like in years past. For more information contact our Wing Education office at 623-856-5318.

Semi-Annual Aerobathon: The Bryant Fitness center is hosting their semi-annual Aerobathon on Dec. 14, 2013, from 0900 to 1300. There is a \$5 entry fee. The event is open to all DoD ID card holders 14 years old of age and older however, there are only 80 spots available. Be sure to bring a towel, yoga mat, and water. Sign up at the front desk at the Bryant fitness center (Bldg. 820) or at the Aerobics Center (Bldg. 700). Prizes and snacks will be provided. For more information please contact: Mr. Stoney, Ms. Bazan, Paul Johnson or Sherri Biringer at 623-856-6241 or 2291.



Reserve Advisory Council looking for innovative ideas

by Col. Bob Thompson, Air Force Reserve Public Affairs

Got a great idea that can improve things for your fellow reservists?

The Air Force Reserve wants your input and has tasked the Reserve Advisory Council to represent all categories of Citizen Airmen and to bring their ideas to the attention of Air Force senior leaders.

The council has 13 members representing Air Reserve Technicians, Traditional Reservists, Individual Mobilization Augmentees and Active Guard and Reserve members.

"The Reserve Advisory Council is represented by 7 officers and 6 enlisted reservists to ensure connectivity to all ranks as well as various career fields," said Col. Carlos Hill, liaison to the council, and director of Policy Integration for Air Force Reserve at the Pentagon. "We want everyone in the Air Force Reserve to feel comfortable reaching out to the council no matter what your rank or duty status."

For more than 10 years, the council has brought several ideas forward helping to shape new Air Force policies and even new federal laws. Travel pay for reservists performing Inactive Duty Training more than 100 miles from their homes was funded by Congress thanks to the council's input in 2010.

"We want all reservists to know their opinions matter and their ideas can get through to make our Air Force Reserve better," said Chief Master Sgt. Desriann L. Stevens, chief, Policy Integration and liaison to the council. "When you contact a member of the Reserve Advisory Council, you're accessing someone who has input to the highest levels of our Air Force, Department of Defense and law makers on Capitol Hill."

Hill."

The council is chaired by Brig. Gen. Karen A. Rizzuti, the mobilization assistant to the commander of 24th Air Force, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas. Besides the general and her two liaisons, the council includes:

- Lt. Col. John A. Boccieri, commander of the 773rd Airlift Squadron, 910th Airlift Wing, Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Vienna, Ohio.
 - Lt. Col. Tony Polashek, deputy commander, 514th Operations Group, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.
 - Lt. Col. Tim Welter, Individual Mobilization Augmentee, U.S. Transportation Command, Scott AFB, Ill.
 - Capt. Philip A. Spencer, 566th Intelligence Squadron, Buckley Air Force Base, Colo.
 - 1Lt. Kristen E. George, flight nurse, 459th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, 459th Air Refueling Wing, Joint Base Andrews, Md.
 - Chief Master Sgt. Richard A. Dawson, superintendent, Cyberspace Operations for the Operations Division, Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, Robins AFB, Ga.
 - Chief Master Sgt. Michael Du, superintendent, 4th Combat Camera Squadron, March ARB, Calif.
 - Senior Master Sgt. Stephanie A. Moncalieri, superintendent, Business Analyst Division, Headquarters Air Reserve Personnel Center, Buckley AFB.
 - Senior Master Sgt. Sandra L. Plentzas, first sergeant, 944th Medical Squadron, 944th Fighter Wing, Luke AFB, Ariz.
 - Master Sgt. Jennifer B. Lynch, flight chief, Readiness and Emergency Management, Civil Engineer Squadron, 944th FW, Luke AFB.
- If you have an innovative idea, contact a member of the council today.

Reserve Advisory Council

The Reserve Advisory Council is composed of officers, enlisted members and civilians who serve (or have served) in the Air Force Reserve. They represent the different constituencies of the Air Force Reserve.

The responsibilities of the Reserve Council are as follows:

1. Develops Air Force policy recommendations on quality of life and quality of service issues, which impact Air Force Reserve members.
2. Identifies and prioritizes quality of life and quality of service issues, driven by legislative action, which impact Air Force Reserve members.
3. Prepares input, to include background information, and recommend action by the Air Force on these issues.
4. Makes recommendations to the Air Force Reserve through AF/RE on policy issues which impact Air Force Reservists.
5. Responds to Air Force Reserve requests for study, evaluation, and/or recommendation on issues affecting members of the Air Force Reserve.
6. Performs such other duties as may be assigned by the Air Force Reserve

Total Force Service Center contact numbers change

by Janis El Shabazz, Air Force Personnel Center Public Affairs

Telephone contact numbers for the Total Force Service Center will change on Nov. 15.

The new numbers, commercial (210) 565-0102 and DSN 665-0102 will replace DSN 665-5000 and DSN 847-3294. To ensure Airmen have ample time to adjust, AFPC will keep the "5000" number live, and ARPC will keep the "3294" number live until Nov. 22. After Nov. 22, DSN 665-5000 and DSN 847-3294 will no longer be active.

The change includes both TFSC locations at AFPC in San Antonio, Texas and the Air Reserve Personnel Center in Aurora, Colo. The toll free number will remain the

same (800-525-0102) but customers are encouraged to use the DSN or commercial number to reduce operation costs.

"The Total Force Service Center was created to provide seamless real-time personnel service to Airmen," said Lt. Col. Shawn Campbell, TFSC operations division chief. "This change will advance that goal by alleviating any confusion with similar numbers and ensuring Airmen have access to personnel services when they need it."

The TFSC centralizes processes and access for most military and civilian personnel services. However, Campbell said the myPers website should be the first stop for Airmen seeking access to personnel information services.

MyPers provides access to personnel information and links to the most commonly used applications at the click of a mouse. When visiting the website Airmen will find data on programs ranging from military assignments to civilian benefits and entitlements.

"With this change Airmen will continue to receive the same level of 24/7 quality assistance as before," Campbell said. "If they cannot find what they need on the myPers website or simply need more information, TSFC customer service representatives will be standing by to assist them."

For more information about active duty, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve or civilian personnel issues, visit the myPers website at <https://mypers.af.mil>.