



WINGSPREAD

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH

No. 46 • NOVEMBER 21, 2014



**Airmen's dinner:
Serving those who serve**

INSIDE ... JBSA OBSERVES VETERANS DAY, P4 ... 558TH FTS MISSION, P5 ... HOLIDAY SAFETY, P9

COMMENTARY

RETAINING THE BEST

How did we lose this young Airman?

By Col. Donald Grannan
88th Communications Group commander

She was an Airman Leadership School distinguished graduate, earned staff sergeant her first time testing, received all 5s on her enlisted performance reports and took part in two deployments. Clearly she was a high-performing Airman.

But, in her words, the Air Force had made it clear it didn't want her. Huh?

I have proudly served our Air Force all of my adult life, so I truly didn't understand. Although I wasn't in her chain of command, I've known this young woman throughout her career. I tried to reflect on this from a professional, albeit admittedly biased, point of view. What would make this superstar believe we didn't care if she stayed or not?

Was it a bad first impression? I remembered an incident that involved her as a new Airman at her first duty station. A senior NCO struck her car from behind in a minor fender-bender.

Instead of admitting fault and moving on, he berated and intimidated this young Airman about the issue. Her first sergeant, who she looked to for help, would not interject or discuss the issue with the senior NCO. I could have interjected as well, but I mistakenly believed it wasn't my place. It was. An Airman needed help and no one gave it.

Was it a lack of encouragement? After she earned staff sergeant her first time eligible, she saw the results online on the Air Force Web. Then ... nothing until the following Monday when the first sergeant stopped by to congratulate her and said the commander was "really busy."

When she was a distinguished graduate from Airman Leadership School, it was a highlight in her career. But other than her immediate supervisor, no one from her squadron chain of command was present. I know, because I was there.

Was it motivation? She was a veteran of two deployments, including one where she had a few days notice to support a humanitarian operation. By chance, I

"No one in her squadron leadership knew about or was present to witness her exceptional duty performance, her distinguished graduate accomplishment, her two deployments or early promotion. But they sure knew about the one time she stumbled."

saw her and another Airman at a connecting airport as I was returning from a temporary duty assignment. I saw their apprehension and anxiety and made sure they understood to take care of each other, trust their training and focus on the mission. But I wondered if their own leadership had talked to them like this.

Did we at least send her out the door with a smile, to encourage others toward an Air Force career? No. Instead her superiors decided there would be no decoration for this outstanding Airman who achieved a lot in a short period of time and who was highly lauded by her supervisors.

Why? Because she had once failed a physical fitness test, immediately re-took it, and passed. She had tried to "wing it," failed the run and learned a lesson.

This young, healthy Airman did not have a fitness or standards problem. She had a leadership problem. No one in her squadron leadership knew about or was present to witness her exceptional duty performance, her distinguished graduate accomplishment, her two deployments or early promotion. But they sure knew about the one time she stumbled.

In the end we took an exceptional, highly motivated volunteer and did we mold her? No way. Did we encourage

her? Not a chance. Did we create a new leader? No. We created someone who cares about our nation but is disillusioned and frustrated about what our Air Force finds important and unimportant. We lost an enormous opportunity, and we can't afford to repeat that mistake.

Today, more than ever, as our ranks continue to decline, we must retain the best and most highly motivated Airmen. To do that, we have to lead them, be in the fight with them and focus on what's truly important and not become hyper-focused on marginal or anecdotal issues.

How many more situations like this are out there? If you're in a leadership position, are you part of this problem? Do you know the people under you? Are you in the fight, witnessing their capabilities, encouraging and motivating them, or do you only know about them when they stumble? If you think command or leadership positions are just another assignment, you're part of the problem.

Ask yourself, when was the last time a troop brought you a problem? If that's not happening, it's because they don't believe you can, or will, help them. So get busy proving to them they can count on you, and you'll be surprised how well you can count on them.

ON THE COVER

Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph single enlisted Airmen mingle and enjoy a hot Thanksgiving meal provided by the JBSA-Randolph Top 3 Nov. 13 at the JBSA-Randolph Chapel Center.

Photo by Airman 1st Class Alexandria Slade

WINGSPREAD

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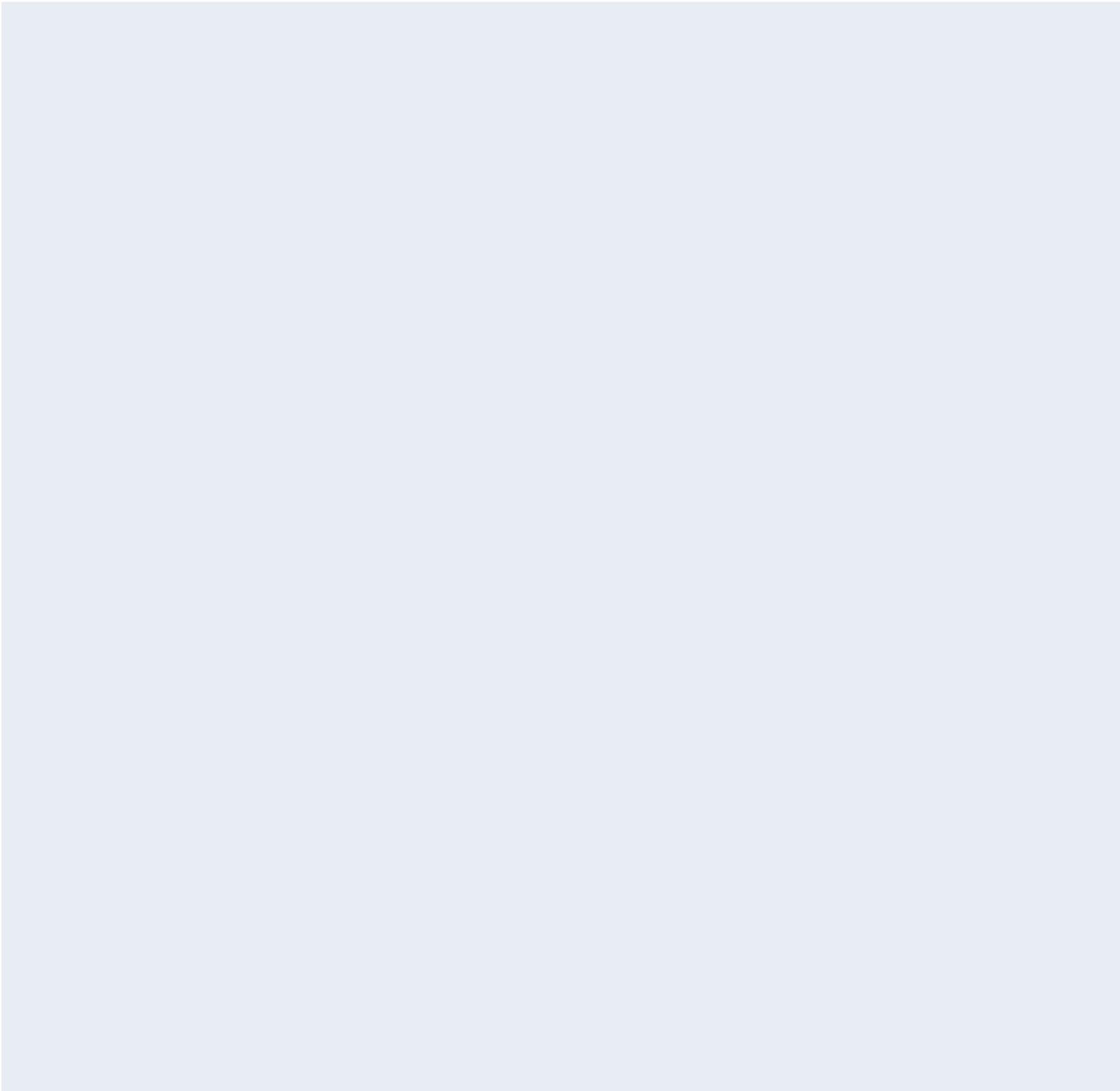
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NEWS

JBSA members participate in local events



Photo by Staff Sgt. Marissa Garner

Capt. Rafael Toro Quiones (center), U.S. Air Force Band of the West commander and conductor, directs the USAF Band of the West Concert Band and the Texas Children's Choir during the Veterans Day Evening of Music Nov. 11 at the Majestic Theater in San Antonio. More than 1,000 people attended the concert, which paid tribute to local veterans through song and by acknowledging their service and sacrifice throughout the program. The Texas Children's Choir, a nationally acclaimed chorus that has performed at various venues throughout the nation, including the White House, was featured during concert.



Photo by Steve Elliott

Brig. Gen. Bob LaBrutta, 502nd Air Base Wing and Joint Base San Antonio commander, speaks at the Bexar County Buffalo Soldiers commemorative ceremony Nov. 11. The history of the Buffalo Soldiers dates back to after the Civil War, when Congress authorized the creation of six black regiments in the regular Army.



Photo by Laura McAndrews

Chief Master Sgt. Troy Palmer (left), 12th Flying Training Wing command chief master sergeant, and Col. Matthew Isler (center), 12th FTW commander, talk with veteran Lin Harrelson during the Seguin, Texas annual Veterans Day ceremony. Members from the 12th FTW participated in community Veterans Day events to express their support to veterans and their families past, present and future.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Marissa Garner

Left to right: Senior Airman Ainsley Davis, Senior Airman Mary Gant and Staff Sgt. Rachel Wilson, U.S. Air Force Band of the West vocalists, perform "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" during the Veterans Day Evening of Music concert Nov. 11 at the Majestic Theater in San Antonio. The USAF Band of the West Concert Band put on the event, which featured the Texas Children's Choir and paid tribute to local veterans.

Training program continues to produce RPA crews at JBSA-Randolph



By Robert Goetz
Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Public Affairs

(Editor's note: For security reasons, only first names are used in this article.)

Five years after the first class of enlisted Airmen graduated from the 558th Flying Training Squadron's Basic Sensor Operator Course at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, the squadron continues to produce remotely piloted aircraft crews for what has been called "one of the most 'in-demand' platforms the Air Force provides to the joint force."

The groundbreaking training program, which started from scratch at JBSA-Randolph in 2009 and has graduated more than 1,400 students since then, consists of the RPA Instrument Qualification Course and RPA Fundamentals Course for officers and the BSOC for enlisted Airmen.

"The RIQ course, which is adapted from the current T-6 syllabus, uses simulators to train students to fly an aircraft within the United States' national airspace using Federal Aviation Administration and Air Force instrument procedures," Capt. Gary, 558th FTS assistant

director of operations, said. "The RFC is designed to transition future RPA pilots from T-6 instrument flying skills into the combat environment with emphasis on the differences of the RPA operational environment, control and exploitation of the battle space, and honing decision making skills and communication."

For most officers, RPA training takes more than six months – two months of initial flight training in Pueblo, Colo., two and a half months for the RIQ course and one month for the RPA fundamentals course.

The academic load is heavy – 140 hours for the RIQ course and 86 hours for the RFC – and students also spend nearly 60 hours in simulators.

When the program began, officers with prior operational experience cross-trained into the new career field; since 2011, the program receives a majority of its officers from the commissioning sources: the U.S. Air Force Academy, Reserve Officers Training Corps and Officer Training School.

See **TRAINING P15**

Photo by Airman 1st Class Alexandria Slade/Photo illustration by Maggie Armstrong
Front to back: Staff Sgt. Jesus, 558th Flying Training Squadron sensor operator instructor, and 2nd Lt. James, 558th FTS Remotely Piloted Aircraft pilot trainee, are instructed by Capt. Gary, 558th FTS instructor pilot on weapons employment procedures.

COMMENTARY

Chaplain finds healing, direction through faith

By Chaplain (Capt.) Sean P. Burson
323rd Training Squadron,
Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland

At 19, I saw joining the Air Force as a way to serve my country and become someone better than I was. Additionally, I didn't have many options. After growing up in an abusive environment, I had struggled emotionally and financially for a year and a half after leaving my parent's home.

When I arrived at Basic Military Training, it felt like a fresh start. Somehow, shaving my head and donning battle dress uniforms gave me hope that there was a new and better life waiting for me on the other side of this rite of passage.

One of the parts of this new life was that I attended worship services every Sunday in BMT, even though I wasn't raised in church and didn't consider myself religious. As we endured each day of training and sang together each Sunday, the men and women next to me began to feel like family and my curiosity about faith grew.

As a jet engine mechanic at my first duty station, faith became an integral part of my life. I began leading worship at the contemporary service on base while connecting closely with chaplains who mentored me and patiently helped me work through the many questions I had.

I grew closer to my parents during this time as well. Through my faith, I found healing and forgiveness for the pain of my past.

I decided to attend a yearlong school of ministry through my civilian church, culminating in a summer mission trip to the Philippines, where I felt called to full-time ministry.

When I returned to my duty station, my spirits were elevated until I learned that my mother had been diagnosed with breast cancer. A few days later, I watched the World Trade Center towers fall.

It was in the midst of this gut punch and seeing the many Airmen around me going through similar questions and pain that I felt

that the place God was calling me to ministry was in the Air Force.

As I started working towards this goal, a new singer named Kristin joined our band one day. We quickly became close friends, sharing a passion for our faith and music.

Every day I knew her, I thought she was more and more beautiful. We led a group of single Airmen through many snowboarding and camping trips, until one day while camping with a group in Colorado, Kristin received a voicemail from her physician that they needed to talk ... it was cancer.

I was beginning terminal leave in order to finish my degree and visit potential seminaries when Kristin had her first surgery and began chemotherapy and radiation. This time off allowed me to be present for every doctor's visit and to care for the woman who had become my best friend. She taught me how to truly love another person unconditionally and it was the most I had ever felt or received love from another person. We quickly knew that we wanted to spend the rest of our lives together, however long her life would be.

When Kristin finished her cancer treatment, we were both excited to put the months of being in hospitals and feeling terrible behind us and start a new chapter of our lives. I had seen my mother recover from her battle with cancer and we hoped that Kristin would have the same outcome. We were soon married in our local church and began our life together with hearts full of joy and gratitude for the future ahead of us.

Sadly, the joy did not last. A few months after our wedding, Kristin began to feel pain in her back and it was discovered that her cancer had returned. This time, the tumor was inoperable and the only option was to try experimental chemotherapy to attempt to shrink the tumor. We tried every chemo they gave us and held countless evenings of prayer with friends, but nothing worked.



Photo by Joshua Rodriguez

Chaplain (Capt.) Sean Burson (right), assigned to the 323rd Training Squadron at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, speaks with basic military training recruits.

CHAPLAIN from P6

We made the decision to keep living life together while we could, so we continued our plans to move to Kansas City where we attended seminary. My love for her grew every day as she continued chemotherapy and we took classes together.

In the midst of everything, we still found moments to laugh and dance in our small seminary apartment. We had a difficult, yet beautiful, year together before Kristin died during finals week of our first year of seminary.

After Kristin died, I was devastated. After a difficult start to life, I had believed that I was in a new phase of joy and happiness and yet I was in the midst of the most pain I had ever felt.

After the funeral, I was also faced with a difficult decision of whether or not to attend commissioned officer training in two weeks, joining the Air Force Chaplain Candidate Program, or give up on a dream in the midst of grief. I knew that Kristin would want me to hold on to my dream that she had supported me in, so I decided to go.

As I stood in the middle of the parade field at graduation as the wing adjutant and academic award

winner, I was filled with the pride of accomplishment and tears of grief that Kristin wasn't able to be there.

As the wing adjutant, I was tasked with calling out the name of the top graduate of our class, Rebecca Stenersen, who was a medical student at Des Moines University. I knew her name well because we had become close friends during COT while playing music together in the base chapel. She had recently lost her best friend in a plane crash. We bonded over a love of music and the ability to identify with each other in our grief.

Becky's medical school was only two-and-a-half hours away from my seminary, so we maintained a friendship over the next two years as we studied, wrote songs and both wrestled with our grief, trying to make sense of our losses in the context of our faith. During that time, I became very close with Kristin's father, Steve, and he became like a father to me. Two years later, he was the best man when Becky and I were married.

After graduating medical school in 2009, Becky was stationed in San Antonio for residency in psychiatry. I also graduated seminary

First sergeant nominations sought for AF-wide award

By Janis El Shabazz
Air Force Personnel Center Public Affairs

Air Force officials are soliciting nominations for the 2015 First Sergeant of the Year award.

The award recognizes the important contributions and leadership qualities exhibited by Air Force members in the first sergeant special duty career field.

Nominations must include examples of leadership and job performance in the nominee's primary duty, significant self-improvement and base or community involvement accomplished between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2014.

Nominees must have served as a first sergeant for at least six months during the award period.

Organizations and base-level personnel must contact their major command, field operating agency, or direct reporting unit for applicable suspense dates and additional information regarding nomination procedures.

Each MAJCOM, FOA or DRU may submit one nomination. Completed nomination packages are due to the Air Force Personnel Center by April 2.

For more information about other personnel issues, go to myPers at <https://mypers.af.mil>.

JBSA Sexual Assault Prevention, Response

To report a sexual assault, call the 24/7 Joint Base San Antonio Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Hotline at 808-7272 or the Department of Defense Safe Helpline at 877-995-5247.

Thanksgiving safety paramount for happy holiday

By Airman 1st Class Alexandria Slade
Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Public Affairs



Smoke fills the air as everyone scrambles outside and a once aromatic Thanksgiving meal turns the kitchen and eventually the rest of a family home into an inferno. A turkey bought at the last minute is left on the kitchen counter to thaw faster and now everyone is home sick with food poisoning.

No one wants to live out these scenarios, but luckily there are methods to avoid them.

Below is a collection of safety tips and Joint Base San Antonio specific statistics from the 502nd Air Base Wing Safety office to help military members and their families avoid mishaps during the holiday season.

- Over the past year, three kitchen fires have taken place in Joint Base San Antonio. Though none of these happened during Thanksgiving, cooking fires nearly double on Thanksgiving Day.

- Never leave a stove unattended if frying, grilling or broiling food. Check food regularly.

- Keep the floor clear to avoid tripping over kids, toys, pocketbooks or bags.

- Avoid wearing loose fitting clothing while cooking, as it can easily catch fire.

- Keep flammable materials away from the stove.



- While the kitchen is a busy place with more people than normal preparing food on Thanksgiving Day, it's important to keep children away from cooking areas to avoid burns, tipped pots of hot liquid and sharp or heavy objects. Turn pot handles away from the front of the stove so that children can't grab them.

- Be sure electric cords from an electric knife, coffee maker, plate warmer or mixer are not dangling off the counter within easy reach of a child.

- Ensure there is a working smoke alarm system in the home.

- Use a turkey fryer outdoors only.

- Ensure all smoking materials have been extinguished after Thanksgiving guests leave.

- There are three methods of thawing a turkey that increase the risk of salmonella poisoning: Thawing at room temperature – thawing for more than

two hours may lead to food poisoning, thawing in the microwave and thawing in cold water. If turkey is thawed in water any warmer than 40 degrees, it increases the chances of bacteria multiplying.

- As guests are coming or going, ask that they dress according to the weather conditions and pay attention while crossing roadways to hurry out of the cold.

- At the end of the meal, ensure pets are not given table scraps, leftovers, raw or undercooked turkey, turkey bones or stuffing as onions and garlic can be a detriment to a pet's digestive system.

For those who may not be travelling to see family for Thanksgiving or preparing their own meal, activities around JBSA are available to create a happy holiday away from home.

Upcoming Air Force activities include Operation Home Cooking, a program that allows area families to host a basic trainee and a Wingman for Thanksgiving from Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland. Those interested can call 671-5453/5454/3701 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday-Friday.

A similar program called Mission Thanksgiving for the Army is available for those who would like to host Soldiers from the training taking place at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston. For more information, call 808-7001/7002.

Joint Base San Antonio spruces up for Proud Week



Photo by Olivia Mendoza

Brig. Gen. Bob Labrutta (left), 502nd Air Base Wing and Joint Base San Antonio commander, recognizes the efforts of Company F, 232nd Medical Battalion Nov. 10 during JBSA 2014 Fall Proud Week, which was held Nov. 10 through Friday. The soldiers of Foxtrot Company led the charge as they officially “adopted” Salado Creek Park. Under the JBSA Adoption Initiative, Foxtrot Company took ownership of Salado Creek Park in October to conduct general area cleanup and minor maintenance to promote pride within their unit and pride across JBSA. Their efforts are in keeping with the charter to and maintain high appearance standards throughout JBSA.



Senior Airman Jonathan Lindstrand (left), Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph 502nd Security Forces and Logistics Support Group, and Capt. Dustin Grant, 502nd SFLSG Judge Advocate, take part in Proud Week by picking up trash, treating ant hills and weeds in front of the JBSA-Randolph Taj Mahal and Randolph Elementary School.



Photos by Melissa Peterson

Tech. Sgt. Nelly Hensley, Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph 502nd SFLSG/JA, takes part in Proud Week by trimming the bushes in front of the JBSA-Randolph Taj Mahal.

'TIS THE SEASON

Holiday mailing deadlines approaching for overseas packages

By Robert Goetz

Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Public Affairs



The United States Postal Service is expecting a double-digit increase in package volume this holiday season, so it's advisable to mail those cards and packages as early as possible.

Priority and first-class mail deadlines for ensuring package delivery to military members stationed or deployed overseas by Christmas Day are Dec. 3 for Air/Army Post Office and Fleet Post Office ZIP codes in the Middle East and Dec. 10 for all other APO and FPO ZIP codes. Domestic rates apply to all APO/FPO addresses.

"Mail early," Jeff Sanna, USPS sales and services associate, said. "The post office is expecting a 19 percent uptick in packages being mailed this holiday season because more people are shopping online and consumer confidence is higher."

Sanna, who works at the Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph postal facility, said the USPS is forecasting the delivery of up to 470 million packages during the holidays, so delivery days will be expanding.

"Carriers will be working seven days a week through Christmas Day in major markets and high-volume areas," he said.

The USPS advises special care in sending packages

to APO and FPO addresses.

The service member's full name should be included in the address, along with the unit, APO/FPO and nine-digit ZIP code. A return address is also required.

Some items are prohibited, Sanna said.

"People can go online to www.usps.com to see what they can and can't send," he said.

Among the prohibited items listed on the USPS website are aerosols, alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, explosives, fresh fruits and vegetables, and perfumes containing alcohol.

A variety of priority-mail boxes are available to consumers, with postal costs ranging from \$5.95 to \$17.90, he said. If a large box is sent to an APO/FPO address, a \$2 discount is applied, reducing the postal cost to \$15.90.

"All priority supplies are free until you mail them," Sanna said. "You can order supplies from the USPS website and they will be delivered free of charge to your doorstep, as long as you order a reasonable number of items."

The costs to deliver priority-mail boxes are not affected by weight, with one exception, Sanna said.

"It doesn't matter if the box weighs 1 ounce or 70 pounds," he said. "You cannot alter the original shape of the box or you'll be charged the full priority cost."

DO NOT MAIL ...

According to the United States Postal Service, the following items cannot be mailed:

- Alcohol – Alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, or liquor) are restricted and can't go in the mail. When reusing a box displaying alcohol brands, all logos and labels need to be completely removed.
- Perfume – Perfume containing alcohol is prohibited on air transportation and can only be shipped domestically via surface transportation. Perfume containing alcohol is prohibited in international shipments.
- Prescription drugs – Prescription medications can only be mailed by Drug Enforcement Administration registered entities.
- Cigarettes and smokeless tobacco
- Firearms – Only licensed manufacturers and dealers can mail or receive handguns. Even though unloaded rifles and shotguns are mailable, mailers must comply with all applicable regulations.

Lackland Airman saves man from burning building

By Senior Airman Lysie Nichols

502nd Air Base Wing Public Affairs

A security forces Airman recently proved that a service member is never off duty.

Senior Airman Christopher Taylor, assigned to 802nd Security Forces Squadron at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, was getting ready for work on the morning of Nov. 3, when someone started banging on his door and ringing the doorbell repeatedly.

"I went to see what the commotion was about and saw that it was my neighbor from across the street," Taylor said.

The neighbor frantically informed him their house was on fire and that their disabled uncle was trapped inside.

"When I heard the news, I didn't hesitate," Taylor said. "I had to get in there and save this man."

The moment the Airman entered the house, he was overcome by thick smoke, so he dropped to his knees

and started crawling in search of his neighbor's uncle.

"When I found him, he was in the center of the house, approximately 20 feet from the door," he said.

As the fire continued to burn, Taylor said he only had one thought on his mind, "We were going to get out of there; no one was dying on my watch."

By the time Taylor got the man out of the house and dragged him to safety, the fire department had already been notified and was on their way.

Taylor's husband, James, said he couldn't be more proud of him.

"Christopher's actions speak much louder than my words – he has always been so selfless," James said. "He didn't stop to think about himself, he just went in to save this man's life."

The man was admitted to the San Antonio Military Medical Center, where he remains for treatment due to minor burns on the left side of his body and severe smoke inhalation.

**Photo by Senior Airman Lysie Nichols**

Senior Airman Christopher Taylor stands outside the remains of the burnt building in San Antonio. Taylor saved a disabled man from a fire Nov. 3.

Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph News Briefs

Native American Indian Heritage Month

Storytelling and music will be displayed Monday through Thursday at the JBSA-Randolph Youth Center in recognition of Native American Indian Heritage Month.

Tree-lighting ceremony

Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph's tree-lighting ceremony is 6 p.m. Dec. 4 at the Taj Mahal, building 100. The event includes entertainment, light refreshments and a visit from Santa. Washington Circle traffic will be re-routed beginning at 4 p.m. For more information, call 565-3993.

Holiday in Blue concert

The United States Air Force Band of the West Concert Band from Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland will present a concert at the Edgewood Theatre for Performing Arts 3-5 p.m. Dec. 6 and 7-9 p.m. Dec. 8. These performances are family friendly and open to the public, free of charge.

For more information, call 671-3934 or visit <http://www.BandoftheWest.af.mil>.

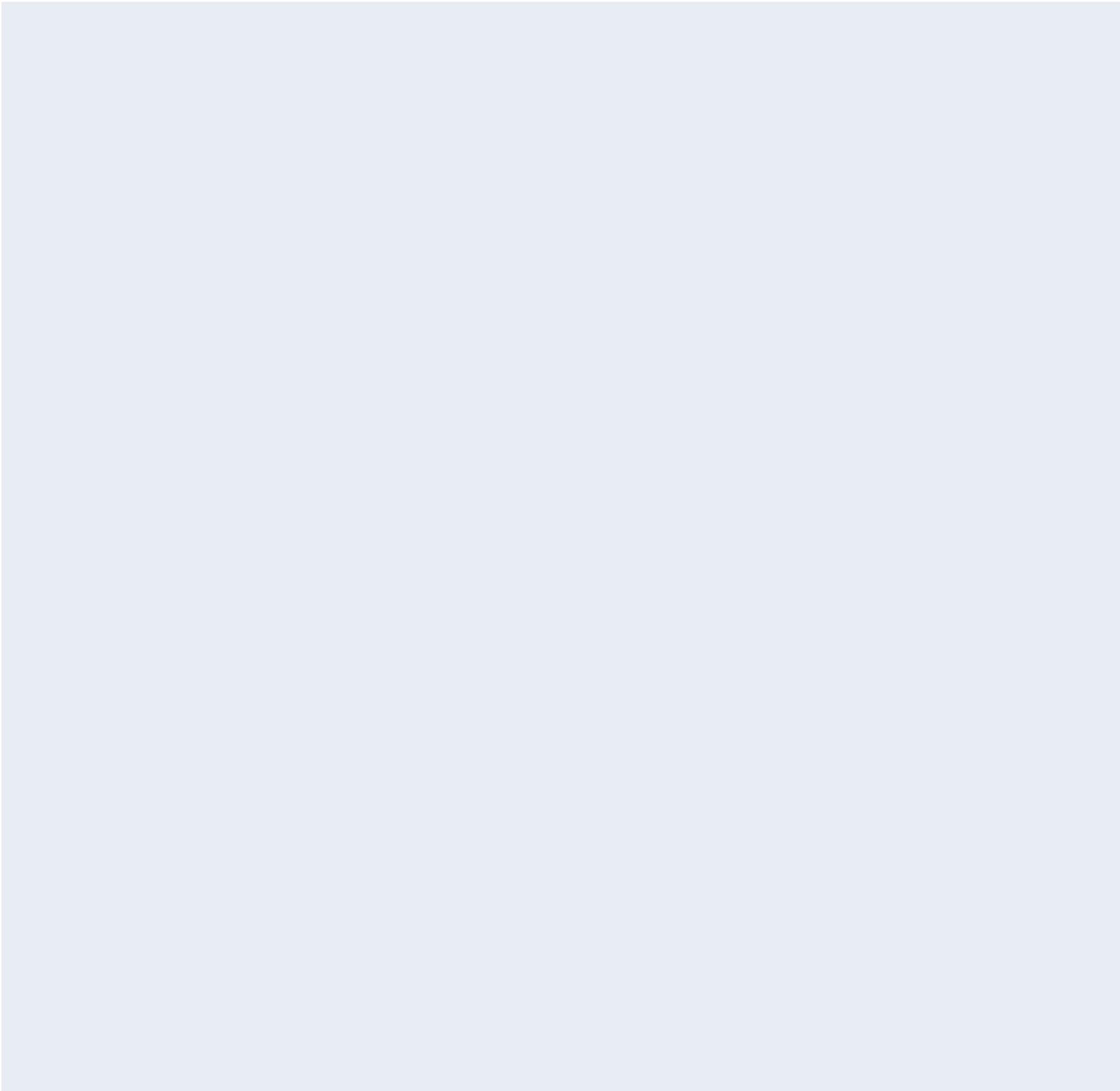
Storage for contingency/deployment entitlement

Storage for contingency/deployments of 90 days or longer is no longer authorized, if the member concurrently receives Basic Allowance for Housing in the commuting area of the permanent duty station, per Air Force Instruction 24-501, Personal Property Moving and Storage, paragraph 1.6.2.2, dated Oct. 10.

This is a major change from the previous entitlement, which authorized storage at government expense by utilizing squadron funds without regard to BAH entitlement provided to the service member. Any future requests received by the installation transportation officer from commanders for storage based on a deployment must reflect the member is not receiving BAH for local housing. There is, however, a grandfather clause to allow continued storage at government expense for members who have approved storage even though they are receiving BAH. For further clarification or questions contact the Personal Property Processing Office JBSA-Lackland, at 671-2821, PPPO-JBSA Fort Sam Houston at 221-1605 or PPPO-JBSA-Randolph at 652-1848.

JBSA Sexual Assault Prevention, Response

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Air Force Aid Society grants, scholarships available

The Air Force Aid Society is accepting applications for education grants and scholarships. The single online application opens the door to three education programs.

- General Henry H. Arnold Education Grant – the centerpiece and gateway to all of the AFAS education programs. It offers need-based grants of at least \$2,000 to dependent children of active, retired and deceased Air Force members. Active duty includes Title 10 Reserve on extended active duty and Title 32 Guard performing full-time active duty. Spouses of active-duty members and surviving spouses of active or retired members are also eligible. All applicants must be enrolled as full-time undergraduates at an accredited college or university during the 2015-2016 academic year and are required to maintain a minimum 2.0 grade-point average.

- Merit Scholarship (incoming freshmen) – with top GPA's as verified through the Arnold education grant application will be contacted directly by AFAS to compete for these \$5,000 merit-based scholarships. A minimum of 10

scholarships are awarded annually.

- Supplemental loan program – Even if a student does not have sufficient financial need to receive the Arnold grant, completing the grant application determines eligibility to secure this interest-free loan. Sponsoring members may request up to \$1,000 per eligible student to help reimburse out-of-pocket education expenses.

A top student could get them all – a \$2,000 grant, plus a \$5,000 Scholarship and a \$1,000 no interest loan equaling \$8,000 in support of a student's education.

The program has an average selection rate of more than 60 percent of those eligible and provides 100 percent of those eligible with validated financial need. The deadline for applications is March 13, 2015; however, students are encouraged to apply early.

For more information on eligibility for all of these programs and to access the application, visit the AFAS website at <http://www.afas.org/education-grants>.

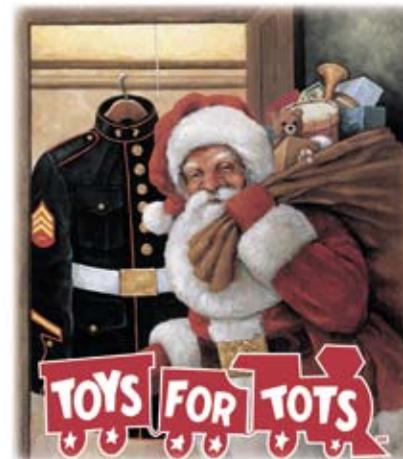
(Information courtesy of the Air Force Aid Society)

Toys for Tots

The annual Marine Reserve toy drive has begun and continues through Dec. 17. Collection boxes are located at the Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Exchange main entrance and within various organizations on base. Toys will be collected for children from 0-14 years old.

Toy donations must be new and unwrapped and stuffed toys must be in the original container. All toy and monetary donations collected go to assist families in the local area.

If interested in having a collection box for an organization, call 652-0891.



Attention all Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph residents and employees:

As of Oct. 21, Universal City has implemented a hands-free device only policy while driving within city limits. Any person who violates this ordinance may be fined up to \$200 for each offense.

To obtain a copy of the ordinance, visit <http://www.uctx.gov>.

TRAINING from P5

BSOC students learn the basics of the MQ-1 Predator and MQ-9 Reaper RPAs, including weapons, cameras, radio procedures and full-motion video, and are introduced to other basic skills such as chart usage, navigational concepts and crew integration, Tech. Sgt. Alan, 558th FTS NCO in charge of BSOC training, said.

They also get an idea of how they fit into combat operations and learn about the intelligence community and the role they play in that mission.

Enlisted students spend six days at JBSA-Lackland for the Aircrew Fundamentals Course and move on to JBSA-Randolph for the BSOC, where they study for one and a half months, totaling 160 academic hours and 36 simulator hours.

"BSOC is a Community College of the Air Force-accredited three-level program," Gary said.

Officers and enlisted members come together during the last four days of the RFC and the BSOC, then head to their formal training units at Holloman Air Force Base, N.M., or Beale AFB, Calif., for three to five months. Some graduates attend the Joint Firepower Course at Nellis AFB, Nev., before joining their FTUs.

Gary said one of the advantages of RPA pilot training is cost, which is 10 percent of the price tag for traditional pilot training. Another advantage is that RPA pilot training takes less time than traditional pilot training.

"They get to theater operations in a shorter time frame – less than half the time," Alan said.

Gary called the RPA pilot and sensor operator ca-

"The RFC is designed to transition future RPA pilots from T-6 instrument flying skills into the combat environment with emphasis on the differences of the RPA operational environment, control and exploitation of the battle space, and honing decision-making skills and communication."

Capt. Gary

558th FTS assistant director of operations

reer fields "rewarding."

"In the RPA community, you have a chance to make an impact on the battlefield just about every day," he said. "You work directly for people on the ground."

RPA pilot training is attracting the attention of other countries, Gary said. A course for officers from other nations begins this month.

"Everybody wants a part of the mission," Alan said.

Gary listed multitasking, communication skills, digital competency and critical decision-making as qualities sought in RPA pilots and sensor operators.

"We also want outside-of-the-box thinkers," Alan said.

RPA pilot and sensor operator training continues to evolve along with the Air Force's vision of the future for

its RPA program, Gary said.

"As available simulation technology advances, our courses are better able to simulate the operational environment and we constantly evolve our syllabi to integrate and take advantage of the technology," he said.

Gary, who volunteered for the program, said he would make the same decision again.

"I had an opportunity to affect more change in the Air Force than I ever would as a manned pilot," he said.

Gary also said RPA training is proving successful.

"Our graduates do very well," he said. "They have a very high success rate. I have no doubt the Air Force will rely less on manned aircraft because of the safety and increased capability that RPAs provide."

Native American legacy of honor, dedication

By Tech. Sgt. Joshua Strang
Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs

During November, the nation pays homage to the contributions of Native Americans throughout history.

On Aug. 3, 1990, President George H. W. Bush approved a joint resolution designating November as National American Indian Heritage Month, thereafter commonly referred to as Native American Heritage Month. Although the resolution passed 24 years ago, Native Americans have a legacy of military service that spans the nation's history.

Many tribes were involved in the War of 1812 and they fought for both sides as auxiliary troops in the Civil War. Native Americans served in every major American conflict and continue to serve in operations around the globe.

Although many served in the Armed Forces, finding their direct impact to the Air Force as a demographic is difficult according to Gary Boyd, the Air Education and Training Command historian.

"Native Americans were not segregated, as were other groups, with regard to military aviation," Boyd said. "They were blended into units making it difficult to track their true impact. It is a substantial history nonetheless."

One such Native American had a lasting impact on Air Force history.

Maj. Gen. Clarence Leonard Tinker was named commander of the 7th Air Force in Hawaii after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. In January 1942, he was promoted to major general making him the first Native American in the U.S. Army to attain that rank. Tinker died in June of that year while leading a force of Liberator bombers on a raid to Wake Island. He was the first American general to die in World War II. On Oct. 14, 1942, the Oklahoma City Air Depot was named Tinker Field in his honor. The installation officially became Tinker Air Force Base on Jan. 13, 1948.

Native Americans have served in uniform for more than two centuries. According to Defense Department statistics, they have the highest per-capita commitment of any ethnic population to serve in the armed forces. Some feel it is a tradition and part of their heritage to serve in uniform. One Air Force veteran's lineage of service extends more than 100 years.

"My great-great-grandfather was the last Comanche chief, Quannah Parker. I don't know much about my great-grandpa but I know he served in World War I," said Christine Fink, a former Air Force photojournalist. "My grandpa, Clifford Clark, was in the Navy ... It wasn't until a few years ago I found out he was a Seabee, which I am very excited about because I was able to photograph Seabees in Africa."

Fink commented there is great honor in her tribe for people who have served in uniform.

"I definitely am proud to be a veteran as a Comanche," Fink said. "My tribe takes real pride in those who have served. They have a memorial of all their veterans and a bigger memorial for the Comanche code talkers."

Brought to popular attention by the 2002 movie



Edward Blauvelt, Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Native American Indian Heritage Month Committee chairman, shares stories with children attending the Part Day Enrichment Program offered by the Child Development Program Nov. 14.

Photo by Johnny Saldivar

"Windtalkers," were Native American Soldiers and Marines who used their knowledge of native languages as a basis to transmit coded messages. Although the movie focuses primarily on Navajo code talkers, according to the National Museum of the American Indian, many other tribes were represented in both world wars to include the Cherokee, Cheyenne, Hopi, Meskwaki and Comanche tribes.

"Most people have heard of the Navajo code talkers, but I feel like the Comanches have a very interesting story as well," Fink noted. "One of them was my great uncle."

According to the Comanche National Museum and Cultural Center, 17 Comanche code talkers enlisted in the U.S. Army in World War II. Fourteen were sent to fight in the European Theater and of those, 13 Comanche code talkers landed on the beach on D-Day. Although several were wounded in battle, all Comanche code talkers survived the war.

While code talkers are some of the more recognized Native Americans, many served in other roles during military service; some of whom made the ultimate sacrifice.

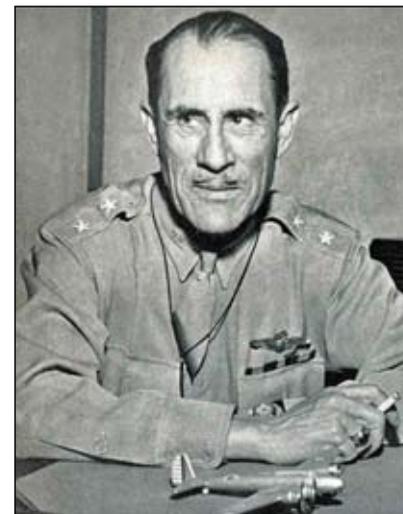
To date, 28 Native Americans have received the Medal of Honor with the most recent being Army Pfc. Charles George. He received this honor during the Korean War. A portion of his medal citation reads, "While in the process of leaving the trenches, an enemy soldier hurled a grenade into their midst. Pfc. George shouted a warning to one comrade, pushed the other Soldier out of danger, and, with full knowledge of the consequences, unhesitatingly threw himself upon the grenade, absorbing the full blast of the explosion."

The sacrifice of Native Americans in the face of ultimate danger is a testament to their fighting spirit and devotion to their comrades. They leave a legacy of military service filled with honor, commitment and service.



Pfc. Charles George is the most recent Native American to receive the Medal of Honor. He was recognized for saving members of his unit during the Korean War by throwing himself on a grenade and absorbing the explosion. The Charles George Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Asheville, N.C., is named in his honor. He was a member of the Cherokee tribe.

Courtesy photo



Maj. Gen. Clarence Tinker was the first American general to die in World War II. He was the first Native American in U.S. Army history to attain the rank of major general. Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., is named in his honor. He was a member of the Osage Nation.

Courtesy photo

FAITH from P7

that year and followed her to San Antonio and served in the Air Force Reserve. I also completed a yearlong clinical pastoral education residency at Baptist Health System and began working in a hospice in Fredericksburg, Texas.

I thought it would be too difficult to work in hospice because of the memories of the many hours spent there with Kristin, but in helping others face saying good bye and grieve their loved ones, I found healing in my own grief.

While wrestling with the hard questions of faith and loss with others, I found a new depth to my own faith that wasn't destroyed by hardships, but refined. I even had the privilege of writing a book for those facing end-of-life decisions that is given for free to families facing terminal diagnoses.

In 2012, I left hospice for a one-year Reserve backfill at BMT, where I was picked up on active duty to complete an 11-year dream of becoming an active duty Air Force chaplain.

I often think back on how

I entered the Air Force with nothing, but in contrast my life feels so rich from the growth and strength that has come from each challenge.

It is with this mindset that when I speak to the thousands of trainees that come to the contemporary service I pastor on base or to counseling during the week to trainees that are struggling in BMT that I remind them, "Two things in this life that will never happen at the same time are comfort and growth."

When life is hardest, there is the greatest possibility for your character to be shaped.

Holocaust survivor Victor Frankl once said, "Despair is suffering without meaning." Though I have experienced deep sorrow, I have never fallen into despair or given up because I know that I would not have the marriage I have today if I hadn't lost Kristin to cancer. I wouldn't have the faith I have if it was never tested. I wouldn't be the man or the chaplain I am today without the hardships I have faced in my life.

Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph**Cookie Drive**

Drop off packaged cookies for the annual JBSA-Randolph Cookie Drive Dec. 10 at the JBSA-Randolph chapel. Cookies will be handed out Dec. 11 at the Single Airmen's Dinner and to JBSA-Randolph fire fighters and security forces members.

For more information, call 652-3212.



Nominations for the 2015 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year

Nominations for the 2015 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year are due to the Air Force Personnel Center April 2.

There are three award categories: Airman, Noncommissioned Officer and Senior NCO. Major commands and the Air Force District of Washington may each nominate one candidate per category.

Nominations must include examples of leadership and job performance in the nominee's primary duty, significant self-improvement, and base or community involvement accomplished between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2014.

All nominees must be enlisted in the Air Force through Sept. 30, 2016. Nominees projected to separate prior to that date must extend or reenlist in the Air Force to remain eligible. Local military personnel section officials may approve or disapprove extensions for the purpose of the 12 OAY program.

Nominees who extend their enlistment for the 12 OAY program and who are not selected may cancel their extensions through their local MPS.

Organization and base-level personnel must contact their MAJCOM, field operating agency, direct-reporting unit or MAJCOM-equivalent for applicable suspense dates.

For more information about the Air Force awards program and other personnel issues, visit the myPers website at <https://mypers.af.mil>.