

WARRIOR

Serving the Whiteman Community - Vol. 4 No. 8

Year of the B2

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Panetta notifies Congress DOD preparing for furloughs

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta has notified Congress that the Defense Department is prepared to implement furloughs for civilian personnel in response to the threat of sequestration.

In a memo to all employees, Panetta vowed to continue working with Congress to avoid sequestration, which would add \$470 billion to the \$487 billion in defense spending cuts the department already is making over the next 10 years. If Congress cannot agree on an alternative deficit reduction plan, the cuts go into effect March 1.

Panetta and every other defense leader have called the cuts dangerous. They would come on top of cuts imposed by operating under a continuing resolution. For fiscal year 2013, the effect will be further magnified, because the cuts must be done in the final six months of the fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30.

"In the event of sequestration, we will do everything we can to be able to continue to perform our core mission of providing for the security of the United States," Panetta wrote in the memo, "but there is no mistaking that the rigid nature of the cuts forced upon this department, and their scale, will result in a serious erosion of

readiness across the force."

Panetta and DOD leaders long have expressed deep concern about the direct impact sequestration will have on military personnel, civilian employees and families. Flexibility in sequestration is limited, the secretary said in his memo, noting that while military personnel are exempt from direct impact, services on bases will deteriorate, and families may feel the pinch in other ways.

Civilian employees will be furloughed if sequestration is triggered. Deputy Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter said last week that civilian employees could lose 20 percent of their normal income through September.

"I can assure you that, if we have to implement furloughs, all affected employees will be provided at least 30 days' notice prior to executing a furlough, and your benefits will be protected to the maximum extent possible," Panetta wrote.

DOD will work to ensure furloughs are executed in a consistent and appropriate manner, the secretary said, and Pentagon officials also will continue work with employee unions.

"Our most important asset at the department is our world-class personnel," Panetta wrote. "You are fighting every day to keep our country strong and secure, and rest assured that the leaders of this department will continue to fight with you and for you."

AF releases criteria for new combat medal

By Senior Master Sgt. David Byron
Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- Air Force officials released nomination criteria for the new Distinguished Warfare Medal Feb. 15, following defense officials' announcement of the new decoration days prior.

The DWM will be awarded to honor individuals for single acts of extraordinary achievement, not involving acts of valor, that directly impact combat or other military operations approved by the secretary of defense.

Unlike other combat-related medals, service members may be awarded the DWM for actions completed from either in or outside an actual combat zone.

The action must include hands-on employment of a weapons system, including remotely controlled assets, or any other activity, in any domain, that had a direct and immediate on-site effect on an engagement or operation against a target.

The domain is expansive in scope and includes air, land, maritime, space and cyberspace, according to Air Force Personnel Center guidance.

"In modern warfare, one individual can have a truly 'extraordinary' impact on combat operations, whether they are located on the front lines, elsewhere in the (area of responsibility) or half way around the world," said Lt. Gen. Darrell Jones, the Air Force deputy chief of staff for manpower, personnel and services. "DOD has authorized the DWM, allowing the services to recognize their members, in our case Airmen, whose single act of extraordinary achievement directly and significantly impacts critical combat operations."

Though involvement in a combat operation is required, the medal will not be awarded for acts of valor under any circumstances. Actions involving valor should be considered for other decorations.



U.S. Air Force graphic

tions.

Valor is defined as "an act or acts of heroism by an individual above what is normally expected while engaged in direct combat with an enemy with exposure to enemy hostilities and personal risk," said Senior Master Sgt. Diana Gonzalez, the AFPC awards and recognition chief.

The criteria needed to be considered for the medal requires that the extraordinary achievement must result in an accomplishment so exceptional and outstanding as to clearly set the individual apart from comrades or others in similar situations. The approval chain sets the bar high as to what meets the criteria.

"The approval level (service secretary), in our case the Secretary of the Air Force, testifies to the importance of this award and the importance of the action on combat operations," Jones said.

For Airmen, the final approval authority for the medal is the secretary of the Air Force. One step of the approval chain rests with the commander of air forces in the

respective area of responsibility.

For an Airman nominated for action taken from outside the combat zone, the commander of Air Force forces will verify the direct impact of the action on the combat operation.

The DWM will immediately follow the Distinguished Flying Cross in order of precedence. Enlisted Airmen who earn the medal will receive five promotion points.

Eligibility for the medal is retroactive to Sept. 11, 2001.

Nominations for currently-serving Airmen will be processed through their respective chain of command.

"Former Airmen who have since retired or separated can contact us for information on how to submit the medal request," Gonzalez said. "The medal can also be presented posthumously, so family members can query us as well."

For more information and full eligibility criteria, go to the myPers website at <https://mypers.af.mil> and enter "DWM" in the search window.

THE WARRIOR

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For more information, call the Warrior office at 660-687-6123, email: Whiteman.Warrior@whiteman.af.mil, fax us: 660-687-7948, or write to us at: 509th Bomb Wing, 1081 Arnold Ave., Bldg. 59, Whiteman AFB, Mo., 65305.

To advertise in *The Warrior*, call the *Sedalia Democrat* at: 1-800-892-7856.

On the cover

U.S. Air Force photo/
Airman 1st Class Keenan Berry
Staff Sergeant Raul Loyo, 509th Medical Group laboratory technician, checks a bacitracin disk, Feb. 20. These disks are used to verify strep throat.

NEWS BRIEFS

Change of Command Ceremony

You are invited to attend the 131st Bomb Wing Change of Command on Sunday, March 3, beginning at 1:31 in the afternoon. The ceremony will take place in the 442nd, 5 Bay Hangar.

FIRST Robotics

Warrensburg High School needs volunteer mentors for its FIRST Robotics Team. Our team is looking for mentors who have experience in engineering, business, and graphics and would be willing to work with high school students. For more information, contact Brian Holmgren at 660-441-5080 or via email at bdholmgren@embarq-mail.com

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Whiteman Warrior Story Ideas

The Public Affairs Office accepts story ideas for news and feature articles on people and organizations to help provide recognition of excellence in performance and set forth norms for mission accomplishment.

To submit an idea, call 660-687-6123, or email whiteman.warrior@us.af.mil

WEATHER

Today	Saturday
Chance of Snow	Mostly Sunny
Hi 32	Hi 35
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Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy
Hi 37	Hi 46
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Courtesy of National Weather Service

Chief's Choice Award



U.S. Air Force photo/Heidi Hunt

Tech. Sgt. Melanie Simmons, 509th Operations Support Squadron Host Aviation Resource Management functional manager, was awarded the Chief's Choice Award by the 509th Bomb Wing Chief's Council, Feb. 20, for her duty performance. The monthly award, selected by the Whiteman Chief's Group, recognizes E-6s and below who exemplify 'Service Before Self,' and dedication to the mission, fellow Airmen and their families.

This Week in 509th Bomb Wing History

David Easley

509 Bomb Wing Historian

1 Mar 1928: Lt. Burnie R. Dallas and Beckwith Havens flew the first transcontinental flight through Mar. 9, in a Loening Amphibian airplane. They used 32 hours 45 minutes of flight time for the trip.

1 Mar 1935: The War Department activated an air combat command called General Headquarters Air Force at Langley Field, Va. This action centralized nationwide command over all Army Air Corps combat units under a single air officer, Frank M. Andrews.

1 Mar 1954: The United States exploded the first hydrogen

(thermonuclear) bomb in a test at Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands. The yield was 15 megatons: 1000 times more powerful than the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

1 Mar 1973: Fairchild-Republic received a contract a contract for the A-10.

1 Mar 2002: The U.S. and its coalition partners launched Operation Anaconda in eastern Afghanistan. Using B-52s, B-1s, AC-130s, A-10s and F-15s for air support, the coalition ground operation tried to surround and kill Taliban and al Qaeda forces regrouping south of Gardez.

Firefighters build snowtruck replica



A snow sculpture replica of a fire truck and fire hydrant was made by the members of the 509th Civil Engineer Squadron firefighters. The sculpture was built after a recent snowstorm Feb. 24.

U.S. Air Force photo/Heidi Hunt

“Congratulations to the 131st Bomb Wing’s newest chief, Chief Alvin Sims, 131st Bomb Wing Human Resource Advisor!”

From the Frontlines: Senior Airman Duzaghi Tafie



U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Nick Wilson

Senior Airman Duzaghi Tafie, 509th Force Support Squadron food services specialist, was deployed to Southwest Asia in 2012 from Apr. 3 to Oct. 8. He worked as a quality assurance inspector for local national contractors who worked in his transit base's dining facility.

By Staff Sgt. Nick Wilson
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

An enlistment in the Air Force can take people on journeys all over the world. For Senior Airman Duzaghi Tafie, 509th Force Support Squadron food services specialist, that journey was an expedition to Southwest Asia.

Tafie was deployed in 2012, from April to October, as a quality assurance inspector for

local national contractors who worked in his transit base's dining facility.

"We inspected how local nationals cooked, served food and served customers," he said.

When it comes to providing quality food service, Tafie is a subject matter expert. Ensuring Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen received quality food was a priority for the members on Tafie's team.

See Frontlines, page 11

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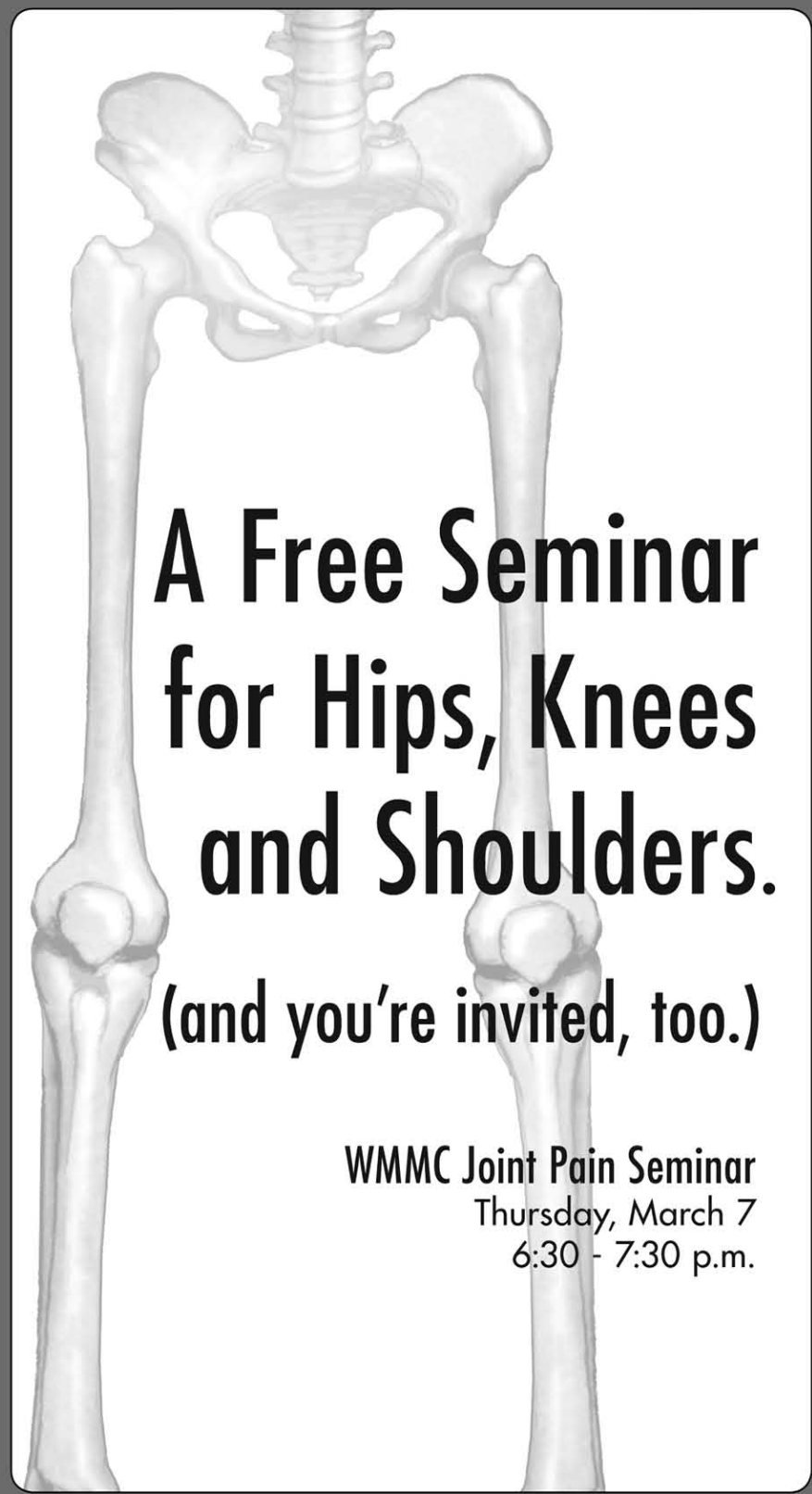
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Whiteman becomes a winter wonderland

Below are several submissions from Team Whiteman taken during the Winter Storm Rocky. Check out our Facebook page for more photos. Thank you to everyone who participated!



CE-A opens volleyball season with a win

By Airman 1st Class Bryan Crane
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

The 2013 Whiteman intramural volleyball season kicked off Feb. 25, with the Civil Engineer-A squad defeating the Operations Support Squadron in two straight sets.

CE-A opened the best of three series with a solid first-game win. The team came out strong to take 21-15 lead late in the first set. OSS could not keep the volleyball from hitting the court, and ended up conceding the first set, 25-16.

After the teams switched ends of the court, the second set began, with OSS looking to force a third set and avoid being shut out by CE-A.

That plan deteriorated fast, however, as CE-A came out firing, opening up an early 10-3 lead. They kept that momentum going with great teamwork.

"I think we played well as a team," said Jermaine Walton, CE-A team member. "We did well setting each other up to get good hits over the net."

CE-A dominated the rest of the way and captured the second set 25-11 to clinch the victory, two games to zero.

"It was a good way to start the season," Walton said. "We had fun and won the match, so it was a very successful first game."

Walton and his teammates are excited for the possibilities this season could hold, but know it will not be easy to take home the intramural volleyball championship.

"We are going to take it one game at a time," Walton said. "I know these games are just for fun, but it would still be nice to say we are the champs



U.S. Air Force photo Airman 1st Class Bryan Crane
A member of the Civil Engineer A team goes up to spike the ball against the Operations Support Squadron, Feb. 25. CE-A beat OSS in the first set 25-16 on their way to a 2-0 match victory.

at the end of the season."

The volleyball season is just getting underway, and you can catch all the action at the Whiteman Fitness Center. In addition to the CE-A/OSS match, six other teams battled for supremacy on the court Monday night. Games are Monday through Thursday, with four games a night, starting at 5:30 p.m. The other games will start at 6:15, 7:00, and 7:45. Come out and enjoy the competition and cheer on your squadron!

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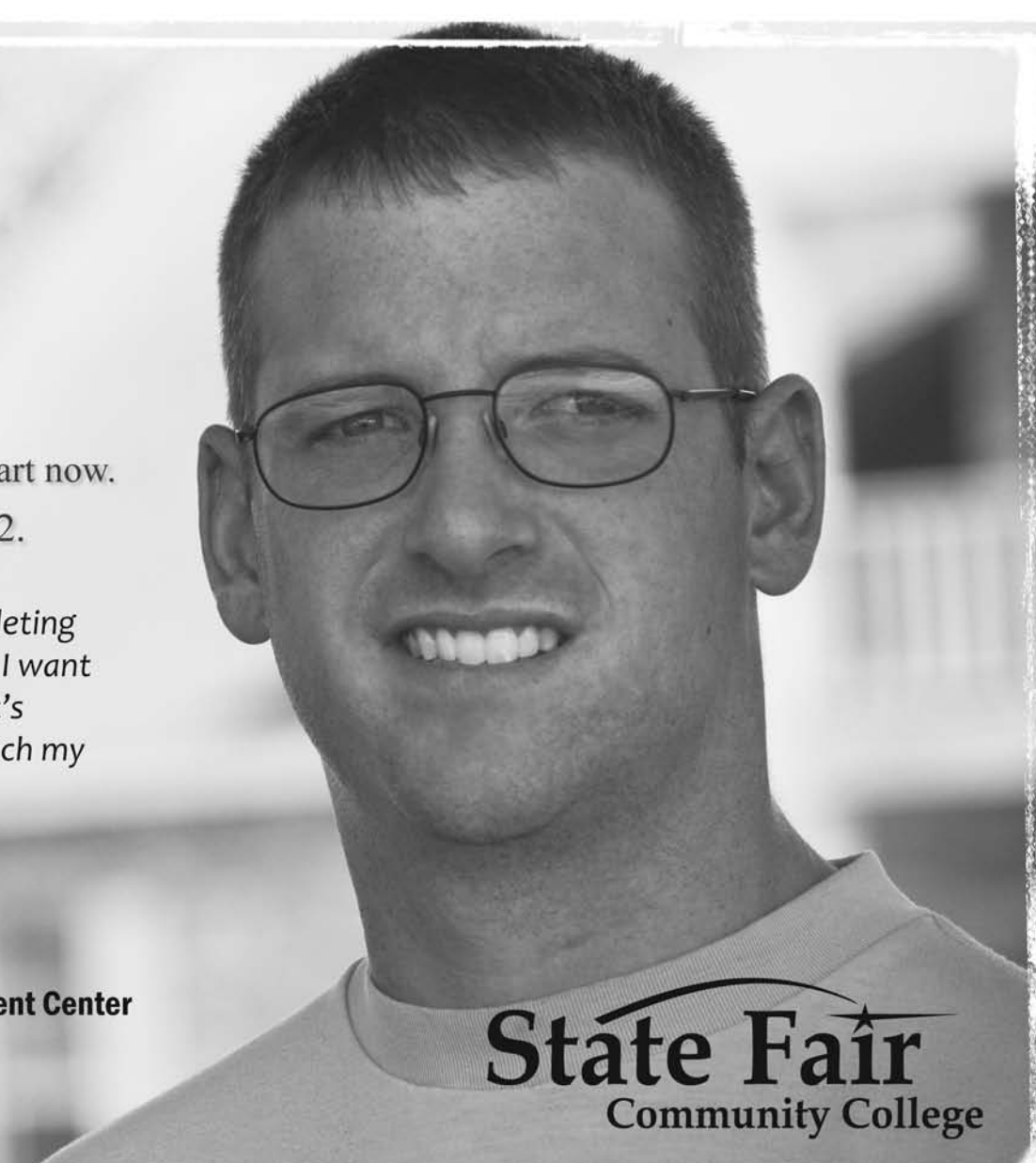
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Mental Health helps Airmen find their “happily ever after”

Airman 1st Class Shelby R. Orozco
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

When the going gets tough, the tough get going, but where exactly do they go to? For Airmen at Whiteman Air Force Base, the answer should be mental health.

The mental health team has much to offer an Airman going through a particularly stressful time in his or her life, with programs ranging from talk therapy to stress management and even prescription medication, said Maj. Mikel Merritt, 509th Medical Operations Support Squadron mental health flight commander.

“Mental health is composed of three elements,” he said. “The first is our regular mental health clinic, where we provide a variety of services, counseling, therapy and assessments.

“The second is our Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment program, where we evaluate and help anyone who has alcohol-related misconduct, or who may be worried they might have a substance abuse issue.

“Our third element is our Family Advocacy program, which deals largely with domestic violence and helping families treat stress in appropriate ways.”

The mental health clinic focuses on returning Airmen to their careers and families in a healthy way, Merritt said.

“We offer a place for people to come and talk about their problems with a [neutral] third party,” Merritt said. “They can talk to some-

one who is not their coworker and not their family, where they have the opportunity to feel free to say what’s really going on in their life.”

Talking to people before things get out of hand is the key to handling problems, according to Capt. Gena Parkman, 509th MDOS mental health clinician.

“If you get intervention early on, you will have a better chance of being able to live happily ever after,” Parkman said. “Coming to see us is better than waiting until things get to the boiling point and feeling like you’re at your last resort. Earlier and faster intervention is always better.”

Many Airmen worry about the effects talking to mental health may have on their career, but in reality, many commanders view visiting mental health as a sign of strength, she said.

“Asking for help isn’t a weakness,” Parkman said. “I see it as strength. I make sure to let commands and other people know that when people are going through a hard time, it is better to let people know than to wait.

“I have countless examples of people who have voluntarily come to mental health and it has never affected their career. They are able to come in and get the services and support they need, and then return to their job and no one is ever the wiser.”

Merritt agrees with Parkman, adding that seeking help does not indicate lesser intelligence or maturity either.

See Mental health, page 12

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Call Pam Thompson @ 563-3398 for more info.
Masons—2nd & 4th Thurs. 7:00 p.m. - Knob Noster Masonic Lodge AF & AM
Garden Club—1st Thurs. of each month 6:30 p.m. - Trails Regional Library - Knob Noster Branch

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)—Every Fri. 8 p.m. - Basement of Methodist Church
Knob Noster Board of Aldermen—1st & 3rd Tues. each month - Basement of City Hall
Whiteman Area Piecemakers Quilt Guild—3rd Thurs. each month 7 p.m. - Methodist Church
AMVETS—Membership Dinner 1st Tues. each month 6 p.m. - AMVETS Building

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The 509th Medical Lab – the behind-the-scenes cure

Story and photos by Airman 1st Class Keenan Berry
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

Proper health is essential to human life. Even in today's modern, medically advanced society, we battle diseases, illnesses and various other ailments.

At Whiteman Air Force Base, the 509th Medical Lab faces these issues on a daily basis and strives to identify cures and promote good health for members of Team Whiteman.

The Medical Lab's role is to provide important medical information to all providers, whether they are working with Personnel Reliability Program (PRP) patients, uniformed members on regular medical status or dependents, said Maj. Neil Helbling, 509th Medical Group flight commander. This data helps providers make accurate diagnoses for patients.

The PRP aspect is perhaps the busiest of the lab's missions, as it includes, among others, all Airmen who work with or around the B-2, such as crew chiefs, Defenders and firefighters, said Staff Sgt. Raul Loy, 509th Medical Group laboratory technician.

The diagnoses the lab provides must be as accurate as possible, because a patient may suspect a medical problem but be drawing the wrong conclusion about what is causing it, said Loy.

"The information we provide supports [medical providers'] conclusion[s] or helps them to eliminate what possibilit[ies] they have considered..." said Helbling. "It is helpful information to the doctors."

To verify what the root cause of the issue might be, medical technicians draw blood and collect urine samples.

The greatest hazard for lab technicians is exposure to patients who have contagious diseases, said Helbling. Techs take precautions to minimize exposure by following procedures called "universal precautions;" some of these include wearing lab coats and gloves, using "safety areas" for opening bottles that contain bodily fluid, and many others.

The workload stays consistently heavy for the techs in the lab.

"We do on average around 5,000 tests per month. We might perform 20 or 30 tests on the same person," said Helbling. "Some people come in for a simple PHA appointment; they might have an HIV screen or a lipid panel, which would be your cholesterol check."

"The age ranges from pediatrics for little babies all the way up to geriatrics for the elderly and retired," he said.

The medical lab does not distribute or prescribe medicine; they simply run tests on urine samples, blood, and any other biological element from the human body. These tests are critical, however, in helping doctors diagnosis conditions and prescribe treatment for them.

So, next time you get assistance from your doctor or pick up a prescription at the pharmacy, remember that it was made possible by the dedicated technicians of the 509th Medical Lab.



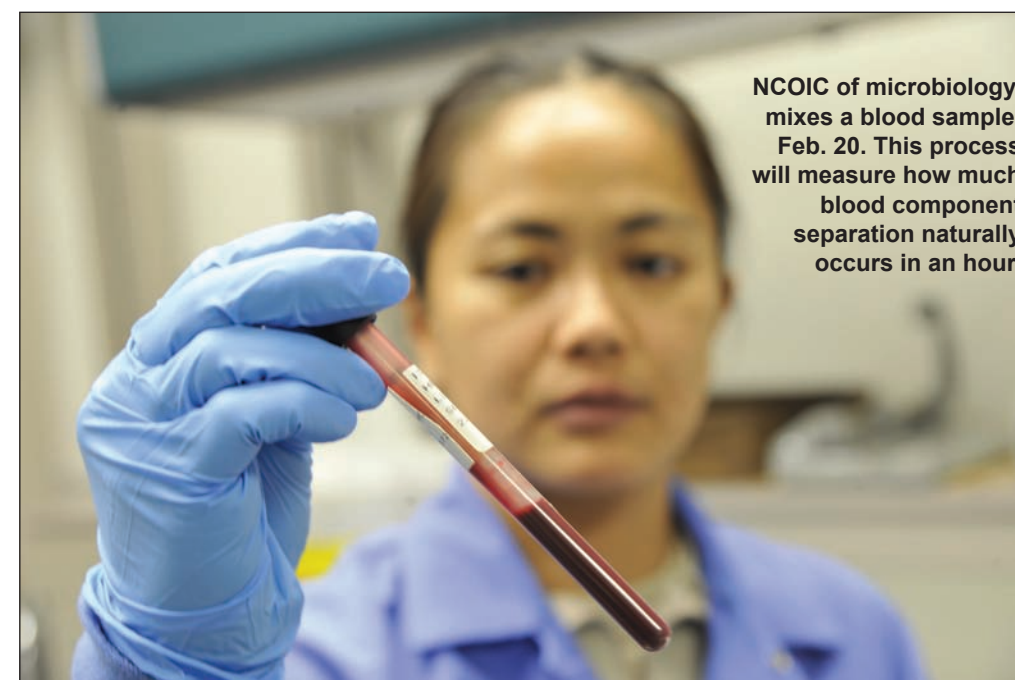
Staff Sergeant Raul Loy, 509th Medical Group laboratory technician, streaks a urine plate, Feb. 20. This plate is used to determine if bacteria is growing within an individual's urine, thereby indicating a urinary tract infection.



Staff Sgt. Nathan Knox, 509th Medical Group medical laboratory scientist, examines a set of cuvettes, Feb. 20. The cuvettes are designed to contain medical samples, and are examined by a chemistry analyzer to determine what a person's test value is based off of color changes.



Staff Sergeant Raul Loy, 509th Medical Group laboratory technician, checks expiration dates on gram stain equipment, Feb. 20. This equipment differentiates bacterial species into two main groups – gram-positive and gram-negative.



NCOIC of microbiology, mixes a blood sample, Feb. 20. This process will measure how much blood component separation naturally occurs in an hour.



Staff Sgt. Nathan Knox, 509th Medical Group medical laboratory scientist, examines a set of cuvettes, Feb. 20. The cuvettes are designed to contain medical samples, and are examined by a chemistry analyzer to determine what a person's test value is based off of color changes.



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Cancer survivorship brings hope



KNOB NOSTER, Mo. -- June Tripp, small cell cancer survivor, recounts stories of her experiences during cancer treatment, Feb. 19. June believes in the power of positive thinking and is grateful for the support of family, friends and community.

Story and photos by Heidi Hunt
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

The word “survivor” is often attached to many different groups of people. Service members returning from deployment to a hostile area are just one of these groups.

However, not all survivors wear a military uniform; instead, they are family members of those who serve or have served.

Whiteman’s own June Tripp is one such individual.

June is married to Richard Tripp, a retired Navy senior chief petty officer currently serving as the 394th Combat Training Squadron’s B-2 flight simulator site manager. She has survived not only her husband’s past deployments, but also a direct threat to her own well-being – small cell lung cancer – and in doing, gained a greater understanding for the term “survivor.”

June is no stranger to cancer, having survived breast cancer more than 25 years ago, but what started out as a tooth-

ache in July 2012 would again fundamentally alter her life and challenge her in incredibly difficult ways.

After being prescribed antibiotics for an unrelated dental ailment, she began to experience significant upper chest pain, and the next day, June went to her family doctor for the pain.

Her doctor listened to her chest, took X-rays and ultimately found a tumor in her chest and lungs.

“The next week, I was sent to an oncologist, where they did a biopsy,” June said. “They drained a liter of fluid out of my lungs and found that it was small cell lung cancer.”

She was devastated, and remembers weeping in the arms of the nurse attending her. Fortunately, June knew she could count on the love and support of her family and close friends.

After she wiped away her tears, the first thing she said was, “I’ve got to do what I’ve got to do, and I am going to fight this cancer.”

By that time, the cancer had already progressed to stage IV. She had several cancer spots throughout her body, and the oncologist informed her the cancer was inoperable.

“The only thing they could do was chemotherapy, because there was more than one spot,” June said. “Within two weeks, I was on chemotherapy and did that for the next six months.”

When she completed chemotherapy, the doctor performed another positron emission tomography (PET) scan, and found two more spots. They also conducted brain radiation treatment, as this type of cancer was capable of traveling to the brain.

As it does for many others fighting cancer, the various treatments took a physical toll on Tripp.

“Radiation made me fatigued, so it was hard drive back and forth every day,” she said.

Fortunately, June found out about the local Hope Lodge in Kansas City, Mo. The Hope Lodge provides cancer patients with a free room so patients do not have to travel every day.

Prior to finding out about the Hope Lodge, a close family friend, Anita Baldwin, transported June to Kansas City from Knob Noster for chemotherapy so Mr. Tripp could continue to work.

“Laughter and a good support system is what got me through it,” she said. “There’s nothing else you can do – you can give up or you can fight it ... I chose to fight it.”

She will have to undergo another PET scan and possibly further radiation on her brain and hip to detect and treat any cancer should it return.

Even though June found out about the Hope Lodge in January, months after she made several trips to her therapy sessions, she is still grateful and wants to give back to others in need.



KNOB NOSTER, Mo. -- June Tripp, left, small cell cancer survivor, and Christi Baldwin, 509th Communication Squadron base operator, display the blanket June won in a raffle at the Hope Lodge when she stayed during her stay. Baldwin has planned a poker tournament in Knob Noster to help benefit the Hope Lodge in Kansas City, Mo.

“I’ve had so many prayers and people behind me, and if we can raise someone’s spirits and help someone else in need, then I feel like I’ve paid it forward,” she said.

Baldwin’s daughter, Christi, who is also a member of the 509th Bomb Wing Communications Squadron, decided to hold a “Hold ‘Em 4 Hope” poker tournament at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4195 in Knob Noster, scheduled for March 16. All proceeds will go to the Hope Lodge.

“Since I started planning the event, I have become impressed with the military and local community,” she said. “I have had an outpouring of support and gratitude.”

For more information, contact Christi Baldwin at 660-563-0061 or search HOLD EM 4 HOPE!! via Facebook. The poker tournament is open to the public. For information about the Hope Lodge log on to <http://www.cancer.org/treatment/supportprogramsservices/hopelodge/kansascity/index>

Frontlines Continued from Page 4

“My job was more appreciated overseas by the members serving from the frontlines,” Tafie said. “Those who had been serving downrange appreciated whatever we did for them. We did our best to help transition them to or from [other locations in Southwest Asia.]”

Throughout the deployment, Tafie worked 12-hour days, six days a week.

“I worked Monday through Saturday and was off on Sundays,” Tafie said. “Each day I arrived to work, my first task was to check what food was available and what had to be prepared for the day.”

After the checklist items were completed, Tafie took accountability of workers, and ensured they were equipped and prepared to perform the day’s mission.

The greatest difference between Tafie’s job at Whiteman and his job in Southwest Asia is that at Whiteman he deals mostly with Service members. However, in the AOR, he worked mainly with an American contractor who was responsible for local national employees downrange.

“We supervised two contracting companies

over there and we weren’t allowed to cook,” Tafie said. “I absolutely love cooking. I didn’t get to cook at all while I was deployed, but I still enjoyed the experience.”

Outside of not being able to cook, and missing his wife and friends, Tafie missed being able to drive his car wherever he wanted.

“While deployed, we couldn’t go off base more than once a week and we didn’t have a need to drive on base,” he said. “So once I got back the very first day, I drove all the way to Kansas State and back. It was very relaxing for me.”

Tafie said the most satisfying part of the deployment was the recreation.

“We had a multi-service volleyball tournament over there,” Tafie said. “I also ran the Air Force half and full marathons. Those activities were very fun for me.”

Being able to take time off during the duty day to work on his fitness was also a major plus for Tafie.

He joined the base honor guard to fill his free time while deployed, posting colors and folding flags for official functions and ceremonies.

nies.

“I also volunteered for the Fallen Warrior program, where we would change ice for the bodies of fallen Service members that were in transit between flights,” Tafie said.

Tafie said one of the flights carrying the bodies was delayed and the ice had completely melted.

“The bodies weren’t in very good shape because of water damage to wounds, and we had to clean them up before we put in new ice and flew them back home to their families,” Tafie said. “There was some blood that needed to be cleaned, but I did what I had to do to take care of a brother-in-arms. I know other Airmen will take care of me if my body is in that kind of position one day.”

Tafie also gave up 150 hours of time off duty to assist with different USO events and help with various base and squadron-level events.

“On a scale of one to 10, I would give my deployment a 10,” Tafie said. “I enjoyed working with the local nationals and members of our sister services.”

Overall, Tafie also enjoyed his living area

while deployed.

“At first I thought our dorm rooms were small compared to what we have here at Whiteman,” Tafie said. “But after speaking with Soldiers and Marines about their living conditions, I would say my living conditions were perfect. It was a deployed location, so I couldn’t expect to live a perfect life.”

Tafie said he appreciates what the Air Force has done to make the quality of life during deployments more enjoyable for Airmen.

“The deployment was an excellent way for Tafie to gain breadth of experience and see the mission from a new perspective,” said Staff Sgt. Alaina Baldowski, 509th FSS Whiteman Inn guest services manager. “His outgoing personality and wide range of interests led him to make important connections that he otherwise would not have.”

Having the opportunity to travel and see the mission from the opposite side of the planet made Tafie want to deploy again.

“There were many things I saw while I was deployed that touched my heart,” Tafie said. “Being deployed taught me many life lessons.”

Mental health Continued from Page 7

“One of the important things for Airmen coming in is feeling like it’s saying they are weak and can’t handle their own problems.” Merritt said. “That’s really where the stigma about coming to mental health comes from – what people put on themselves. It’s not because any particular individual is weak or doesn’t have the intelligence to figure it out;

it’s just that they are overwhelmed with the situation they are in.”

Confidentiality is also another thing Airmen worry about, he said.

“There are varying levels of confidentiality,” Merritt said. “For the most part, we try to keep everything confidential. The big exceptions would be if you tell us you plan on

killing yourself, then we would break confidentiality to keep you safe. The safety of our Airmen is paramount.”

The services offered by mental health provide clear benefits, Parkman said.

“I’ve seen positive repercussions and positive impact,” she said. “I’ve seen families come out of here stronger and better, and I’ve

also seen individuals coming from counseling sessions saying they are in a good place and everything we have done has helped.”

Merritt stresses that Airmen who need help should seek it.

“Airmen need to realize there is nothing negative about seeing mental health,” Merritt said. “It’s not something that Airmen look down on others for doing. Most people that I talk to have some apprehension about it, but when I ask an Airman if [he] had a friend going through a hard time if [he] would tell them to come see us, they always say yes.

“I think people just need to do a little of perspective thinking. If your friend was going through something and you recommended they see mental health, why would you worry about coming yourself?”

At the end of the day, it is all about making sure the Air Force’s mission is accomplished, said Parkman.

“When our Airmen are happy, the Air Force is in a better place,” Parkman said. “The mission is getting done. Airmen aren’t worried about going home, or if someone is going to tell. If we can get them on the road to recovery, then it’s a successful day for us.”

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FEATURED EVENTS

FRIDAY 3/1

First Friday! - Starts at 4pm - Mission's End

Enjoy a free member buffet, a chance inside the "Cashinator", a \$200 cash drawing is available to all active club members. Bar Bingo with a \$100 jackpot only \$1 per card. Then Texas Hold 'Em will begin at 6pm. Karaoke will be after Texas Hold 'Em. Only \$5 for non-members and free to members! Call 687-4422 for more information.

SATURDAY 3/2

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Snowboarding Trip-Single Airman Initiative-ODR

Snowboarding in Weston, Missouri at Snow Creek. Transportation, Snowboard Rental, are at no expense. Yes, that's right free! Those who are interested there are more trips planned for this month. Ask ODR how to sign up! Call 687-5565 for more information about this trip and others.

MONDAY 3/4

Seniors Bowling-10am-1pm- Bowling Center

Seniors join in bowling for only \$1 games. Share some coffee and breakfast with your friends! Call 687-5114 for more info.

WEDNESDAY 3/6

Boss & Buddy-Starts at 4:30pm- Mission's End

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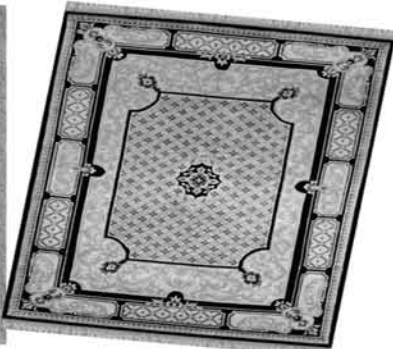
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- Many offices on base are using old forms**. If you would like a copy of the new ad form to keep in your office, call 687-6123 and we'll fax a new form for your use. Or, you can download it at <http://www.whiteman.af.mil> and click on "Whiteman Warrior Classified Ad Form."
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