

WARRIOR



Traditional

Treatment

Whiteman Airmen enjoy Thanksgiving meal

CAUTION - HOT

WHITEMAN

To innovate, we can't be afraid to fail

By Col. Robert Novotny
Commander, 48th Fighter Wing

ROYAL AIR FORCE LAKENHEATH, England (AFNS) -- *"Throughout history, people with new ideas -- who think differently and try to change things -- have always been called troublemakers."* - *Richelle Mead, author.*

The Air Force is pushing hard for us to innovate. You hear it when our senior leaders give speeches or post articles imploring us to improve. Examples include the AFSO21 process or the new Airmen Powered by Innovation program launched in April. All of that is great, except for the fact that over the last 30 years, we've created an organization that is resistant to failure.

When was the last time you heard someone say, "It's okay to not spend all of your money at the end of the fiscal year," or, "Getting a three on your enlisted performance report is awesome!" Never, right? Clearly we have a problem. Innovation and fear of failure are incompatible. Like oil and water, a culture afraid to take risk is inherently unable to explore the sometimes-ugly world of innovation.

Here's some good news. Since the birth of the airplane, Airmen have always been innovative. Innovation is resident in our DNA, just maybe a bit dormant right now.

A pair of brave, "troublemaker" bicycle mechanics took flight at Kitty Hawk, Doolittle's courageous "troublemakers" launched B-25 bombers off of the USS Hornet, and a fearless "troublemaker" named Chuck Yeager are all legacy examples showcasing the rich history of risk-taking Airmen.

If you've ever been to Edwards Air Force Base in California, you know that nearly every street is named for an innovative Airman who gave his or her life pushing the envelope -- failing while innovating. Given that innovation is part of our culture, how can we create an environment where our Air-

men are willing to innovate without fear of failure?

First, I think we need to agree that we have to be better than we are -- with our precious time, our tremendous Airmen and our finite resources. In the past several months, the Air Force released more Airmen in an attempt to meet congressionally-mandated end strengths. This reduction in manpower is stressing the team more than ever. Furthermore, our team is now in a period of mission-growth that I can't remember in recent history.

We all thought that the drawdown in Afghanistan would bring relief, but the new fight in Iraq and Syria, a pandemic virus coupled with declining security in Africa, and other resurgent threats, demand improvements in the way we accomplish our mission. It is only appropriate that an old English proverb stated, "Necessity is the mother of invention." I think that applies to us right now.

Second, and most important, we have to foster a culture that is willing to experiment and fail during discovery. I have a big role in this culture, but I am convinced our first and second-level supervisors will make or break this effort. Every time I meet with the first-term Airmen, I am reminded that we recruit and retain brilliant Americans, and they have great ideas. They are also a fresh set of eyes in the organization with a long list of questions about how we're doing business.

If you're a young supervisor, listen to your folks. Engage with them about how to improve the organization. Our Airmen, regardless of rank or experience, are the key to our future. You have to empower them to take action on their ideas, and reward them when they succeed -- and fail. As soon as we admonish an Airman for trying and failing, we can be certain they won't try again.

Without a doubt, we know there are areas where failure brings a high price, like flight and weapons safety, and our healthcare. But

there are countless areas around this installation, to include bureaucratic processes, communication, staffing, mission accomplishment and finances, where we can make improvements. If in doubt, start small and build some momentum. Every improvement, no matter how small, will make our team better.

I know this is easier said than done, and we can't change it overnight. I also know that some folks won't trust me when I say it's okay to fail. Fair enough.

I can tell you we are listening to your ideas and making improvements. Because of your ideas at RAF Lakenheath, we've already raised the speed limit on the perimeter road, canceled monthly meetings, returned promotion ceremonies to the squadrons, deleted multiple briefing requirements, and so on. All of these improvements are incredibly simple and small changes that make our lives better -- ideas that came from our Airmen. Those are not truly innovative ideas, but they are better ways of doing business, and we're listening.

Together we can push the boundaries. Our youngest Airmen hold the keys to this change. Listen to them, and take action. Don't be afraid to try and fail.

Innovation will save us money, which is good, but more importantly, it will save us time -- time that will go back to you and your team. I want you to keep that elusive "white space" time for yourselves. You know best what to do with your time.

Hopefully you'll use that time to get to the gym, travel Europe, mentor a young Airman, or experiment with ways to do our mission better. We can innovate together if we accept the fact that it comes with a price. A price we're willing to pay.

I like Winston Churchill quotes, so I'll leave you with this one: "No idea is so outlandish that it should not be considered."

Trust your intuition, and let's get after this together.

Virtual Enterprise Service Desk App coming to Whiteman

By Airman 1st Class Joel Pfister
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

Team Whiteman will no longer have to wait on the phone to report a basic computer problem. Now, computer problems can be reported and potentially solved through a self-service application called the virtual Enterprise Service Desk (vESD).

The vESD App will be pushed via automated means to NIPRNet computers beginning on Dec. 8, 2014. Within a few days, all computers should receive it.

The vESD is a software program that assists users in resolving computer problems on their own versus having to call the Enterprise Service Desk (ESD). Users can access vESD by clicking on an icon on the computer's desktop. Once opened, vESD provides an initial diagnosis and performs a series of basic queries to ensure the system is working properly. Should the problem persist, users will then have the option of going through additional troubleshooting steps. If vESD is unable to resolve the issue, a trouble ticket will automatically be created and routed to the appropriate office depending on the problem identified.

In addition to problem solving, vESD allows users to check on the current status of previously submitted tickets.

"This is long overdue," said Maj. Eric Tucker, 509th Communications Squadron Commander. "Finally, technology is being

used in a way that was only dreamed of back in 2005 when cyberspace was added to the Air Force mission statement. The app will attempt to self-heal the computer. If it doesn't automatically fix the problem, it will walk the user through some basic troubleshooting steps, and finally, if that is unsuccessful it will automatically create a ticket for the user."

The new application will clear up the ESD's backlog, which previously had users waiting up to an hour on the phone, coupled with the wait time after obtaining a ticket number. In the future when customers have computer, network, or personnel wireless communications device issues, the first place they should go to is the vESD App on their desktop. For user account issues, such as establishing, moving or deleting a user or organizational account, unlocking accounts, or adding users to network shared drives or SharePoint sites, customers should contact the Information Assurance Officer that is assigned to their unit.

"vESD is all about providing better customer service to users and using technology to efficiently fix computer issues," said Tucker. "With the Air Force the smallest since its inception, using automation is not a luxury -- it's a necessity."

If customers need help with the vESD App or any other communications services, they can always contact the 509 CS CFP at 660 687-2666 or visit the Cyberspace Virtual Customer Service SharePoint site at <https://cs1.eis.af.mil/sites/whiteman/int/509thBW/cshelpdesk/default.aspx>.

THE WARRIOR

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For more information, call the Warrior office at 660-687-6126, email Whiteman.Warrior@us.af.mil, fax 660-687-7948, or write to us at Whiteman Warrior, 509th Bomb Wing, 509 Spirit Blvd. Suite 116, 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 Joel Pfister

A member of Team Whiteman receives a Thanksgiving meal at the Ozark Inn dining facility on Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., Nov. 28, 2014. The Thanksgiving meal is served to ensure that Airmen unable to travel home for the holidays are still able to receive a traditional Thanksgiving meal.

NEWS BRIEFS

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If you have any questions regarding this program, you can contact your unit First Sergeant or Master Sgt. Stephen Thomas, the AFRC In-service Recruiter, at 687-1868.



The Beat the Boss program is a monthly PT test competition between 509th units that will recognize outstanding teamwork and devotion to fitness at the Squadron level. Active duty 509th Airmen who score higher than the commander's score of 98.5% will earn a one-day pass and those who score a 100% with a one-day pass and one of the commander's coins.

Congratulations to the following Airmen who "Beat the Boss"!

- **Capt. Nicholas Clark**
20th Reconnaissance Squadron • 99.2%
- **Senior Airman Ryan Speicher**
20th Reconnaissance Squadron • 98.5%
- **Airman 1st Class Korie Fischer**
509th Force Support Squadron • 99.3%
- **Lt. Col. John Galloway**
495th Fighter Group Detachment 303 • 99.3%
- **Airman Jeffrey Ebbert**
509th Civil Engineer Squadron • 100%
- **Airman 1st Class Jared Barnett**
20th Reconnaissance Squadron • 99.7%
- **Maj. Oren Goldstein**
547th Intelligence Squadron • 98.70%

WEATHER

Today	Saturday
Rain	Partly Sunny
Hi 48	Hi 41
Lo 37	Lo 34

Sunday	Monday
Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
Hi 45	Hi 43
Lo 30	Lo 32

Tool to safeguard PII scheduled for AF-wide December rollout

Information courtesy of 24th Air Force Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, Texas (AFNS) -- The Digital Signature Enforcement Tool is scheduled for Air Force-wide integration Dec. 5, providing Microsoft Outlook email users with an interactive, automated virtual assistant to help ensure the security of personally identifiable information.

"I can't overstate the operational importance of preventing PII breaches," said Maj. Gen. B. Edwin Wilson, the commander of 24th Air Force and Air Forces Cyber. "It's not an IT problem, it's a total-force problem, and DSET is an effective tool the total force can use, right now, to help reduce inadvertent PII breaches."

Beyond potential identity theft, PII breaches can lead to significant compromises in operational security. For example, a well-meaning member working to meet an operational deadline sends an unencrypted email, containing PII on several unit members, to a "non .mil" email account.

The sender could be attempting to get ahead on a project or be providing a status update to unit members on pending unit movements.

Unknown to the sender, hackers have compromised email transport infrastructure between the sender's desktop and one of the destination, "non .mil" desktops. Hackers intercepting this unencrypted email traffic can utilize the newly acquired personal information to form specifically targeted attacks, known as spear phishing, to acquire additional information such as account numbers or passwords.

Unfortunately, the attack does not stop there. Once an attacker has acquired enough information, he can simulate user accounts or even pass off communications on behalf of the service member, who is likely still unaware that his information has been compromised. Those false communications could be leveraged to gain digital access to Air Force systems, or even physical access to installations and personnel. Obviously, the negative implications caused by PII breaches are severe, and equipping the force with tools to mitigate the risk is paramount.

DSET version 1.6.1, an updated version of the DSET 1.6.0 software already in use by the Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve Command, and Air Force Space Command, contains fixes for some previously identified software bugs as well as enhancements to make the digital tool more effective.

"DSET 1.6.0 launched back in July to three major commands," said

Alonzo Pugh, a cyber business system analyst for 24th Air Force.

"Feedback has been overwhelmingly favorable for the use of the tool, and version 1.6.1 is definitely ready for Air Force-wide usage."

DSET is regarded as a short-term fix to help all Air Force network users protect PII, specifically if that information is to be included in an email communication. DSET 1.6.1 still only scans for PII in the form of social security numbers, leaving overall responsibility on the user to safeguard the sensitive information in all of its forms.

"First, the user should ask him or herself if the PII in the email is truly necessary," Pugh said. "DSET scans the email draft before transmission. If PII is identified, DSET will notify the user through a series of pop-up windows. This interactivity allows the user to make a conscious decision of how to proceed with the information in question."

According to Pugh, if the information must be transmitted, encrypting the PII is all that is necessary to protect the data during transmission. DSET will trigger when it detects potential PII in an email, giving the user the opportunity to delete the information if not necessary to the communication, encrypt the information, or override and transmit the email as originally written.

If the file containing PII is already encrypted – through the Microsoft Office "protect" permission feature or some other software – DSET will not trigger and the email can be sent as usual to any recipient's email address, whether ".mil," ".com," etc. However, if the email itself is encrypted through Microsoft Outlook, the communication is only safe to transmit to a recipient's ".mil" email address. An email encrypted in this fashion cannot be sent to any "non-mil" addresses. If the user attempts to do so, DSET and Microsoft Outlook will provide pop-up boxes explaining the user's options.

"I can't overstate the importance of reading the information in the pop-up box," Pugh said. "Read the training materials on the use of DSET; read the training slides on how to use Microsoft Office features to encrypt various documents; understand how these tools can help you safeguard PII."

Users have multiple tools at their disposal to protect PII if encrypting email is not feasible, but if electronic transmission of sensitive PII is operationally required, users can leverage approved Department of Defense file exchange services at: <https://safe.amrdec.army.mil/safe/>

More information regarding DSET implementation can be found at: <http://www.24af.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123417788>



BANJO'S TIME CAPSULE BY TSGT. CHRIS BOEHLER

During the summer of 1961, while on their annual training at Volk Field, Wis., Guardsmen of the 131st Tactical Fighter Wing received word that their summer camp took on a whole new importance. Notification was sent to the wing that they were selected for activation into federal service effective Oct. 1, 1961.

In October, the 131st TFW was notified that they would be taking their F-84F Thunderstreak fighter jets to Toul-Rosieres Air Base, France, in support of operations related to the Berlin Crisis of 1961. Word to launch came on October 25 and the fighter jets left St. Louis for overseas duty. On a stopover in Newfoundland, the Missouri ANG pilots were joined by other Guard units from Alabama, New Jersey, Indiana, Ohio, New York and Massachusetts, all heading to Europe.

By the first few days of November, the F-84Fs from the 131st TFW arrived in France and immediately assumed 24-hour alert duty ready to respond to any aggressive acts by the Soviet Union. Maintenance personnel



of the Missouri ANG worked long hours to keep the jet-powered fighters serviced and prepared to take-off at a moment's notice.

While deployed, the wing also took advantage of other opportunities to train that they would not have received otherwise in the United States, to include the following: participation in exercises with the United States 7th Army, training with the 730th TFS of the Royal Danish Air Force, attending gunnery exercises in Germany and

Libya, and completion of an Operational Readiness Inspection (which the scored the highest score in the 17th Air Force).

In July of 1962, the Missouri ANG redeployed home to St. Louis having completed their obligations in France. The F-84F Thunderstreaks that they took to Europe stood alert and provided a deterrence to Soviet aggression, but had rapidly become obsolete. Upon returning, the 131st TFW immediately began conversion to the newer and improved F-100C Super Sabre and many of the F-84Fs were diverted to new locations, some never even arriving in St. Louis.

With formal demobilization ceremonies conducted on August 20, 1962, the members of the Missouri ANG closed the chapter on yet another successful mission. Time and time again, the 131st proved that it was up to any challenge when called upon to serve. To this day, the members of the Missouri ANG and the 131st Bomb Wing still stand at the ready-ready to serve both State and Country at a moment's notice.

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Courtesy photo

Senior Airman Ryan McGarrigle, 509th Operations Support Squadron Base Honor Guardsman receives the Chiefs Choice Award at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., Nov. 25, 2014. McGarrigle volunteered on Veterans Day to perform with the Knob Noster JROTC in five veteran recognition ceremonies. He has also donated numerous hours to mentoring and training the JROTC drill team as well as visiting the local veteran's home with the students.

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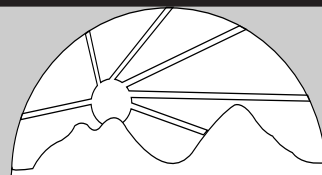
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Masons—2nd & 4th Thurs. 7:00 p.m. - Knob Noster Masonic Lodge AF & AM
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Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)—Every Fri. 8 p.m. - Basement of Methodist Church • Every Tues. Noon - 101 Gray Lane, Chapel Annex 2 at WAFB
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

VFW—1st Fri. each month 7 p.m. - VFW Building
VFW Auxiliary—1st Fri. each month 7 p.m. - VFW Building
Boy Scouts - Troop 509 Methodist Church, Peter Blaszczyk, 660-563-6333
Cub Scouts - Pack 405 Bill Sander 687-1154
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Master sergeant evaluation board, SNCO promotion changes coming in spring 2015

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- The Air Force continues the phased implementation of its Enlisted Evaluation System and Weighted Airman Promotion System (WAPS) changes with the convening of a master sergeant evaluation board scheduled for May 2015.

Evaluation and promotion system changes, scheduled for implementation over the next 16 months for active-duty Airmen, are focused on ensuring job performance is the most important factor when evaluating and identifying Airmen for promotion.

Master Sergeant Evaluation Board

The revamped master sergeant promotion process will be divided into two phases --Phase I and a Phase II which contains an evaluation board similar to the current senior master sergeant and chief master sergeant evaluation boards.

Under Phase I, promotion eligible technical sergeants, as of the Nov. 30 promotion eligibility cut-off date (PECD), will be scheduled to complete their WAPS tests (specialty knowledge test (SKT) and/or promotion fitness examination (PFE)) during the February - March 2015 testing window. Promotion eligible technical sergeants complete WAPS testing in the same testing window as promotion eligible staff sergeants; therefore, force support squadrons have been instructed to give testing priority to their technical sergeant population. This will assist the Air Force Personnel Center in completing the Phase I process which includes ensuring SKT and/or PFE minimum scores have been met and establishing each Air Force specialty code's (AFSC) Phase I

cut-line.

Each Airman's test scores will be combined with their other weighted factor points (time in grade, time in service, decorations and enlisted performance reports) to determine an initial score. Scoring will follow the previously released WAPS point model for staff sergeants through master sergeants. The top 60 percent of Airmen, by score in each AFSC, will then move forward to Phase II of the promotion process where their records will meet an evaluation board. In addition, in AFSCs where there are 15 or less eligible Airmen, all records will be advanced to the Phase II evaluation board provided the minimum SKT/PFE scores have been met.

During phase II, board members will follow the same process as the current senior master sergeant and chief master sergeant boards. They will review the selection folder containing each Airman's evaluation brief, EPRs closing out within 10 years of the PECD, and all decorations received over the Airman's entire career. Any Article 15 received within two years of the PECD and recommended for placement in the selection folder by a commander will also be visible.

The evaluation board will provide a score for each Airman's record. That board score will replace an Airman's weighted EPR points score from the Phase I portion of the process. The board score is then combined with the remaining WAPS factor scores from Phase I to produce a final overall score. Ultimately, this final WAPS score allows the creation of an order of merit that ranks Airmen by total score for each AFSC.

For the last step, the promotion quota is applied to each AFSC order of merit to determine the final master sergeant promotion selections. See the table describing the revised scoring and an associated example calculation.

Consistent with current practice, deployed Airmen and those serving in a temporary duty assignment location unable to test during the normal testing cycle will be considered for promotion through the supplemental promotion process.

Additional SNCO Promotion Adjustments

The Air Force is also adjusting the WAPS scoring model for chief and senior master sergeant promotions beginning with the 15E9 chief master sergeant and 16E8 senior master sergeant promotion cycles. Starting with these cycles, weighted EPR points will no longer be included in the final WAPS score calculations for promotion eligible master sergeants and senior master sergeants.

Airmen competing for promotion to senior master sergeant and chief master sergeant will have their points calculated using the following factors: United States Air Force supervisory examination, time in grade, time in service, decorations and a board score. Additionally, to be promotion eligible master sergeants and senior master sergeants must have completed a Community College of the Air Force degree, in any discipline, and must have completed the Senior NCO Academy via correspondence or in-residence, on or before the PECD.

Details on the composition of the SNCO enlisted performance reports are scheduled for release in spring 2015.

Weighted Factors for promotions to MSgt	Current Maximum Score	Phase I Maximum Score	Phase II Maximum Score
Specialty Knowledge Test (SKT)	100	100	100
Promotion Fitness Examination (PFE)	100	100	100
Decorations	25	25	25
Enlisted Performance Reports	135	250	--
Time in Service	40	26	26
Time in Grade	60	40	40
Evaluation Board	--	--	450
Total WAPS Score	460	541	741

Example Promotion Eligible T Sgt	Weighted Factors	Phase I Weighted Points	Phase II Weighted Points
Specialty Knowledge Test (SKT) (receives score of 50 out of 100)	50	50	50
Promotion Fitness Examination (PFE) (receives score of 50 out of 100)	50	50	50
Decorations (entire career)	2 AFAM, 2 AFM	8	8
Enlisted Performance Reports (250 x .50 + 220 x .30 + 220 x .20)	5, 4, 4	235	--
Time in Service (11 yrs x 12 mos = 132 mos + 6 mos = 138 mos x .108334 = 14.950092 = 14.95)	11.5 yrs	14.95	14.95
Time in Grade (4 yrs x 12 mos = 48 mos x .3334 = 16.0032 = 16.00)	4 yrs	16	16
Evaluation Board Score	375	--	375
Total WAPS Score		373.95	513.95

Weighted Factors for promotions to SMSgt and CMSgt	Current Maximum Score	14E9/15E8 Maximum Score	15E9/16E8 Maximum Score
United States Air Force Supervisory Examination (USAFSE)	100	100	100
Decorations	25	25	25
Enlisted Performance Reports	135	135	--
Time in Service	25	25	16
Time in Grade	60	60	40
Evaluation Board	450	450	450
Total WAPS Score	795	795	631

The Smoke Alarm



Airmen receive grab bags for the Great American Smokeout at Whiteman Air Force Base Mo., Nov. 21, 2014. The event is manned by volunteers every year to encourage tobacco users to give up tobacco.

Airman 1st Class Jovan Banks
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

At an early age people are taught that quitting is not acceptable but on the third Thursday of November it is encouraged. Every year the Great American Smokeout is held to encourage tobacco users to quit, whether it's chewing tobacco, cigarettes or any other form of use.

The mission is simple; quit for one day, if not longer.

Members of Team Whiteman participated in The Great American Smokeout Nov. 21, 2014 at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo.

Volunteers of the event posted at different areas of the base throughout the day providing bags filled with items encouraging tobacco users to quit.

Brian Kirby, the health promotion director of the 509th Medical Operations Squadron, said 70 percent of people that smoke want to quit smoking.



"The items in the bags are designed to get people to quit," Kirby said. "Many people have tried to quit but couldn't. The bags give people extra incentive to quit."

This event is done annually to encourage tobacco users to finally quit.

For more information on how to volunteer for next year's Great American Smokeout contact Brian Kirby at (660)975-1199



The Great American Smokeout event grab bags were put together to encourage people to quit using tobacco products. The bags contained several items to preoccupy the users time when faced with a craving for tobacco.

U.S. Air Force photos/Airman 1st Class Jovan Banks

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Team Whiteman: Thankful on Thanksgiving



A member of Team Whiteman waits to receive a Thanksgiving meal at the Ozark Inn Dining facility on Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., Nov. 28, 2014. Every year it is tradition that Whiteman's senior leaders serve Airmen and their families as well as retirees.



Retirees wait in line to be served a Thanksgiving meal at the Ozark Inn dining facility Nov. 28, 2014 at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo. The Thanksgiving meal served by senior leadership is an annual tradition at Whiteman to boost morale for those who cannot travel home for the holiday.

The Ozark Inn dining facility serves a Thanksgiving day meal to Airmen and their families as well as retirees at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., Nov. 28, 2014. The Thanksgiving meal served by senior leadership is an annual tradition at Whiteman to boost morale for those who cannot travel home for the holiday.

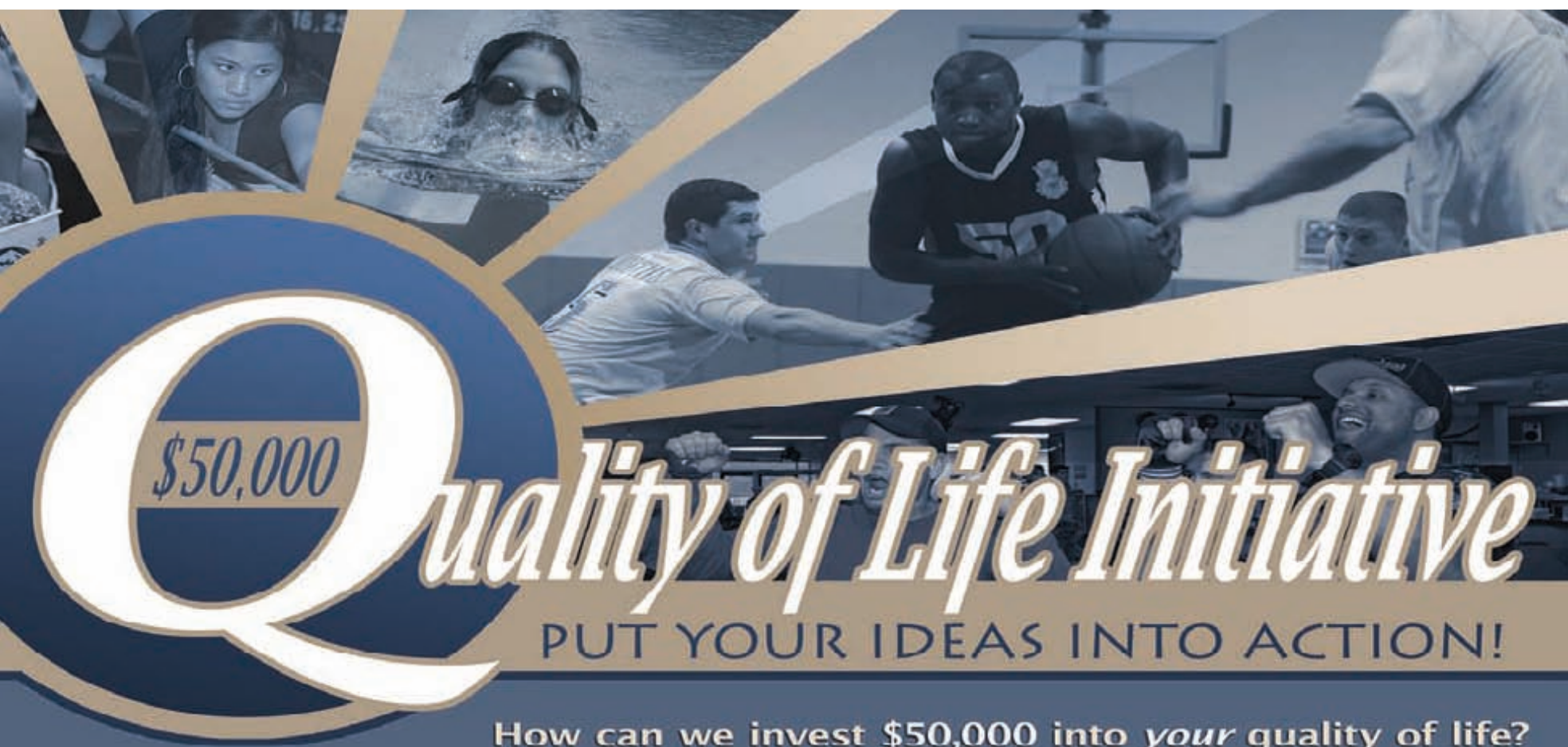


Retirees and Airmen are served a Thanksgiving meal at the Ozark Inn dining facility Nov. 27, 2014 at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo. Retirees as well as Airmen and their families were invited to the event.



Col. Matthew Brooks, 509th Bomb Wing vice commander, serves a piece of turkey during the Ozark Inn dining facility's Thanksgiving day meal Nov. 27, 2014 at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo. Whiteman's senior leaders also served ham, mashed potatoes and other Thanksgiving dishes to customers.

U.S. Air Force photos/Airman 1st Class Joel Pfister



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Academy Airman completes Ranger assessment course



U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Thomas Spangler

Senior Airman Joseph Massoglia along with other Ranger Assessment Course students is sprayed with a hose Oct. 2, 2014, in Las Vegas. The RAC is meant to assess Airmen to determine if they are strong students for the U.S. Army Ranger School. Many students have difficulty with the course due to the lack of sleep, food, and operating for 22 hours a day -- all while staying focused on the task at hand. Massoglia is a 10th Security Forces Squadron evaluator at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

By Airman 1st Class Rachel Hammes

U.S. Air Force Academy Public Affairs

U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. (AFNS) -- A long, silent line of men march in darkness late one night in October on a training range at Creech Air Field, Nevada, carrying 60 to 70 pounds of tactical gear under the blaze of a starry sky.

Senior Airman Joseph Massoglia, a 10th Security Forces Squadron evaluator at the Academy, marches with them. There is little sound but the steady tramp of boots on the crusty Nevada soil.

Suddenly, Massoglia is cornered by two instructors.

"They grabbed me, because they thought I was going to fall over," he said. "And the first one yells, 'Ranger! What are you doing?!'"

Massoglia had fallen asleep mid-step, succumbing to the sleep deprivation he'd lived with for almost two weeks as part of the U.S. Army Ranger Assessment Course, a preliminary course to Ranger School.

"If they hadn't both seen me fall asleep, I wouldn't have believed them," he said.

This was the last night of patrols before graduation. Massoglia, exhausted beyond anything he had imagined prior to the training, was determined to make it through.

"We probably got around two hours of sleep a night, at times," he said. "You just have to prepare for the suck."

The lack of sleep is not all Massoglia and his fellow Airmen dealt with. They were expected to work and train up to 23 hours a time, living off two Meals Ready to Eat a day, containing about 2,400 calories.

"We did a PT test on our first day," he said. "That's two minutes of strict push-up, two minutes of full sit-ups and a five mile run. Once everyone was done, we did six straight chin-ups, we couldn't swing at all. From there, we did the combat water survival test, then a bag drag. We started with 21 people, but at that point one of the guys quit on the spot."

Ranger School develops the combat skills of officers and enlisted men by giving them turns as unit leaders in a simulated tactical environment, under physical and mental stress similar to actual combat.

Ranger candidates are tested on placing Claymore mines, assembling and disassembling firearms and programming radios.

"The instructors would give us a brief overview of how to do it, and we would perform it and be evaluated," Massoglia said. "One of the early days also was line navigation (a map and compass course). They gave us each five points to find in the area, and it was a pretty large area."

Massoglia hoped the course would be just an assessment before Ranger School, but it proved challenging in and of itself.

"It's intense from the get-go," he said, adding the first morning of training began at 3 a.m. "You could relate it to basic military training as well -- we had to get on the bus very fast, and then get off the bus very fast. Then we didn't meet the time requirement, so we had to get back on and off again."

Physically pushing himself while extremely sleep-deprived was not what Massoglia wanted when he first joined the Air Force in February 2012, he said.

"I ended up with security forces because my recruiter said it was a job that left every month, and I just wanted to get in," Massoglia said with a laugh, adding that attempting to become a Ranger was never something he saw himself doing. It wasn't until he heard about an open slot for pre-Ranger School during a commander's call that he seriously considered it.

While Ranger School is an Army program, there are six slots reserved for Airmen every year. To secure those slots, Airmen must apply for and finish the Air Force-run pre-Ranger School.

Once an Airman completes pre-Ranger School, he appears before a board to receive performance critiques. At that point, he will be given either a "go," a "no go" or a "conditional go."

"I got a 'go', so I can go straight into Ranger after pre-Ranger," Massoglia said. "A 'conditional go' means you need more training, so they decide what you need more training in and then

your training needs to be signed off by a certified Ranger. And then a 'no go' is you can't go to Ranger this time, but you can go to pre-Ranger again."

Massoglia does not currently have a date for the 61-day Ranger School, but hopes to enter in May 2015. Until then, he is focusing on preparations.

"I'm trying to gain weight while remaining in shape," he said. "I actually haven't been able to run for the past two weeks -- I got runner's knee while I was at pre-Ranger School from all the physical activity. But I'll be running again, and running longer distances."

Despite how challenging Ranger School may be physically, Massoglia doesn't rank it among his top concerns.

"Sleep deprivation is probably the number one challenge," he said. "Number two is being Air Force and going to Ranger School. A lot of the instructors told me, 'You'll get extra love, being there and being Air Force.'"

Massoglia credits his motivation to personal and professional reasons.

"My wife is a big motivator in my life," he said. "The fact that I have her behind me gives me so much more determination. I called my supervisor, Tech. Sgt. Ashley Umstead, after I got my 'go' from the board, and she was ecstatic for me. Having so many people be proud of what I did was a huge motivator."

Umstead has little doubt Massoglia will succeed.

"I know Senior Airman Massoglia is one of the hardest working and most dedicated Airman I've worked with," she said.

Despite the small number of Ranger-qualified Airmen, only 263 Airmen have completed Ranger School since it began in 1950, Massoglia has still found ties to the group at the Academy.

"I was in the gym the other day, and there was an Army pre-Ranger course going on," he said. "A few Ranger-qualified sergeants were putting Airmen through a PT test. They were saying the Ranger Creed, and that made me happy because I know it and it's something I can connect with. That's a big drive, that brotherhood."

Holiday Decorating Fire Prevention Safety Article

By Tech. Sgt. Christopher Gunn
509th CES/CEFP

Now that the Holiday decorations are down from the attic or drug out of storage, it's time to beautify your home inside and out. Setting up plastic reindeer in the yard, along with light up Santas, lights on the roof, wreath on the door and garland on the stair case. Did you know, according to the National Fire Protection Association, that nearly half of holiday decoration fires happen because decorations are placed too close to a heat source. So before you dump that box of decoration and start sorting through them, take a few minutes and review the safety tips on decorations.

Holiday Decorating

- Be careful with holiday decorations. Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant.
- Keep decorations away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.

Indoor/Outdoor Decorating

- Keep lit candles away from decorations and other things that can burn.
- Blow out lit candles when you leave the room or go to bed.
- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn.

- Think about using flameless candles in your home. They look and smell like real candles.
- Some lights and extension cords are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.
- Keep decorations away from windows and doors. This keeps your egress path free and clear.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Connect no more than three strands of mini-light sets and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of LED strands to connect.
- Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged.
- Turn off all light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.
- Check extension cords for damage before using. Replace any damaged cords right away.
- Use extension cords that have the label of an independent testing laboratory and are marked for outdoor use.

Whiteman Fire Emergency Services would like you and your family to enjoy the Holidays this winter. If you have any questions about fire prevention, fire safety or training please contact our Fire Prevention Office for information at 687-6080, 687-3748, or 687-6083. Also, please log on to our face book page at Whiteman AFB Fire Emergency Services for more fire safety tips.



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Find out More About the FCC Online at whitemanfss.com

NORAD prepares to track Santa's flight



U.S. Air Force graphic/Staff Sgt. Luis Loza Gutierrez

(Information courtesy from a North American Aerospace Defense Command news release. No federal endorsement is intended or implied.)

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. (AFNS) – The North American Aerospace Defense Command's NORAD Tracks Santa website, <http://www.noradsanta.org>, launched Dec. 1, featuring a mobile version, a holiday countdown, new games and daily activities and more.

The website is available in eight languages: English, French, Spanish, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, and Chinese.

Official NORAD Tracks Santa apps are also available in the Windows, Apple and Google Play stores, so parents and children can count-down the days until Santa's launch on their smart phones and tablets. Tracking opportunities are also offered on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Google+.

Santa followers can go to any of these sites and search for "@noradsanta" to get started. Also new this year, the website features Santa's elves in the North Pole Village. NORAD Tracks Santa is introducing the newest elf and asking the public to help choose the perfect

name for him. Details can be found via NORAD Tracks Santa social media or in the "Name the Elf" video in Santa's North Pole Movie Theater.

Starting at 12:01 a.m. MST on Dec. 24, website visitors can watch Santa make preparations for his flight. NORAD's "Santa Cams" will stream videos on the website as Santa makes his way over various locations.

Then, at 4 a.m. MST (6 a.m. EST), trackers worldwide can speak with a live phone operator to inquire as to Santa's whereabouts by dialing the toll-free number 1-877-Hi-NORAD (1-877-446-6723) or by sending an email to noradtrackssanta@outlook.com. Any time on Dec. 24, Windows Phone users can ask Cortana for Santa's location, and OnStar subscribers can press the OnStar button in their vehicles to find Santa.

NORAD Tracks Santa started in 1955 when a local media advertisement directed children to call Santa direct -- only the number was misprinted. Instead of reaching Santa, the phone rang through to the crew commander on duty at the Continental Air Defense Command Operations Center. Thus began the tradition, which NORAD has carried on since it was created in 1958.

Thrift Savings Plan limits increase for 2015

By Janis El Shabazz

Air Force Personnel Center Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, Texas (AFNS) -- The Internal Revenue Service has announced increased limits for 2015 Thrift Savings Plan contributions.

"The maximum contribution amount for traditional and/or Roth TSP will be \$18,000; this is an increase from the elective deferral limits of 2013 and 2014, which was \$17,500," said Erica Cathro, an AFPC Human Resources Specialist. "Additionally, the maximum amount of 2015 catch-up contributions is \$6,000, which is an increase from the \$5,500 elective deferral limit for calendar years 2013 and 2014."

Catch-up contributions are additional tax-deferred contributions and are separate from regular TSP contributions. For those who are eligible, catch-up contributions provide a way for individuals to secure their retirement, especially for those who begin investing later in their careers.

To be eligible for catch-up contributions,

civilian and military employees must be 50 or older in the year in which the first deduction from pay occurs. They must also be in a pay status and be able to certify they will make, or have made, the maximum "regular" employee contributions of \$18,000 to a TSP or other eligible account by the end of 2015.

TSP contributions stop when an employee's contributions reach the annual maximum limit and will automatically resume the next tax year if the employee is still enrolled in TSP.

"This is especially important to employees under the Federal Employees Retirement System because once employee contributions stop, agency matching contributions will also stop," Cathro said.

For detailed information on TSP and other personnel issues, go to myPers, select "Search All Components" from the drop down menu and enter knowledge article number "23799" in the search window. Air Force retirees who do not have a myPers account can request one at www.retirees.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-120510-068.pdf.

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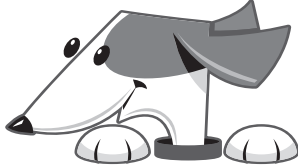
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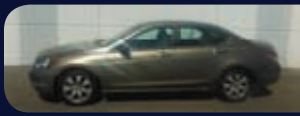


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