WARREN
SENTINEL
"Jolly Rogers"
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Volume 65, Issue 2 | F. E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo. | Jan. 13, 2006

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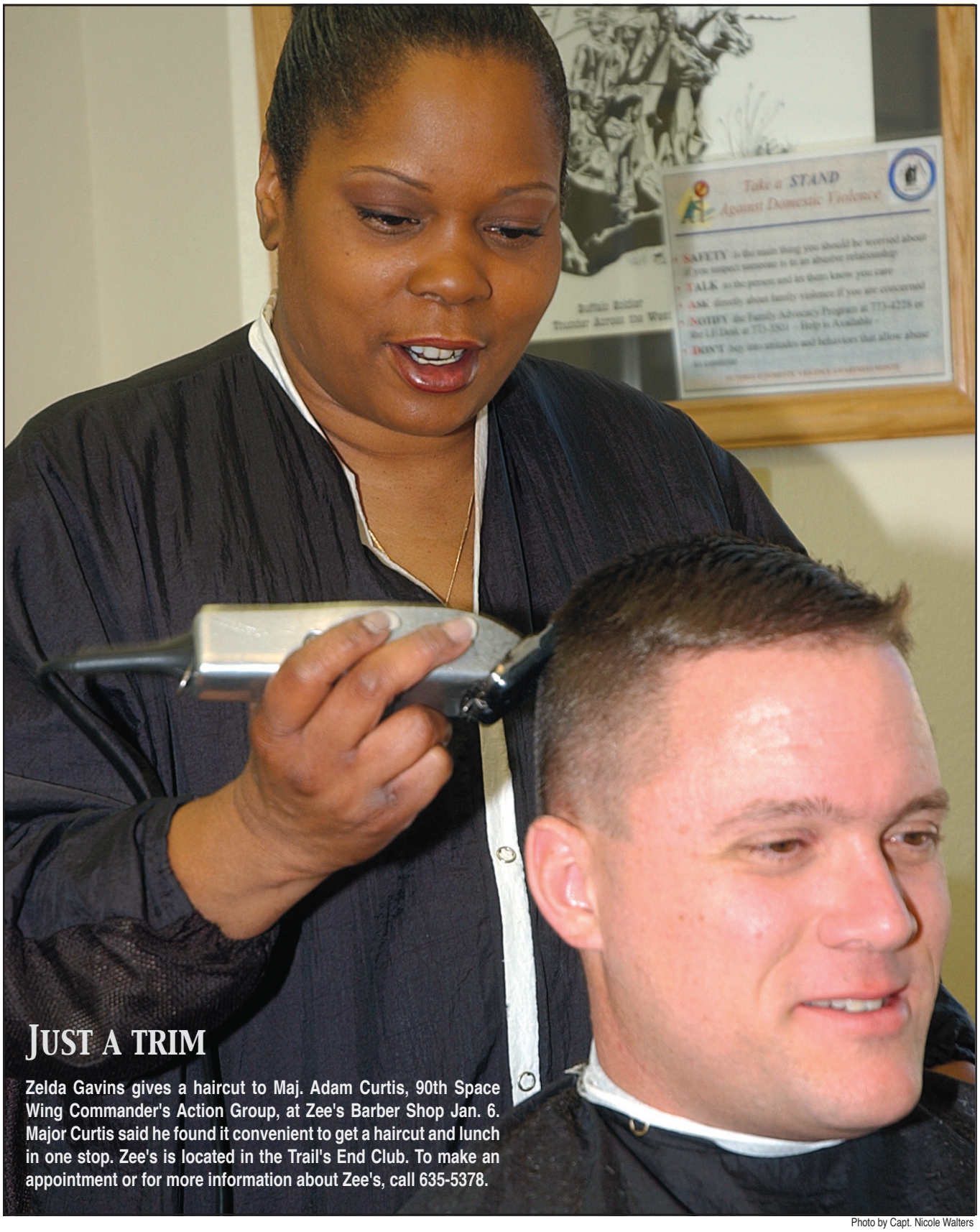

JUST A TRIM

Zelda Gavins gives a haircut to Maj. Adam Curtis, 90th Space Wing Commander's Action Group, at Zee's Barber Shop Jan. 6. Major Curtis said he found it convenient to get a haircut and lunch in one stop. Zee's is located in the Trail's End Club. To make an appointment or for more information about Zee's, call 635-5378.

Photo by Capt. Nicole Walters

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Commentary

NCOA lives up to its creed

Senior Airman Matthew Edwards
90th Mission Support Squadron

It was one of the proudest moments of my life. There I stood behind a podium at my mother's funeral. I shuffled my papers organizing my thoughts and for some reason I looked up. What I saw took my breath away. As I panned the crowd from left to right, I saw that the pews were full of people sitting shoulder to shoulder from front to back. People lined the walls all the way around the sanctuary while others crowded in the foyer of the church. There was a line of people out the front door while others were packed in the hall leading to the foyer. The place was packed! I caught my breath and without thinking said, "Wow! There are a lot of people here."

As I shared how the life of my mother had impacted mine, my chest stuck out and my heart smiled from ear to ear. There was never another day I was more proud to be the son of my mother than that day. It was very clear that mine was not the only life that Dixie Edwards had impacted. The testimony of her life stood packed in a church that only fit 250 people in the sanctuary, yet it was overflowing. It was that day that inspired me to my core to be of who I am - that my life would count just like hers did.

Years later, sitting in the First Term Airman Center I heard a briefing from the Noncommissioned Officers Association that inspired me to try and make a difference and impact people's lives like my mother did. I heard this NCOA creed for the first time:

"It is with the conception and full understanding that many things of great need and importance can be accomplished in unity and cooperation. Thus do the members of the Noncommissioned Officers Association of the United States of America agree to join their efforts and strength to work together for the benefit of the individual, the group, and for the greatest benefit of our beloved nation."

It struck a chord in my heart. That's how my mom lived. I'm in! The more involved I became the more it became clear that these people were for real. The creed recited at every meeting wasn't just a show, it actually meant something to these folks. I had no idea just how much it meant until a fellow member of our local chapter came face to face with the near death of his daughter before she had a chance to really live.

Master Sgt. Johnny Goldfuss, 90th Missile Maintenance Squadron, never expected his daughter's life to be threatened on the day of her birth. The doctor delivered the nerve-racking news that Sergeant Goldfuss's daughter's intestines had not fully developed and in order to save her life she would have to be flown to Denver for immediate surgery. For several weeks he made the exhausting four-hour round trip to see his wife and daughter. It wasn't long before these extenuating circumstances started to take a toll on his finances. The response of the NCOA was mind blowing.

The NCOA has set up benevolent programs to assist members of the enlisted core of all branches of the military when life hits the fan. One of those is the Medical Trust Fund. This fund was designed to assist the en-

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Street Talk

The Warren Sentinel asked Warren members, "Which college bowl game did you enjoy most?"

"The Fiesta Bowl with Notre Dame and Ohio State. [I was rooting for] Notre Dame."

- Tech. Sgt. Joshua Galipeau, 20th Air Force

"USC and Texas, because it was a close game and Texas came out on top."

- Airman Camille Graves, 90th Medical Operations Squadron

"This year's Rose Bowl was great! Texas whooped 'em bad!"

- Cindy Weaver, AAFES

"My favorite college bowl was the Sugar Bowl with University of Georgia versus West Virginia, because I went to UGA."

- 1st Lt. Justin Ramsey, 319th Missile Squadron

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90th Space Wing Commander

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Articles are due to public affairs, Building 250, room 201, by 4:30 p.m. Thursday the week before publication. Classified ads are due by 11 a.m. Tuesday the week of publication.

Classified ads can also be dropped off or mailed to Wyoming Newspapers, Inc., 202 E. 18th St., by 1 p.m. Tuesday the week of publication. Articles and ads that don't meet these deadlines won't be considered for that week's issue. Editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by 90th Space Wing Public Affairs of Warren Air Force Base, Wyo., of Air Force Space Command. All photographs are Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated. Public affairs reserves the right to edit content to conform to style and space requirements. Articles run on a space-available basis.

Direct questions or comments to the SENTINEL at 773-3381 or e-mail at *Sentinel@warren.af.mil*.

Published by:
Wyoming Newspapers, Inc.
202 E. 18th St., Cheyenne, WY, 82005
(307) 632-5666
Sentinel@warren.af.mil

Warren Honor Guard inspires cub scouts

First through fifth graders were fixated on the ceremonial flag

Meredith Thomas
20th Air Force spouse

Our country got a little bit stronger today. We didn't spend any money, or acquire new weapons or land. It was the time and effort spent by four Airmen at Warren.

Honor guard members Senior Airmen Marissa Wells, 90th Mission Support Squadron, Noah Wells, 90th Space Wing, Roderick Mance, 90th Maintenance Operations Squadron and Airman 1st Class Shawn Ruiz, 321st Missile Squadron teamed up Dec. 12, 2005 at the Knights of Columbus to present the colors at the pack meeting of Cub Scout Pack 112.

To see the widening eyes of these young boys as they heard the commands ordered and the shoes marching in unison on the tiled floor was to glimpse the hope of our country. Thirty symbols of hope stood at attention, saluting our flag as impeccably groomed Airmen so honorably carried it into the pack meeting.

The Airmen graciously took valuable time from their personal lives to explain flag etiquette to our cub scouts, answering a barrage of questions. The boys watched a magnificent flag folding demonstration, a requirement the older scouts must practice to learn the significance of each fold.

One would think first through fifth grade boys would be fixated on the firearm accompanying "Old Glory," but only one question was asked about that, "Why do you carry that for the flag ceremony?" The simply stated response, "To protect the colors," was enough. The importance of what they stood for didn't need a lengthy explanation.

There were questions about the uniforms, especially the significance of the white gloves. But there was no doubt the proudly worn uniform was a representation that the Airmen believed in a cause much bigger than just themselves. Airman Marissa Wells pointed out, "We have something in common. You're all wearing the flag on your shoulder, too."

What was once just part of their cub scout uniform became an honor, putting these boys in a category they'd previously only awed from afar. And these little men somehow seemed to stand taller after that.

A first grader asked, "Why do we have a flag?" The answer to the evening's most fundamental question packed powerful meaning.

"Since the beginning of time, flags were used as symbols to unite people with a common goal," the Airmen said.

And there it was … still doing its job. The selflessness of your Airmen and what they conveyed to the future leaders of this country strengthened us greatly.

Cub Scout Pack 112 is most grateful for their service to all of us. Our words of appreciation don't seem nearly adequate to all of you who defend our freedom, but thanks for sharing some of your finest with our sons.

> **"The selflessness of your Airmen and what they conveyed to the future leaders of this country strengthened us greatly."**
>
> **- Meredith Thomas**
> *20th Air Force spouse*

NCOA, From Page 2

listed core with medically related incidental expenses associated with medical emergencies. For example, Tri-Care doesn't cover the cost of gas for round trips to Denver, food expenses or childcare. The incredible thing about these benevolent programs is that membership isn't required. The only prerequisite is that you are a member of the enlisted core, active, reserve, Guard or retired of any branch of the military. To access the money available, all that is needed is an application sent to national headquarters detailing the situation. Sergeant Goldfuss sent his application in with the expectation anyone would have about receiving money from a program like this: two maybe three hundred dollars tops, plus the thought it would probably take quite a while to get to him. But something is better than nothing, right?

It's been said, when it rains, it pours. Such was the case for Sergeant Goldfuss. The phone call came and he found out all would be well with his daughter. A sigh of relief, but now what to do about the finances? Sergeant Goldfuss checked the mail to find that a check from the NCOA had arrived much sooner than anticipated. He opened the envelope and upon seeing the dollar amount of the check his jaw hit the ground. He didn't get $200. He didn't get $300. The check was for $1,200!

Now I knew the NCOA was an organization that really lived what they said they believed. Just like Mom. Again pride filled my heart. So as I look back and reflect on my past while looking forward to the future, I know three things for sure. I'm proud to be my mother's son, proud to be a member of the NCOA, and because I choose to get involved, I'll follow the example of my mom. So how about you? Will the house be packed when your time comes? Make a difference in 2006.

WARREN'S STEP PROMOTEES

Master Sgt. Tony Donaldson, 90th Civil Engineer Squadron, has his new master sergeant stripes tacked on by Lt. Col. Joe Ballard, 90 CES Commander, and Col. Michael Carey, 90th Space Wing Commander, during a briefing at the 90 CES training building here Monday.

Photos by Airman 1st Class Tessa Cubbon

Tech. Sgt. Tony Bostic, 90th Security Support Squadron, gets his new stripes tacked on by his wife, Senior Airman Anita Bostic, 90th Services Squadron, and Col. Michael Carey, 90th Space Wing Commander, during the 90th Security Forces Squadron commander's call at the base theater Monday.

90th CPTS can help with deployment financial issues

Tech. Sgt. Brian Thomas
90th Comptroller Squadron

It's 2 a.m. and I'm staring at the ceiling trying to run through everything that needs to be accomplished before I deploy.

My main concern is to make sure that my family and finances are in order. Some of the questions that I have are what entitlements will I draw while I'm deployed, how will I get my travel card paid off on time, and what other services can finance offer me or my family to make this run smoother? Now I'm starting to stress because I don't have the answers to these questions.

This is a common reaction that many Airmen face when a deployment looms.

First, let's start with entitlements that one could draw while deployed. Family Separation Allowance is payable to individuals who are separated from their family for more than 30 consecutive days. It's payable in the amount of $250 per month while you are separated. Other common entitlements are Hardship Duty Pay which can range from $50 to $150 per month and Hostile Fire Pay that pays $225 per month, each depending on location. If you are deployed to a designated combat zone then your basic pay earned while in that zone will not be taxed.

Second, what are my travel entitlements and how do I go about paying for my travel expenses? The first step is to try to obtain a government travel card. If you are able to obtain one before you deploy, you can use it for all travel expenses required for your deployment. It may be used to pay for plane tickets, hotels and meals while traveling. The second part is "how do I pay my travel card off while I'm deployed?" There are two different ways to file an accrual voucher. Pick up an accrual voucher worksheet at the finance office or file directly through Virtual MPF. If you want to pay your government travel card off, just specify how much you want to disburse and if there is anything remaining it will be deposited into your bank account. Our average turnaround time for accrual vouchers is less than 48 hours. On the other hand, if you do not have or cannot obtain a government travel card before your travel begins, you may receive a travel advance. All you need to do to get an advance is have a copy of your travel orders and stop by the finance office three days before your travel starts.

Finally, what do I need to do to make sure that all of my financial obligations are in order? Make sure all of your allotments are in order to cover any expenses that you are responsible for (i.e. rent, car payment, telephone, cable, etc.) This can be done on the MyPay Web site. The number one problem in the finance office is a spouse who wants finance to provide information or services without authorization from the member. To avoid this, plan ahead and have a Special Power of Attorney for Finance drawn up by the base legal office. Per finance regulations, a General Power of Attorney does not suffice when giving authority to a spouse to conduct financial transactions on the member's behalf.

With proper planning, pre-deployment stress can be reduced by having finances in order. Whether it be the Government Travel Card, allotments, MyPay PIN's or Special Powers of Attorney, you can have everything planned out in minimal time.

"Our folks, especially ones that are deployed thousands of miles from home, shouldn't be bothered with common financial concerns." said Lt. Col. Todd Gondeck, 90th Comptroller Squadron Commander. "We need to do everything we can to ensure they are 100 percent focused on the deployed mission."

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON DEPLOYMENT FINANCIAL ISSUES, CONTACT THE 90TH CPTS CUSTOMER SERVICE AT 773-1851.

SNCOA AND NCOA GRADUATES

Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy
Senior Master Sgt. James Schumacher, 90th Security Forces Squadron
Noncommissioned Officer Academy, Tech. Sgts.
Daniel Perge, 90th Space Wing, distinguished graduate
Lee Abraham, 90th Maintenance Operations Squadron
Anthony Aquilano, 90th Civil Engineer Squadron
Benjamin Arioso, 90th Medical Operations Squadron
John Bedwell, 90 SFS
Lynette Burden, 90th Medical Support Squadron
Ernest Cheh, 90th Maintenance Group
Mark Glen, 90th Missile Security Forces Squadron
Roger Salinas, 90 CES
Florentina Thibodeau, 90th MDOS
Jonathan Weaver, 90th Logistics Readiness Squadron

Briefs

MSET Assessment

Warren's first Missile Standardization, Evaluation and Training Assessment is scheduled for Monday to Jan. 20. MSET, formerly known as the Combat Capability Assessment, is an inspection that evaluates how Warren trains and evaluates its people to effectively safeguard and/or employ 150 Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missiles upon direction from the President.

For more information, contact Lt. Col. Jeff Jenkins or Capt. Mike Morris at 773-2135.

Base child care hours

The Warren Youth Center and Child Development Center will be open normal hours Monday.

For more information, call the youth center at 773-2564 or the CDC at 773-5745.

Facility Managers needed

The 90th Operations Group is seeking mission focused personnel with drive and self-initiative in the grades of staff to technical sergeant to serve as Missile Facility Managers, AFSC 8S000. Facility Managers are responsible for multimillion-dollar facility maintenance as well as the conduct of at least seven personnel on a daily basis. To find out more about this special-duty, controlled tour assignment, contact Master Sgt. Michael Whittaker at 773-4210.

FTAC NCOIC needed

A staff or technical sergeant is needed to fill the position of the First Term Airman Center NCOIC.

Applicants must have approval from their career field manager for release from their current duty. To apply for this position submit a military resume, last five EPRs, a copy of their recent fitness test score sheet and an approval/release letter signed by your commander to Senior Master Sgt. Yvonne Miller, 90th Mission Support Squadron Career Assistance Advisor, Building 243, 773-6668, by Feb. 1. Applicants may also submit letters of recommendation.

The individual selected for this position will report to FTAC on April 3. For more information, contact Maj. Dan Knight, 90 MSS Commander at 773-3308.

Photo by Bernie Ernst

STORM READY

John Griffith, Warning Coordination Meteorologist and William Parker, Meteorologist In Charge of the National Weather Service in Cheyenne, present Col. Boomer Crowley, 90th Space Wing Vice Commander, with a letter of recognition and a Storm Ready sign at a ceremony Dec. 14, 2005. Officials from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association's National Weather Service declared Warren to be a Storm Ready community. The Storm Ready program was developed by the NWS to prepare communities with an action plan that responds to all types of severe weather. The signs presented to the 90 SW are prominently displayed at buildings 250 and 1250.

Yellow Card: Don't leave home without it

1st Lt. Tanya Yelverton
90th Medical Group

The next time you visit the 90th Medical Group, whether for a routine visit, to pick up a prescription, get an x-ray or get lab work done, you will be asked for your identification card and your "Yellow Card."

Similar to the civilian health insurance system where patients are required to show proof of insurance, the Air Force asks all retirees, retiree dependents and active duty dependents to show proof that a "Record of Other Health Insurance" (DD Form 2569) is in their medical record. This proof of a completed DD Form 2569 is the "Yellow Card." Updates of the DD2569 form are required yearly.

Health insurance companies are mandated by law to reimburse the government for medical treatment provided at Warren. In turn, the 90 MDG's Third Party Collections Program is responsible for billing the insurance companies for services performed, items used or prescriptions filled.

The money received is used for purchasing the latest medical equipment, renovating the facility and hiring more staff. The 90 MDG requires all non-active duty patients show their Yellow Card with their government ID at check-in to help improve the quality of patient care.

What if you don't have other health insurance?

You will still need to complete and sign a DD Form 2569. This certifies that your health insurance information is true and correct.

How does letting the 90th MDG know I have other health insurance benefit me?

When you use private health insurance, all visits to the 90 MDG can be applied to your policy's deductible. You can meet your annual deductible without paying a cent, and the 90 MDG can build up revenue to help continue providing quality health care for you.

Concerned that your other health insurance rates will go up if you release this information to the 90 MDG?

Insurance rates are calculated a number of ways. The cost of your employer's health insurance is dependent on the total number of claims it has across the entire organization plus other factors such as adding or subtracting people on the plan, increasing or decreasing deductibles or co-pays, or offering a HMO versus a PPO plan. These things would happen regardless if you received your care at Warren or at other area health care providers.

What if your health insurance changes?

Notify the medical technician or receptionist immediately upon check-in. We will give you another form to complete and put it in your medical record and update your Yellow Card.

For more information on the Yellow Card program, contact the 90 MDG at 773-5889.

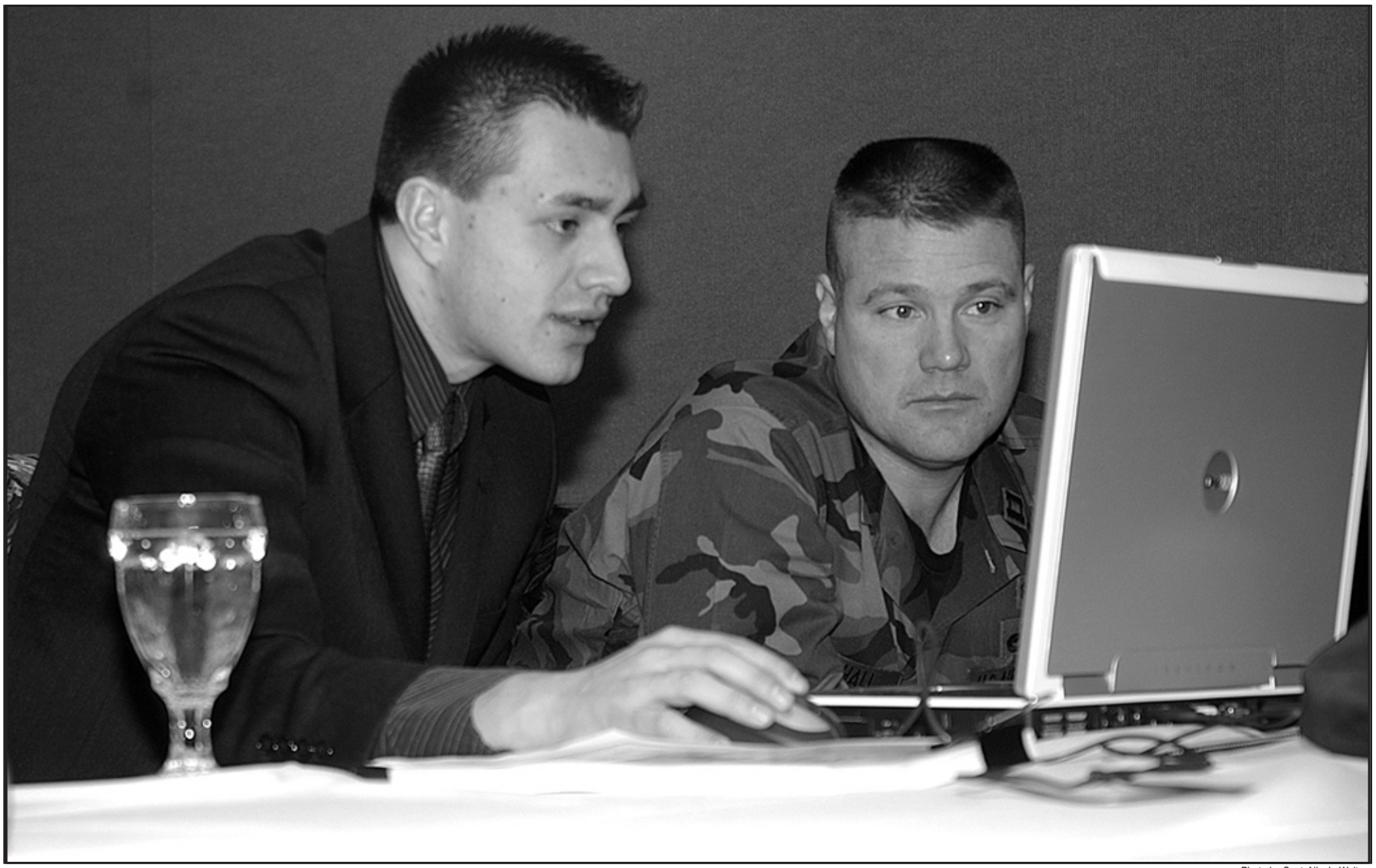


Photo by Capt. Nicole Walters

CAPEX

Ricardo Agudello, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, and Capt. Sean Marshall, 90th Medical Support Squadron, plan 90th Medical Group involvement in the upcoming NATO-Russian council demonstration of United States nuclear weapons accident response capabilities Jan. 5 at the Trail's End Club here. The event is called CAPEX and will be held on Warren June 20 - 22. More than 100 people representing multiple federal, state and local agencies attended the conference to coordinate their involvement.

F. E. Warren BX Mall has New Hours

Beginning January 1

Flower Shop
Mon-Fri: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sat: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Sun: Closed

Optical Shop
Mon: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Tues: Fri 9 a.m to 2 p.m.
Sat: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Sun: Closed

Enterprise
Mon: Fri 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sat and Sun: Closed

Laundry/Cleaners
Mon-Fri: 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sat: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Sun: Closed

Beauty Shop
Tues-Fri: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Sat: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Sun and Mon: Closed

GNC
Mon: Fri 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Sat: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Sun: Closed

Barber Shop
Mon: Fri 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sat: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Sun: Closed

Be prepared

Driving in Wyoming's winter can be hazardous

Airman 1st Class
Brandy Holcepl
90th Space Wing Public Affairs

Photo by Airman 1st Class Brandy Holcepl

Tech. Sgt. Jerry Fenwick, 90th Space Wing Safety, drives the gravel course here Monday to demonstrate safe driving techniques.

Wyoming weather can be unpredictable. What seems to be good weather can turn severe within minutes. Severe weather can cause poor road conditions and visibility which could lead to accidents or cause drivers to get lost or stranded.

Being prepared for winter driving and having the right tools can help with survival and safety during the winter season.

Vehicles should be winterized and mechanically sound before the winter season comes to avoid breaking down during the winter, said Glenn Martin, 90th Logistics Readiness Squadron Motor Vehicle Operator Trainer.

"Make sure your vehicle is in good operating order," said Mr. Martin. "Get a tune up, change the oil and check the condition of the coolant to make sure it can withstand sub-zero temperatures."

Besides fluid levels, there are also mechanical items that need attention.

"Check your lights, horn, mirrors, windows, battery and all the general stuff before going out into winter weather," said Tech. Sgt. Jerry Fenwick, 90th Space Wing Ground Safety Technician.

Also, make sure the gas tank is full, heaters and defrosters are working, the tread and pressure on the tires are good, the windshield wipers are working correctly and there is enough windshield wiper fluid, said Mr. Martin.

Another way to prepare for winter driving conditions is to have an emergency or survival kit in the car.

The Wyoming Winter Driving Book, which is used by 90 SW Safety, has a check list of items that should be in a survival kit, such as plastic jugs of water, non-perishable, high energy foods, sleeping bags or blankets, candles with matches or lighter and a container to burn them in, first aid kits and toilet or facial tissue.

The list of items in a survival kit should be limited to your imagination and the space available to carry them.

"Have marking devices so others can see you when they drive by, a shovel so you can dig yourself out of snow and to clear the tail pipe of your car if you get stuck, a flashlight with working batteries, and a reflector belt so others can see you when you get out of the car," said Sergeant Fenwick.

No matter how prepared a driver may be, there is always the chance of losing control of the car or getting into an accident.

"If you lose control of your car, don't panic. That is the most important thing," said Sergeant Fenwick. "Don't slam on the brakes, make small corrections and re-corrections, and don't worry about going into a ditch, you can always get back out of them."

"If you get into an accident, move clear of the road if you can, don't start the car if you can smell chemicals or gas," said Sergeant Fenwick. "Call the authorities, check to see if the other person involved is OK, exchange insurance information if possible and get pictures of the vehicles if you can," he said.

In addition to accidents, getting lost or stranded can also result in fatalities if not handled the right way.

"The number one thing to remember when you get lost or stranded is to stay with or in the car," said Mr. Martin. "You have a better chance of being found if you are with the car than if you venture out for help."

If you are within a close distance of a house or shop or some kind of civilization, then walk to shelter. You'll be safer there and you can get help faster.

Rescue personnel might not begin looking for you if they don't know you're missing.

"If you are able to, let someone know where you are," said Staff Sgt. Charles Roach, 90 LRS Vehicle Operator Dispatcher. "And try to be aware of your surroundings, know where you are going and what street you turned onto so you can give a better description of where you are and so people know where to look and find you."

If you happen to be the rescuer instead of the rescuee, there are still a few things you should know.

"Now if you find someone who has been lost or stranded, bring them to a warm and safe environment," said Sergeant Fenwick. "But if you bring someone to safety, make sure you leave a note or notify someone that they have been brought to safety."

Winters can be rough here in Wyoming, but if you are prepared and follow these common sense tips, you can come home safe to family and friends.

ITEMS TO KEEP IN A SURVIVAL KIT

- PLASTIC JUGS OF WATER
- NON-PERISHABLE, HIGH ENERGY FOOD
- SLEEPING BAGS OR BLANKETS
- CANDLES WITH MATCHES AND CONTAINER
- FIRST AID KITS
- TOILET OR FACIAL TISSUE

Photo by Master Sgt. Val Gempis

HERCULES ROW

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan - C-130 Hercules aircraft from the 36th Airlift Squadron taxi out for a mission during a six-ship sortie. The squadron is the only forward-based tactical airlift squadron in the Pacific region. They provide C-130 aircrews to conduct theater airlift, special operations, aeromedical evacuation, search and rescue, repatriation and humanitarian relief missions.

2006 defense budget increases military pay and benefits

Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON - President George W. Bush ushered in an across-the-board 3.1 percent military pay raise, effective Jan. 1.

It includes a variety of new or enhanced benefits for servicemembers and their families when he signed the 2006 National Defense Authorization Bill into law Jan. 6.

In addition to a pay raise that's a half percent higher than the average private-sector increase, the new budget provides about 20 new or increased bonuses or special pays or benefits. This reflects a trend DoD officials emphasize is becoming increasingly rare in the private sector.

The new law provides a variety of benefits designed to better compensate servicemembers, improve their quality of life, bring reserve-component benefits more on par with those for the active force and promote recruiting and retention, said Chuck Witschonke, DoD's Deputy Director for compensation.

"Not only does it contain the routine annual pay raise, which is one-half percent higher than the raise measured in the private sector, but it also includes a number of increases in ceilings on some very important pays," he said.

Among the law's most significant features are:

- An increase in the maximum reenlistment bonus offered, from $60,000 to $90,000;

- A higher maximum enlistment bonus, up from $20,000 to $40,000;

- A new ceiling on hardship-duty pay, from $300 to $750 a month;

- A doubling of the maximum assignment incentive pay for hard-to-fill billets or assignments, from $1,500 to $3,000 a month, now payable either in a lump sum or installments;

- A new allowance to cover the first $150,000 in Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance premiums for troops serving in Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom;

- A new bonus of up to $2,500 for servicemembers who agree to transfer from one service to another and serve for at least three years;

- An incentive pay of up to $1,000 for servicemembers who refer someone who enlists in the Army and successfully completes basic training;

- An average 5.9 percent increase in housing allowances, with authority to increase set levels temporarily by as much as 20 percent in areas affected by natural disasters or troop surges resulting from force realignments;

- An increase of 2,000 pounds in the household goods weight allowance for senior noncommissioned officers E-7 and above;

- Enhanced death benefits, resulting in a total of $238,000 for all deaths not previously qualified for enhanced benefits, and the permanent institution of a policy that continues the basic allowance for housing or government quarters for one year for families of deceased servicemembers;

- Authority to pay the applicable overseas cost-of-living allowance to dependents who remain at their location outside the continental United States when a servicemember deploys from that location;

- Expanded eligibility or increased ceilings for special pays for designated medical and dental officers, and officers with nuclear qualifications;

- A bonus of up to $12,000 per year for both active and reserve members with certified language proficiency;

- Payment of travel and lodging for families of hospitalized servicemembers wounded in combat zones or other designated areas.

The law also provides a variety of benefits specifically targeting members of the reserve components. These include:

- Full housing allowance payments for reserve members called to active duty for more than 30 days, vs. the previous 140-day requirement;

- Income replacement benefits to help offset the pay loss some reservists and guardsmen experience when called to active duty, based on specific guidelines provided in the law;

- Increases in the maximum payment for accession and affiliation bonuses, from $10,000 and $15,000, respectively, to a consolidated $20,000 for enlistment in the Selected Reserve;

- Boosts in the maximum affiliation bonus for officers in the Selected Reserve, from $6,000 to $10,000;

- A bonus that could total up to $100,000 over a career for members with a designated critical skill or who volunteer to serve in a designated high-priority unit; and

- Extension of eligibility for a prior-service enlistment bonus to include Selected Reserve members who previously received one.

Mr. Witschonke emphasized that the new law does not guarantee that all servicemembers will qualify for these pays and benefits, or that those who do will receive the highest amounts authorized. Rather, the law gives defense and service leaders the flexibility they need to tailor the force to meet operational, recruiting and retention goals.

The 2006 authorization act, like those in recent years, reflects steady progress in compensating servicemembers and their families with increased benefits and opportunities, he said.

"Every year for the past several years, our servicemembers have gotten larger pay, increased benefits and increased special incentive pays. This is a clear reflection of our Congress, our administration and our country wanting to take care of our servicemembers and their families," he said.

"The members of our uniformed services should feel very good about this year's defense bill as a follow-on to those from past few years," he said.

More information about pay and benefits is posted on DoD's military compensation Web site at www.defenselink.mil/militarypay/.

Money Matters: Part 1

No matter what type of contract, take precautions

90th Space Wing Legal Office

Knowledge is the first step to preventing legal problems. The 90th Space Wing Legal Office has developed the Preventative Law Plan to provide Warren member's with knowledge they need to help safeguard their financial assets.

Isolation from the rest of the world is not an option. In order to be successful and financially independent, people must take risks and participate in commerce. Military members, in particular, have a responsibility to pay financial obligations in a proper and timely manner according to the Personal Financial Responsibility AFI 36-2906.

Many of the financial issues the legal office sees involve contracts, bank accounts, credit cards and general credit problems. It is important to be informed on each topic in order to avoid some of the common legal pitfalls. This series of articles, in conjunction with individual advice from the staff at the legal office, is designed to equip you with the tools to protect yourself financially.

A contract is an agreement between two or more people that may be written or oral. In order to be enforceable the agreement must be made between competent parties (at least 18 years old and of sound mind) and the agreement must be legal in nature (you cannot agree to break the law).

No matter what type of contract you are considering entering, take precautions:

- Read the entire contract.
- Do not sign anything until the document is completely understood.
- Contract changes can always be negotiated before the document is signed. Those entering into contracts can talk to the other party about altering or removing terms that are disagreed with.
- Do not sign a contract with blank spaces. Either fill in the blanks or cross them out.
- Keep a copy of all signed contracts.

Not understanding a contract is generally not an excuse for failing to abide be the terms set forth. It is the responsibility of those signing the contract to make sure that the terms of the agreement are understood before the document is signed. Furthermore, if an agreement goes sour, the types of remedies are limited. For example, if a builder does not show up to lay the foundation for a house on the day he said he would, that is not enough for the home owner to hire a new builder. If a new builder is hired, the home owner is in breach of contract, not the builder. Breaching the contract can lead to serious consequences. Those in breach could be sued and required to appear before a judge. If the case is lost, the person found in breach of the contract must pay the judgment plus interest, and in some cases attorney fees for both parties involved.

The best thing to do when entering into contracts is to understand the agreement and negotiate keeping best interests in mind. Most form contracts are written with the best interests of the seller in mind, not the consumer. Be proactive and insist on changes to the form that seem unfair. If an agreement goes bad, servicemembers can come to the legal office for assistance. The attorneys can review contracts and suggest a course of action.

Be proactive financially, research all of your options, take advantage of the resources available, and make sound financial decisions. Do not wait until your finances cause you personal and criminal problems. Protect yourself by acting responsibly with money.

For more information or questions regarding legal financial issues, call the legal office at 773-2256.

(This is the first part in a three-part series.)

STEPS TO TAKE BEFORE ENTERING INTO A CONTRACT

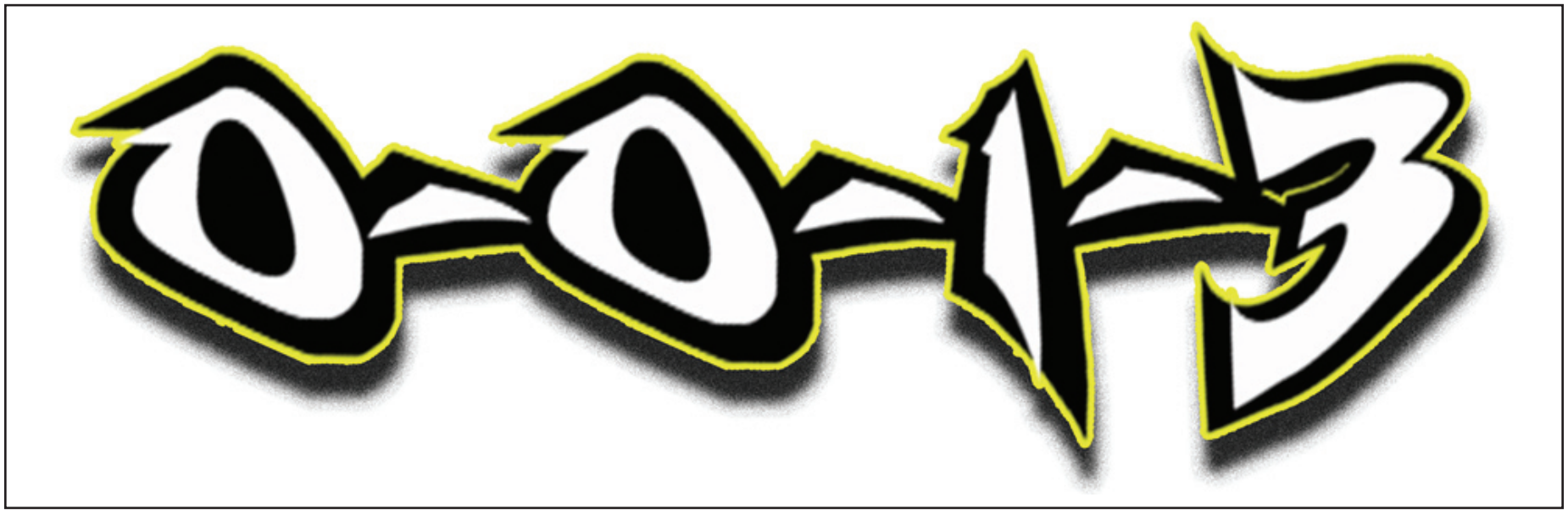
- READ THE ENTIRE CONTRACT.
- DO NOT SIGN ANYTHING UNTIL THE DOCUMENT IS COMPLETELY UNDERSTOOD.
- CONTRACT CHANGES CAN ALWAYS BE NEGOTIATED BEFORE THE DOCUMENT IS SIGNED. THOSE ENTERING INTO CONTRACTS CAN TALK TO THE OTHER PARTY ABOUT ALTERING OR REMOVING TERMS THAT ARE DISAGREED WITH.
- DO NOT SIGN A CONTRACT WITH BLANK SPACES. EITHER FILL IN THE BLANKS OR CROSS THEM OUT.
- KEEP A COPY OF ALL SIGNED CONTRACTS.

Warren varsity upends all-stars

Airman Jeff Booze, 790th Missile Security Forces Squadron, blocks Lawrence Presbury, Cheyenne All-Stars Basketball team, Dec. 17, 2005 at Freedom Hall.

Photos by Airman 1st Class Brandy Holcepl

(Above) Staff Sgt. David Rivera, 90th Medical Operations Squadron, attempts to block Tim Walsh, Cheyenne All-Stars, during the Cheyenne All-Stars versus Warren's varsity team basketball game Dec. 17, 2005. Warren won with a score of 129 to 64. (Right) Ryan Seaberg, Warren varsity basketball team member, keeps up with Tim Walsh as he sprints down court Dec. 17, 2005 at Freedom Hall during the Cheyenne All-Stars versus Warren's varsity team game.



Airman makes it big with Tops in Blue

Houston native has been playing guitar since age 12

Airman Amanda Aguilar, 90th Comptroller Squadron, sat down with Airman 1st Class Brandy Holcepl, 90th Space Wing Public Affairs to talk about her new role in Tops In Blue.

What are you doing for Tops In Blue?
I am playing the guitar. I am the first female guitarist to join Tops In Blue.

How and when did you begin playing the guitar?
My uncle found a guitar in the attic of a house he bought, and gave it to me for Christmas when I was 12.

Did you teach yourself how to play the guitar or did you take lessons?
I taught myself for a year, then I auditioned to get into the performing arts high school back home.

Did you play in any other bands before you joined the military?
I played in a Mariachi band and a band called the Young Performers, they were a vocal group.

What were auditions like?
We were there for 10 days - and they were long days. We would get there around eight in the morning, and sometimes they would keep us there until 1 a.m., so we had a lot of late nights.

When did you find out you made Tops In Blue?
I found out in November of last year, two days after I got back from auditions.

Where will you be traveling to while you are in Tops In Blue?
We will be traveling to every Air Force base and some deployed locations.

Did you audition for anything else for Tops In Blue?
Yes, I auditioned for vocals. When you audition for more than one thing it is called a music specialty.

How long will you be with Tops In Blue?
I will be with them for one year. For four months I will be [training] in San Antonio, Texas, and then for the other eight months I will be on tour.

Where are you from?
I am from Houston, Texas.

How is your hometown different from Cheyenne?
Cheyenne is a lot smaller and colder. I had never seen snow until I came to Cheyenne.

What is your favorite memory with your family?
Getting together and playing softball with extended family.

What is your favorite memory from high school?
My favorite memory is during my senior year of high school I performed "This Love" by Maroon Five during our lunch hour. We had entertainment during lunch.

What kind of extra curricular activities did you participate in during high school?
I played guitar in a jazz band.

When did you join the Air Force?
I joined in September of 2004.

Why did you choose the Air Force over other military branches?
I got more support from my family joining the Air Force.

Courtesy photo

Airman Amanda Aguilar plays guitar for her audition for Tops In Blue November 2005 in San Antonio, Texas. Airman Aguilar, a member of the 90th Comptroller Squadron, was selected for the 2006 Tops In Blue tour.

Why did you join the Air Force?
I (originally) wanted to join the Air Force jazz band. When I couldn't, I decided to join anyway.

Do you plan on re-enlisting?
Yes, I want to re-enlist at least once.

Have you won any awards?
Yes, I won our squadron excellence award in October 2005.

What do you do for your job?
I [work in] customer service [in the finance office].

Do you like your job?
Yes, I like it because you get to talk to higher ranking individuals that you wouldn't normally.

What are your career goals?
After I finish my time with Tops In Blue, I would like to try and get into an Air Force band. After my time is up, I would like to get into real estate.

Would you try out for Tops In Blue again when you're done?
I might, but I can't do two consecutive years because auditions are held during the tour.

Services

SnoFest 2006

SnoFest, the military snow sports weekend, is scheduled for Jan. 27 to 29 in Keystone, Colo. Tickets are on sale now at outdoor recreation. Prices are as follows: lift tickets are $34 for adults and $22 for children ages 5 to 12. A season pass costs $129 for adults and $79 for children ages 5 to 12. Tickets for the SnoFest parties cost $13. Resort lodging starts at $100. To book, call 1-800-258-0437, mention Warren Air Force Base and use the code GV7FEST. For off-resort lodging, call 719-333-7367. ODR is offering discount ski rental and transportation.

For more information, call 773-2988.

Ski Steamboat Springs

Outdoor recreation is hosting a trip to Steamboat Springs Saturday. Lift tickets can be purchased for $48.25. Transportation costs $25 per person and includes ski or snowboard package. The trip departs ODR at 5:30 a.m. and will return at approximately 8 p.m.

For more information, call 773-2988.

Ski Eldora

Outdoor recreation is hosting a trip to Eldora Ski Area Sunday. Tickets can be purchased for $29 for adults and $19 for children 12 and under. Trip departs ODR at 6 a.m. and will return approximately at 7 p.m.

For more information, call 773-2988.

New provider orientation

A free new child-care provider orientation class is scheduled for 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Feb. 6, and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Feb. 10. All military spouses interested in providing child care are invited.

For more information or to register, call 773-3317.

Auto skills center special

Stall and lift fees are half price Tuesdays and Fridays during January at the auto skills center.

Call 773-3869 for an appointment.

Free lunchtime bowl

Bowl two free games, shoes included, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Mondays through Fridays at Warren Lanes when you spend $5 at the snack bar.

Quarterly birthday meal

Meal card holders with birthdays October through December are invited to Chadwell Dining Facility 5 p.m. Jan. 23 for the quarterly birthday meal. Sign up by Jan. 20 with the cashier.

For more information, call 773-6172.

Spinning class

Free spinning classes are held 5:30 a.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 5 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, and 9 a.m. Saturdays at Freedom Hall.

For more information, call 773-6172.

The Spa at the Aquatic Center

The Spa at the Aquatic Center offers massage therapy, hot stone massage, couples massage, body wrap, sugar scrub, facial mask/reflex session, ear candling and airbrush tanning.

For more information, call 773-3195.

Water aerobics class

Water aerobics offers a low impact cardio workout. Sessions are Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Each session is $3 or save with a $30 punch card for 15 sessions. The first class is free.

For more information, call the aquatic center at 773-3195.

Ladies night

It's ladies night each Wednesday from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the wood skills center. Receive one-on-one instruction on any project. The free safety orientation class is a prerequisite.

For more information, call 773-3166.

First Steps Basketball program

Registration for the First Steps Basketball program is scheduled now through Feb. 3 for kids ages 3 and 4 years old. The cost is $25 per child and includes all practices and scrimmages, all equipment, team uniforms, NYSCA certified coaches and an end of season banquet.

This six-week program is designed to teach young kids the fundamentals of basketball. All instruction will take place at the youth gym on Wednesday nights from 6 to 7 p.m. starting the second week in February.

For more information, call 773-2564.

Airmen's all nighter

An Airmen's all nighter is scheduled from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. Jan. 21 at the community center. Activities include karaoke contest, movies, pizza, beer, snacks, pool, dart and ping pong tournaments, three on three basketball and Madden Football. Sign up for tournaments by Wednesday. Admission is free. IDs will be checked at the door. Guests 18 and older are welcome. For more information, call 773-3511.

Photo by Airman 1st Class Tessa Cubbon

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The recipients of the Warren's Chiefs and Sergeants Major Group scholarships pose for a picture Dec. 16, 2005 at the Trail's End Club. Each winner received a $250 scholarship. The recipients from left to right are Stephanie Pruitt, a dependent of 90th Missile Security Forces Squadron member, Senior Airman Ana Dreary, 90th Missile Maintenance Squadron, Staci Kramer, dependent of Army National Guard member, Kimberly Johnson, dependent of 90 MMXS member, Melissa Thompson, dependent of 90th Medical Support Squadron member, Senior Airman Monica Wong, 90 MSFS, and Staff Sgt. Jared Moran, 90th Security Forces Squadron. Airman 1st Class Jeffery Blanda, 90 SFS, is not pictured. The winners stand with Chief Master Sgts. Richard Singhas, 90th Civil Engineer Squadron, Mark Brejcha, 90th Mission Support Group, Charles Hopkins, 90th Medical Group, and Randolph Tegge, 90th Maintenance Operations Squadron.

Education center briefs

Squadron education briefing

Would you like to have a representative from the education center come to your squadron to provide information and handouts on the educational benefits and programs available at Warren? Education counselor and advisors are available to speak at commander's calls, staff meetings or training sessions. Call the education center at 773-2117 for more information.

Attention officers

Did you know that as an Air Force officer you are responsible for contacting the Air Force Institute of Technology to upgrade your education level on your records? You can contact AFIT by mail at: AFIT/SCIB, 2950 P Street, Wright Patterson AFB, OH, 45433-7765. To contact AFIT by phone, call DSN 785-6234, commercially (937) 255-6234 or toll-free 1-800-211-5097.

Online tuition assistance

Do you plan on using Air Force tuition assistance in fiscal year 2006? The Air Force Education Community has announced Air Force members will begin completing requests for tuition assistance online through the Air Force Portal and the Virtual Education Center. For more information, contact the education center at 773-2117.

Online tuition assistance briefing

The education center will be conducting briefings to provide information on the new Air Force Portal/Air Force Virtual Education Center Online Tuition Assistance Program. Briefings will take place in the education center at 2 p.m. Fridays starting today. For more information, contact the education center at 773-2117.

Visited the education center lately?

If you have paid us a visit, don't be surprised if you receive an e-mail asking you to rate the customer service you received during your visit. Respond honestly to the questions so that the education center may serve you better.