



Vol. 56 No. 10

Oct 2009

154th MDG ready to help the world

Within 24 hours, members of the Hawaii Air National Guard were headed to American Samoa as part of a relief team sent in response to the tsunami that hit the region Sept. 29. The following are personal observations from members of the 154th Medical Group.

*by Master Sgt. Jeffrey Romualdo,
154 MDG, 1st Sgt.*

Being the First Sergeant at the 154th Medical Group for little over a year has been filled with experiences, which have made me realize how wonderful and diverse our unit is. Despite being undermanned with just over 60 unit members to support 2,500 Hawaii Air National Guard members, we consistently and constantly exceed all expectations. Here is one snapshot:

It all happened suddenly; in the wee hours in the morning on Tuesday Sept. 19, a magnitude 8.0 earthquake struck the Pacific near American Samoa, triggering towering tsunami waves that gushed over the island. By nightfall many were left injured, missing or dead. That same day, notifications by e-mail and text were being sent out to members of the 154th Medical Group of what just occurred. Soon after, the full-time staff at the Medical Group were recalling all unit members requesting for volunteers for the search and rescue efforts in American Samoa. Within a few hours, 19 guardsmen from the Medical Group were preparing and getting ready to deploy. One unit member, Capt. Jason Iyomasa was just returning from a trip and was still at the Honolulu International Airport when



photo by Staff Sgt. Mike Meares

Capt. B.J. Itoman, C-17 pilot with the 204th Airlift Squadron, watches as Hawaii Air National Guard and Hickam Air Force active-duty Airmen load Humanitarian supplies from the Federal Emergency Management Agency onto C-17 Globemaster III bound for American Samoa as part of the relief effort underway in response to the tsunami that hit the Pacific region Sept. 29.

he immediately volunteered. By 1:30 a.m, Wednesday, 11 unit members including the 154 MDG commander, Lt. Col. Stan Sato and myself, were heading toward Diamond Head to prepare two of our Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and high-yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package trailers for deployment. Within six hours the trailers were mission ready to deploy to American Samoa. It is said that in the Air force, an airman should be ready to deploy within 72 hours. However, members of the 154th Medical Group along with other Guardsmen were on C-17's flying to American Samoa for the relief efforts

in less than 48 hours. All of this was achieved with exceptional communication, teamwork and leadership in our unit.

Colonel Brett Wyrrick, the National Guard Bureau Air Surgeon and our former commander wrote, "The folks going to Samoa were big, big news up here (NGB Headquarters in Washington, DC). I was very proud to say that is my Home Unit."

On a personal note, I am proud to serve with the members of the HIANG, but especially honored to be the first sergeant of the 154th Medical Group. These people are

see SAMOA page 4



Commander's Call: Ready to go, always

by Col. Joseph K. Kim, Commander 154 WG

Aloha! This month brings us to a happy New Year of sorts, the start of the new Fiscal Year. In our ever changing military and economic climate, our top priority as the 154th Wing must be READINESS. We have a "no-fail" mission to serve both our State and Nation every single day in times of peace, conflict and natural disaster.

Our READINESS posture encompasses our entire organization, top to bottom, we all play a critical role in our success. Beginning with personal readiness (fitness, family, financial and legal) through our deployment and employment and through post-deployment reception and care, we must be immediately available and mission ready when we are called upon.

Accordingly, we are conducting two readiness exercises this fiscal year, in November and January. These exercises are designed to gain and maintain fidelity of our deployment processes. I've tasked your Group Commanders



photo by Tech. Sgt. Cohen A. Young, DMA

U.S. Air Force and U.S. Army personnel prepare to leave Sept. 30, for America Samoa to support relief efforts following a tsunami that hit the region after an 8.4 magnitude earthquake Sept. 29.

and they have delivered an ambitious plan to exercise while still keeping critical training on track. This will require all of you to "hit the ground running" for these events.

Our need for READINESS was highlighted clearly last Monday when an earthquake rocked Samoa, wreaking havoc and destruction. Within hours, we were called upon to assemble and ready people and cargo to render aid. Due to tremendous efforts by Team Hickam, the State JFHQ, NGB, FEMA and many others, these living care packages deployed the very next day, bringing life-saving aid to the earthquake and tsunami victims. Please keep the families and victims of these natural disasters in your prayers.

Finally, we must ready ourselves and accomplish all of our missions safely. Each one of you are our most precious resource. Adopt the "Wingman" mentality, DO NOT take unnecessary risks, and stop any unsafe activity or event, you are all empowered to do so. Again, my heartfelt mahalo to you and your families and loved ones for your phenomenal performance and support!



photo by Staff Sgt. Andrew Jackson

Static display aircraft have been removed from their home at the 154th Wing and are ready to be moved to their new home at the Pacific Aviation Museum.

Kuka'ili moku

This funded Air Force newspaper is an authorized publication for the members of the US military services. Contents of the Kuka'ili moku are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the US Government, the Department of Defense, and the Department of the Air Force or the Hawaii Air National Guard.

This publication is prepared, edited and provided by the Public Affairs Office of the 154th Wing, Hawaii 96853-5517. Telephone: DSN / (315) 448-7320 / (808) 448-7320. Send e-mail submissions, comments or suggestions internally to KUKAILIMOKU@HIHICK.ANG.AF.MIL

The Kuka'ili moku can be seen on the 154th Wing intranet web page at <http://154web/>. The punctuation of the name of this publication was researched by the Indo-Pacific Language Department at the University of Hawaii.

All photos are United States Air Force photos unless otherwise noted.

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Brig. Gen. Peter S. Pawling

STAFF

Capt. Regina Berry

PAO

Tech. Sgt. Betty J. Squatrito-Martin

PA Representative

Published by

154th Wing Public Affairs Office

Samoa relief: Answering the call, it's what we do!

by Command Chief Master Sgt. Robert S.K. Lee III, 154 WG



Aloha all! When the report was received that American Samoa had been hit by an earthquake that measured 8.0 on the richter scale, the Hawaii National Guard went into action. Rendering assistance in providing medical, equipment, personnel and life supplies is the reason why the National Guard trains day in and day out. All the preparation pays off when you are postured to provide the necessary resources to a country experiencing a crisis.

In a matter of hours, the emergency response teams coordinated the joint rescue effort that brought physical and emotional relief to the citizens of American Samoa all the while working to restore order and aid in life support. This entire process answers why there are requirements to conduct training, while using exercise's to execute doctrine ensuring we are capable.

Imagine how disheartening it would be if we were not able to answer a call to duty. The positive affect our organization provides hits home in every aspect of urgent need, it is what we are trained to do and it is what our community hopes for.

To the men and women who don the uniform that represents their state and country, you are the very best at what you do and it shows. Our prayers go out to those who lost their life, lost a loved one, received injuries and whose lives were changed forever. To those who are at the forefront of providing the pillar of strength the people of American Samoa need in this dire time, who exude care and expend energy into making the relief effort come about here at home, there is no one better at making it happen, you are the guiding hands that deliver the rescuers needed at a time when our fellow Pacific Islanders are helpless and reach out for assistance.

It is proven time and again that the Hawaii National Guard in a joint effort, stands poised and ready to answer any call, 24/7.....365!.....Let's Roll!!!!!!



Defining the role of the Inspector General

by Lt. Col. Tamah-Lani Noh, 154 WG/IG

Several times within the past six months, I have been told, "Wow, you the IG – I never do nothing"! Not the type of response I enjoy hearing, so I felt compelled to enlighten our members of my role as the Wing Inspector General. It is my hope that the next time I ask, "How's it going," people will take the time to honestly share some of their thoughts and feelings about the HIANG that leadership should be aware of. This way, together we can improve our organization without fear of reprisal.

As the Wing IG, I simply serve as the "eyes and ears" for Commander, Col. Joseph Kim. It is my responsibility to keep him informed of potential areas of concern as reflected by trends; I also have the opportunity to play a role of the fact finder and honest broker in the resolution of complaints; I educate and train commanders and members of HIANG on their rights and responsibilities in regard to the IG system; and I help commanders prevent, detect, and correct Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

issues and mismanagement at the lowest level.

It is important to note, that no briefing or article on the IG program would be complete without mentioning the importance of the chain of command. Our Air Force culture demands that we understand, utilize and respect our chain of command. Experience has shown that your immediate supervisor, first sergeant, or commanders are in the best position to provide a solution to your issue or concern. However, you are not required to get prior approval from your supervisor before filing a complaint or getting assistance at any level within the IG system.

Personal complaints and FWA disclosures help commanders discover and correct problems that affect the productivity and morale of our HIANG Ohana. Resolving the underlying cause of a complaint may prevent more severe symptoms or costly consequences, such as reduced performance, accidents, poor quality work, poor morale, or loss of resources. Even though allega-



tions may not be substantiated, the evidence or investigation findings may reveal systemic morale or other problems that impede efficiency and mission effectiveness. The great part is the assurances that an individual's privacy will be safeguarded to the maximum extent practical to encourage voluntary cooperation and promote a climate of openness in identifying issues requiring leadership intervention. More about IG complaints in the next issue.

SAMOA

my "ohana" or family. And, as you can all see we are "Ready for the World."

The following are excerpts from the observations of Capt. Nathaniel Duff, Physician's Assistant, 154 MDG:

I was the designated medical team leader for the group that was deployed to the West side of American Samoa, in a small village called Leone.

We contacted the village chief who had been waiting since the tsunami hit for help. We were the first contact his village had with any government relief agency.

The village included at least 30-50 families, a school and a temple/church. [It is a] very beautiful spot with clear water and a beach surrounded by lush, verdant forest-covered mountains. It was absolutely devastated. Most of the village was in rubble and washed deep into the tropical mangrove forest up toward the mountains. Entire contents of homes, boats, full-size pick-up trucks and cars carried through the forest and up the mountainside

It must have been a tremendous wall of water to create that much damage.

After talking with the village chief we learned that a small 6-year-old boy was missing from his village and an 11-year-old girl was missing from an adjacent village.

We set up an organized search grid and went out in five-man teams lead by a local villager into the hot, humid mangrove swamp. The entire area was easily over a mile wide and

one-half mile deep. The air stunk with human and animal excrement, hundreds of dead fish and animals, and rotting food and debris.

It was very treacherous wading through knee deep swamp and climbing over sharp debris with rusty nails, sheet metal, glass and all manner of house debris. We found over-turned trucks nearly 500

of being called to duty from Hawaii. Logistics and communications have been difficult to say the least, but everyone in our unit has risen to the challenge.

Day Two

Today we pushed about 20 minutes northeast beyond Pago Pago to a small village named Faga'itua. [We] synched-up with two Navy corpsmen from the USS Ingraham a frigate docked in Pago Pago harbor as we passed through.

Pago Pago is the capital city of American Samoa, and appeared to have firmly shifted into recovery mode. The tuna factory in the bay appeared half functional although the dead fish smell was horrible.

The port facilities were a mess and there were still several boats in the city streets. We arrived in Faga'itua by 9:30 a.m. and there were already about 40 villagers waiting for us. By 10:00 a.m. our entire medical footprint was unpacked from the CERFP trailer and deployed in the open-air village church.

This provided us with a fully functional four bed triage and first aid station with a limited urgent care medical formulary.

We held an impromptu spiritual moment in prayer with the villagers presided [over] by the church pastor. The villagers unexpectedly began singing a beautiful and emotional Christian hymn that left a good portion of us in tears. It was incredibly moving and inspirational for us to



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Cohen A. Young

154th Medical Group CERFP team members take time to pray with the local community as they prepare to provide basic medical care to residents of the Faga'itua village, American Samoa at the Congressional Christian Church of American Samoa on Oct. 2, 2009. The CERFP team deployed in response to the tsunami that hit the region Sept. 29, following an 8.4 magnitude earthquake.

yards deep into the jungle upside down in trees.

The villagers all welcomed us and were grateful that we cared to stop and help, even though we were unsuccessful at locating their child today.

The more seriously injured villagers had already been transported to the one hospital in the main town, so we provided basic first aid to any walking wounded, including a big 300 plus pound muscular Samoan nicknamed "The General" who was injured saving his wife from being washed away.

Things have been pretty chaotic, since we were essentially in the first wave of boots on the ground. It was very cool to know that we have been able to effectively operate our CERFP mission essentially within 24 hours

Samoa

begin our work. From that moment our team was in non-stop motion until sunset. I believe we treated approximately 165 patients in about seven hours. Capt. Jason Iyomasa and Tech. Sgt. Gloria Lafitaga even had a chance to lead an away team to a local village to provide bed-side care to a home-bound elderly lady.

The following observation is from Capt. Jason Iyomasa, senior nurse, 154 MDG:

When we arrived at site it was a bit hectic, off-loading our trailer while we tried to meet the time hack, at the same time trying to figure out patient flow, assignments, setting up the floor plan all the while there were about 100 members watching us looking a little antsy. But, things really came together.

Before we started, our team stood hand in hand in front of the congregation as the pastor prayed over us and the community, while the church members sang in melodic harmony in both Samoan and English - chicken skin and not a dry eye in sight. After that it was like OKAY this is why we're here.

Its amazing. The appreciation and



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Cohen A. Young

Members of the 154 MDG prepare to give medical care to residents of Faga'itua, American Samoa Sept. 30, following the devastating tsunami that hit Sept. 29.

gratitude expressed by the people of Faga'itua we saw is indescribable. You could see it in their eyes and feel it in their hugs. We made a difference and they sincerely, earnestly appreciated whatever we could provide, no matter how much or how little it was better than what they started with. Even though it was a very long, busy day; the general

consensus was that yes, we can do this again and would like to help out any way we can.

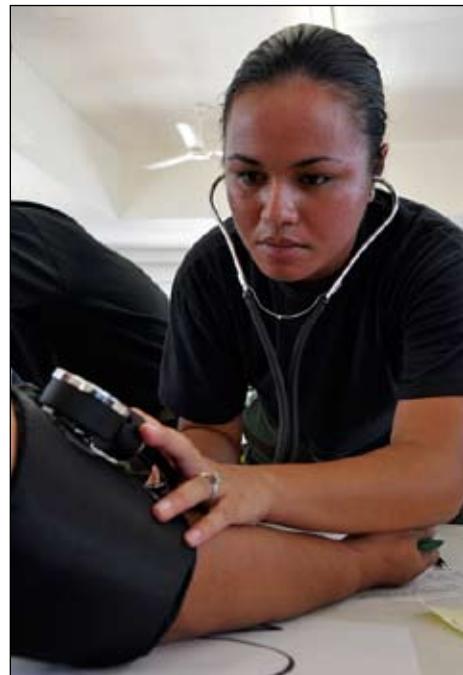


Photo by Tech. Sgt. Cohen A. Young

Tech. Sgt. Gloria Lafitaga takes the blood pressure of tsunami survivor in Faga'itua, American Samoa, Sept. 30.



photo by Staff Sgt. Mike Meares

Tech. Sgt. Kimo McKee, 204th Airlift Squadron loadmaster, inputs load weight data for humanitarian aid supplies that have been loaded onto a C-17 bound for American Samoa as part of the relief effort underway Sept. 30, following the earthquake and tsunami that hit American Samoa, Sept. 29.

At the time of this publication, the CERFP support team and four 154 FSS members were wrapping up their mission in American Samoa and preparing to redeploy to Hawaii.

News Briefs

New MPF Rules

The two year process of transforming the Air National Guard-wide Personnel Systems is complete and in full execution.

That means, there is a new of doing way business. Much of the personnel processes that would have gone directly to MPF now start with the Command Support Staff. Please see the CSS before contacting MPF. The CSS will provide assistance, or if needed, will work directly with MPF to get the assistance needed.

New BMT Standard

Beginning Jan. 1, 2010, enlistees will be expected to arrive at Basic Training prepared to pass a minimum accession run time.

Males failing to meat 1.5 mile run time of 18:30 and females failing to meet a 1.5 mile run time of 21:35 upon arrival at Basic Military Training are deemed medically unable to safely complete training and may be immediately processed for entry level searation pursuant of AFI 36-3208.

In addition recruits must meet weight and height standards, which are based on the Body Mass Index.

This action will help recruiters in having prospective basic trainees prepared to meet the rigors of BMT.

In addition, it will assist 737 Training with the separations process of new accessions who fail to meet minimm standards. This should improve the training environment significantly and result in fewer injuries and fewer mental attritions.

Oct promotions

Promoted to TSgt. (E-6)

| | |
|----------|---------------------|
| 291 CBCS | Correia, Chris G. |
| 293 CBCS | Marzan, Aaron I. |
| 154 AMXS | Sing Chow, Chance |
| 154 MXS | Villanueva, Rudy G. |
| 154 LRS | Yoshioka, Ivan M. |

Promoted to SSgt. (E-5)

| | |
|----------|--------------------|
| 169 ACWS | Davan, Debra A. |
| 293 CBCS | Han, Chungil |
| 169 ACWS | Lopez, Jasmine K. |
| 169 ACWS | Magno, Evangeline |
| 154 AMXS | Osserman, Roger P. |
| 154 MXS | Solmirin, Lucas T. |
| 169 ACWS | Tam, Katherine G. |
| 154 CES | Yurko, Roger |

Military and teacher furloughs

USPACOM is sponsoring a working session for its service components and the Coast Guard Oct. 7, to address the issue of teacher furlough days and its impact on military families.

Services are invited to organize service teams of Child and Youth specialits, Morale Recreation and Welfare administrators and other members of their choosing to find ways to provide appropriate alternatives that will meet the needs of military children from Kindergarten through twelfth grade during the furlough days.

For further information contact Kathleen Hydro via email: Kathleen.hydro@pacom.mil or call 808-477-8073.

154 WG
Drill Dates
IRRE/UTA Nov 6-8
2009
Dec. 5-6 2009
Jan. 9-10, 2010
Feb. 20-21, 2010
Mar. 6-7, 2010

YMCA and teacher furloughs

The YMCA of Honolulu will be offering one-day programs on the public schools' scheduled furlough days, beginning Friday, Oct. 23.

Programs will include homework time and guidance, enrichment projects, recreational and sports-related activities.

Registration opened Sept. 28 online at <http://sendemail.biggerbird.com/t/r/1/dkkytd/uhdivjt/h> or in person at your local YMCA.

Confirmed locations include the following YMCA branches: Central, Kaimuki-Waialae, Kalihi, Leeward, Mililani, Nuuanu, Windward and YMCA Camp Erdman on the North Shore.

Rates and hours will vary by branches. The YMCA is currently working with the Department of Education to expand programming to school site facilities. For more information go to:

<http://sendemail.biggerbird.com/t/r/1/dkkytd/uhdivjt/u> or call 531-YMCA

Traffic Merge

Effective immediately, 154th Logistics Readiness Squadron Vehicle Operations will merge with 154th Traffic Management Office. The new office name and symbol are: 154th Distribution Flight/LGRDD. The vehicle requests/support may be emailed to 154th Distribution Flight/LGRDD. Someone will reply to requests within 24 hours. Vehicle Fleet remains at bldg. 3424, pick-up/drop off will be coordinated through Staff Sgt. Dustin Williams. Military Licensing will be conducted during UTAs at bldg. 3424. Taskings that require immediate attention please call Master Sgt. Sheena Tayuan/Staff Sgt. Dustin Williams at 448-7036/7667.

Asking for help is a sign of strength

by Maj. Daniel Leatherman, Chaplain



A critical incident is any incident or prolonged exposure to an environment that has the potential to bring about strong emotional or physical reactions that can interfere with a person's ability to function normally.

Chills, nausea, nightmares, feelings of guilt or anger, depression, and questioning ones faith are all NORMAL REACTIONS. Like aftershocks from an earthquake, these are stress reactions that can occur immediately after the traumatic event or even hours or days later, and in some cases, weeks or months.

As members of the National Guard, we are called upon to assist in recovery and relief efforts when disaster strikes. We've done it here locally, and many have raised their hands when volunteers are needed elsewhere such as in the tsunami region of Samoa.

Without a doubt, these are traumatic events not just for the victims, but also for aid workers. We are there to help (and we do), but there is often so much devastation it's overwhelming, and the stress of the environment builds.

Not everyone who has experienced trauma will develop post-traumatic stress disorder, a genuine psychological condition not limited to combat veterans. All who have been exposed to traumatic events are at risk. The key is help and intervention.

Seeking help in such instances is not a weakness-but a sign of strength that will allow you to be a stronger and better person for your family, friends, and those you care about.

There is a spiritual connection to all of this in that traumatic events such as natural disasters the question of why did this have to happen, or why did God allow this to happen come about. These

are deep questions and can shake us to our core. Perhaps the question of why is too big for any one person to answer.

Maybe, there is no answer, only silence. Whatever the event, when a traumatic incident strikes, asking the religious and spiritual questions is a natural part of the healing process.

Prayer, devotions, religious practice, and so on, helps to put what we have experienced in context. Faith alone, won't answer all our questions or solve all our problems.

Sometimes, I don't think we can pray our way out. Sometimes professional mental health services are critical. But, faith and prayer are an integral part of the equation. They help to bring meaning to what we do and to our lives; they help inform us as to what is truly important.

The Chaplains, Family Readiness, and Mental Health are just three resources at your disposal for assistance when a crisis hits-whether it's in the line of duty or in our personal lives.

We work together and independently so that the ripples from a traumatic or critical incident can be dealt with and the individual can continue to move forward.



WORSHIP SERVICES

Catholic Services:

5:00 p.m., Saturdays, Nelles Chapel
10:30 a.m., Sundays, Chapel Center

Jewish Services:

7:30 p.m., Fridays, Pearl Harbor Aloha Chapel on Makalapa Road.

Buddhist, Muslim or other faith groups:

call either the Wing Chaplain's office at 448-7275 on drill weekends or during other times the Chapel Center at 449-1754.

Integrating robotics into YCA curriculum

Brig. Gen. Stanley Osserman, AAG

So what else has Brig Gen Osserman been doing up at Ft Ruger the last 11 months? One exciting thing has been helping the Office of the Secretary of Defense integrate a robotics curriculum into the Hawaii Youth Challenge Academy as a way of showing a practical reason (and making it fun) to study science, math, engineering and technology subjects.

The Hawaii YCA program is a “pilot” program, meaning that we will test the concept, refine the program, and then, export it to other National Guard YCA programs.

In all honesty, I can’t take much credit for the hard work. I was just responsible for getting the right people together and helping facilitate the relationships, then the excitement took over and things started moving out at afterburner speed. We started with a “club” of 20 cadets that met several times a week after regular classes.

They were coached by several volunteer engineers and OSD robotics team members. Ten “VEX” robotic kits were provided by OSD, driven from the factory to our C-17 by the Texas Army National Guard and delivered by the 204th Airlift Squadron as “space available” cargo on an already scheduled mission from San Antonio, Texas. From that point on, it was just magic and excitement! The cadets were fired up.

The mentors were having as much fun as the students, and

it was pretty evident that we had a winner and were on a roll.

The OSD team and a team from Carnegie-Mellon worked with the staff of YCA to develop a curriculum that could be incorporated into the established YCA program, then it was time to show off.

The cadets participated in a local competition to demonstrate what their machines could do.

The two winning robots and their creators were flown to Maui to demonstrate their work at the Hawaii Air National Guard Commander’s Conference, to show off in front of our commanders, as well as PACAF and National Guard Bureau leadership.

Next, the OSD folks will give a robotics curriculum presentation at the National Youth Challenge conference, and I predict that robotics will become a staple of the YCA curriculum nation-wide in another

year or so.

The Hawaii Youth Challenge Academy is one of the best in the nation, and the payback to our community is priceless.

In my career the YCA has graduated over 2,000 cadets here in Hawaii, and well over 90 percent of those young people turn into the success stories that most people would simply call a miracle.

As a young lieutenant, I had the opportunity to “mentor” two young cadets, and I found it a very rewarding experience. I still attend every YCA graduation that I can. The staff members of YCA are Hawaiian heroes, plain and simple.

Making a positive impact and being part of turning around a young person’s life is something that you never forget. I encourage any of you who want to be

part of something very special to call Mr. Rick Campbell and be a part of the YCA experience as a mentor or robotics coach.

Hawaii’s program has been so successful, that Maj. Gen. Lee is working to get a second campus started in Hilo. He’s been told that the funding for this new campus has strong support from all key players, but there is still a lot of work ahead in that effort.

Maj. Gen. Lee knows that Hawaii leads the way AGAIN, and our YCA program is making Hawaii’s future better one cadet at a time. Aloha.



Upon graduating from “charm” school

Brig. Gen. Stanley Osserman, AAG

Aloha! A big mystery most of my career was, “If generals go to “charm school,” why is it that they don’t seem really charming when they get back home?” I know several folks out there are wondering the same thing, so, having just graduated from that prestigious program, I’ll share some highlights and some great thoughts from the folks who talked with us.

First of all the class is 11 days long with no time off (we even had evening events most nights) and is mandatory for active duty general officers (also known as “flag officers”), and Senior Executive Service employees of the USAF. Guard and Reserve generals are highly encouraged to attend. Spouses are also invited to attend for the first five days and they sit in on many of the same briefings and events as the member, but about 30 percent of their time is dedicated to Family Readiness, Wounded Warrior, Survivor Assistance, Chaplain services, and other family focused topics offered to help the leader/spouse team in handling family issues, particularly, crisis and loss of life situations.

The list of presenters reads like a “Who’s Who” of the U.S. military. Virtually every Service Chief talked to us. Commanders of PACAF, USAFE, TRANSCOM, ACC, AMC, SPACECOM, and even the new Global Strike Command gave us an hour of their time. We had dinner at the Chief of Staff of the Air Force residence and about 200 of us rowdy Air Force generals, Senior Executive Service civilians and spouses sang the Air Force Song to the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as he entertained dinner guests inside his historic residence (yes even generals have some fun at school). The last five days were spent at Lackland Air Force Base, in San Antonio, TX, where we visited the training wing, attended chapel services with the trainees and families of the recently graduated class, visited the new “BEAST” field training area, which is like four “Base X” compounds designed to put the trainees in an Operational Readiness Inspection type environment to apply what they have learned in their first few weeks. We also got to eat lunch with a trainee (one-on-one) and watch four trainees demonstrate disassembly/reassembly of an M-16 in less than 2 minutes. The week ended with us visiting Brooks Army Medical Center and the “Center for the Intrepid.” At Brooks we spent over an hour with four Wounded Warriors who talked about how they were injured and about their treatment, rehabilitation and plans for the future. The “Center for the Intrepid” is a privately constructed (built by the Fischer House folks) and Army/VA operated state of the art rehabilitation center for America’s wounded veterans. Both of these tours were humbling and somber experiences, but also very encouraging to see that there is great help available for America’s best.

Most of our briefings actually had little to do with making us all “charming” and more to do with mak-

ing us better leaders and bringing us up to speed on the current state of affairs in our Air Force, the other Armed Services, and the DoD, and that’s too much to condense into this space, but I would like to share some selected quotes that I found particularly worth-while or enlightening; “The two leading career ending events for most senior leaders are failure to take care of your health and failure to keep your relationships professional.” I always hear about the second one, but I’ve never thought much about that “#1 cause”....health, but as I look at what has impacted many of our HIANG senior officers and NCOs, it is true that health issues have caused a large share of the ‘early’ retirements in the HIANG, so we all can learn from this one. Let’s visit the doctor, let’s live healthy lifestyles and let’s make it a family affair, so we keep our families healthy too. Another quote I thought was worth noting, “Your ability to empty your ‘out-box’ will not determine your success.” In other words, it’s not just the quantity of the work you do in your job, it’s the quality you need to think about. It also means that you need to prioritize (not everything is urgent), and you need to balance your time (particularly as a senior leader) with the time you spend in your office and the time you spend with your people. The last quote I’ll leave you with, but certainly not the last of the great thoughts shared by our leaders was, “Don’t lead by e-mail.” This one takes very little imagination to grasp, and we ALL are guilty of, at one time or another, using e-mail as the weapon of choice to give guidance, pass a tasker, express an opinion, criticize something (the list goes on and on). One of the most important characteristics of a leader is the ability to interact with people effectively, and that takes two way communication, face-to-face discussion, dialog not encumbered by fear, intimidation or misunderstanding. E-mail is often not the best tool for the leader.

So “Charm School” really only had one block of actual etiquette training, which was an evening event, and an intense experience for a ‘fish and poi boy.’ It was called “Dine Like a Diplomat” and we all paid \$40 to get the full assault of 20 pieces of silver ware, five glasses and cups, eating “Continental Style,” and even how to propose a formal toast. So what I’ll share with you to help make you all charming is “B-M-W,” that is bread-meal-water. When you’re sitting there and wondering if the water glass in front of you is yours or your neighbor’s, just remember B-M-W. Your Bread dish is on your left 10 o’clock, your Meal is in front of you at the center, and your Water glass (coffee cup/wine glasses etc) are all at your right two o’clock position. TA-DA, Now you are SOMEBODY, and you are just as charming as me!



Last HIANG F-15A aircraft retires

by Master Sgt. Fred Higa, 154 LSF

For the 154th Wing, the departure of the last two F-15A model aircraft marked the end of an era. At 8 a.m. Sept. 22, over 100 current and former Wing members stood at the edge of the flight line to say Aloha to aircraft 76-032 piloted by Maj. Kristoff Sills and aircraft 77-074 piloted by Lt.

Col. Mark Ladtkow as they taxied out of their respective F-15 slots to embark on the long flight to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, the final resting place for the last two "A" model F-15's in the 154th Wing's inventory.

The 154th Wing has been flying the F-15A and F-15B models since 1986, retired eight "A" and one "B" model in 2007, which were replaced by F-15C aircraft from Kadena AB, Japan. Due to the upcoming F-22 conversion, all "A" model aircraft had to be retired to Davis-Monthan AFB.

The F-15 "A" and "B" models reached a major milestone July 31, when Capt. Andy Fessenden, flying in aircraft 77-070, attained 80,000 accident-free flying hours for the Wing. This is a tremendous milestone for the Wing, becoming one of the few flying units to attain 80,000 flying in one type of aircraft series. The Wing's "A" models flew 72,444.1 hours and the "B" models flew 7558.4 hours respectively for a total of 80,002.5 hours.

The Boeing Company will honor the Wing with a plaque recognizing

this milestone. This is a tribute to all Wing members, past and present, who work tirelessly to ensure we provide safe aircraft for our aircrew to fly.

This brings us back to the departure of aircraft "6032" and "7074." In an effort to recognize the retirement of our legacy aircraft as well

everyone on how far the unit has come since 1986. Chief Master Sgt. Doug Awana read a very touching speech written by retired 154th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron Lt. Col. Norman Ault who couldn't attend the event.

After saying goodbye to the departing aircraft, everyone was invited

to Slot's one and two to have a close up view of two F-22 aircraft parked on our F-15 ramp. This was a surprise to the retirees as they were able to get up close and personal with the future of the Wing. The attendees then had pictures taken beside an F-15C parked adjacent to the hangar, then returned to the Dining Facility for additional speeches and breakfast.

The two pilots in the departing aircraft were in for a surprise when they land at Davis-Monthan AFB as retirees Col. Gary Peters, who lives and works in Yuma, Arizona, greeted both pilots with leis when they landed at the base.

This event was a fitting tribute to honor and mark the end of the F-15A and F-15B aircraft era for the Wing.

It was great to have our retired members join us in sending off our legacy aircraft. They could take great pride in knowing they started the unit on this "Tradition of Excellence" movement and current unit members are carrying on that proud tradition.



photo by Master Sgt. Kristen Stanley

Crew chiefs remove chalks from the last F-15A fighter preparing for final take-off from Hickam Air Force Base. Maj. Kristoff Sills and Lt. Col. Mark Ladtkow had the honor of flying the HIANGs last two F-15As to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona where they will be retired.

as honor those maintainers and operators who repaired and flew the aircraft, the 154th Maintenance Group decided to invite our retirees to say one last goodbye to these two departing aircraft.

Over 30 retired maintainers and pilots arrived early Tuesday morning to take part in the departure ceremonies hosted by Wing Commander Col. Joseph Kim who provided the welcome speech.

Retired Maj. Gen. Edward "Rick" Richardson, retired Col. Clint Churchill, and Lt. Col. Jeff Namihira, 199th Commander, addressed the crowd, reminding everyone about how we started the F-15 conversion and congratulating

Don't be an end of the year UTA "reject"

by 154 WG/FM

A member is authorized payment for only 48 periods of Inactive Duty per fiscal year (Sep-Oct). Members are required to perform Inactive duty every month on the scheduled drill dates per the Letter of Instruction-FY UTA Schedule. Each UTA weekend a member will be paid for four periods of inactive duty (two periods per day).

FM has been inundated with inquiries regarding member's not being paid for September's UTA. The reason for this problem is that prior to September's UTA, the member had already performed more than 44 periods of inactive duty. Example: Member has been paid for 46 periods prior to September drill, the roster will reject the person because it wants to pay four periods but member is only authorized two periods.

We have worked on the Reject listing this drill weekend, and for those members that are authorized, payment will be paid on the Leave and Earnings Statement dated Oct. 13, 2009.

Each member is responsible for his/her own pay records. Please remember to print out your LES(s) on a regular basis and keep copies of ALL pay documents. A helpful tool is the "Personal Training ledger," this will help you keep track of your military duties performed. It is located on our website under: FINANCE, Military pay, Personal Training Pay Ledger.

Also, please read the REMARKS area of your LESs, there is a lot of helpful information such as the dates you are being paid for and "Total Performance FY information," which states the amount of Inactive, AFTP, PT, and Active Duty performed for the Fiscal Year.

VA: Emergency education payments available

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced further outreach to Veteran-students eligible for a special emergency payment of their education benefits.

Veterans can now apply online. Veteran-students can also request courtesy transportation to VA regional benefits offices.

"Our Veterans went the extra mile for their country," Shinseki said. "One of our top priorities in transforming VA is to be, first and foremost, the advocate for Veterans."

Last week Shinseki announced that on Friday, Oct. 2, VA's 57 regional benefits offices would begin providing on-the-spot emergency payments up to \$3,000 to students who have applied for their education benefits but who have not yet received a government payment.

Citing the distance many Veterans would have to travel to apply in person at a VA benefits office, Shinseki announced Veterans can also apply online at www.va.gov.

The online application will guide Veterans through the process to supply needed information. Shinseki noted that online applicants will

receive their emergency payments through the mail after processing.

"VA is adapting to meet the financial needs of our Veteran-students who are on campus," Shinseki said. "They should be focusing on their studies, not worrying about financial difficulties."

Students without their own transportation can also request free van service, provided by volunteers, to carry them to the nearest benefits office. To obtain this service, Veterans have to call their nearest VA medical center and ask for the "Volunteer Transportation Coordinator." Transportation will be on a first-come, first-served, space-available basis.

Veterans can find a map and list of medical centers at http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/division_flsf.asp?dnum=1.

Whether traveling by personal vehicle or volunteer van, VA officials suggest students check their mail boxes and bank accounts before leaving home, since some Veterans will find their checks have already arrived.

VA would like to recognize the volunteers and Veterans Service Organizations for partnering with the



Department to ensure that Veterans' needs are met.

The emergency checks are an advance on each student's education benefits, and the amount will be deducted from future benefits payments. Checks will be written at the regional offices for Veterans who bring a photo ID and evidence of their enrollment.

VA officials emphasize that \$3,000 is the maximum payment, with many Veterans receiving smaller payments based upon their likely monthly education benefits.

A map and list of the participating VA regional benefits offices is available on the Internet at http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/division_flsf.asp?dnum=1.

The most updated information regarding VA issuing emergency checks will be available at VA's web site www.va.gov starting Oct. 1.

