

Reservists prepare for inspection

By Staff Sgt. Grant Saylor
 Wing Public Affairs

Reserve and active-duty Airmen here joined forces in a combat airlift mobility exercise Feb. 9-13, in preparation for an upcoming operational readiness inspection. This is the first of three exercises to prepare the 446th and 62nd Airlift Wings for the ORI in October.

During the course of the MOBEX, Airmen responded to a variety of challenges, including simulated enemy attacks, in an effort to evaluate their ability to survive and operate in a combat environment.

"I think one of the biggest challenges of this MOBEX is knowing your job, doing it well, and maintaining a positive attitude even when things start to go wrong," said Lt. Col. Tony Angelo, the MOBEX Installa-



Photo by Staff Sgt. Grant Saylor
Senior Airman Nicholas Karpenko, 62nd Civil Engineer Squadron, lays a detonation cord during a simulated unexploded ordnance exercise at the February mobility exercise involving 446th and 62nd Airlift Wing Airmen. Both wings are preparing for an operational readiness inspection in October.

tion Control Center operations chief.

Colonel Angelo, a pilot with

the 728th Airlift Squadron, said he thinks 446th AW Reservists are up to the challenge.

"From my perspective on the ICC staff, we've exceeded our initial goals," he said. "I think our Reservists are well on track to succeed at the ORI in October."

Phase 2 for the MOBEX participants will consist of a week-long flyaway exercise to Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center in Michigan. The Phase 3 flyaway in September will be a final tune-up before the ORI.

"You just don't get this kind of experience from a textbook," said Senior Airman Juliana Swain, a customer service advisor with the 446th Mission Support Squadron.

Like a lot of participants, this was Airman Swain's first experience with a MOBEX, and she was impressed by the

See MOBILITY, Page 3

Time to break out the dress shoes

Know proper style for banquet

By Senior Master Sgt. Theron Smith
 446th Aeromedical Staging Squadron

It's that time again to celebrate the achievements of our fellow Airmen at the 446th Annual Wing Awards Banquet. The banquet will be April 4. The theme of this year's gala is "I am an American Airman."

The uniforms for the event are mess dress, with the semi-formal option for enlisted Airmen. Since Airmen of the wing don't all wear these uniforms often, here are a few highlights on how to properly wear them.

Mess Dress Uniform

No name tags or headgear are worn with this uniform. Saluting is not required when outdoors. Men wear the formal long white shirt with the blue satin bow tie. Women wear the blue satin V-tie tab with the white formal long sleeve blouse.

Wear matching cuff links and studs. Either the "Wing and Star" design with satin finish with the Air Force symbol or plain silver highly-polished cuff links. Cuff links are optional for women. The cummerbund is to be worn with the pleats up for both men and women.

Semi-Formal Dress Uniform

For both enlisted men and women, the semi-formal uniform is essentially the service dress uniform with a few minor changes. The silver metallic name tag and headgear are not worn. Saluting is not required when outdoors. Men wear a long sleeve white shirt with the blue herringbone tie and women wear a long sleeve white blouse with blue satin V-tie tab. For women, the skirt and heels make up the rest of the semi-formal uniform; slacks are not authorized nor are flat shoes.

Let's all truly dressing for success.

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March 10 is the deadline for articles in the April issue of **The 446th Associate Press**.

All articles and photographs must be turned in to the 446th Airlift Wing Public Affairs office, Bldg. 1214, Room 124 by 4 p.m.

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Vigilance in everything you do keeps us safe, on target

By Col. William Flanigan

Wing commander

How many times have we heard the terms complacency and fatigue or ORM or checklist discipline? They aren't just terms because ultimately, if any of these factors continue unmonitored, loss of life or injury can be the result.

Every day, ask yourself, have you performed at the best of your abilities and has serious injury been avoided. Think about it. If you tend to think "I can't get this all done," rather than what can be done to make work safe and efficient, you should stop and regroup. Review work and communication processes. Deliberately make what you do more safe and efficient. Every member of the 446th Airlift Wing matters and has an effect on our work environment and the way we do business on duty and off.

It is no surprise that the 446th AW operations pace has been relentless and will most likely continue. With this comes added stress to all members of the wing, their families and civilian employers. Without a healthy workforce,

we put our lives and others in jeopardy.

Factors impacting our lives such as the economy, jobs, burning the candle at both ends, and lack of down time are things we all face. We need to understand that each person has different stress breaking points and be on the lookout for personality changes, depression, excessive drinking and changes in normal habits.

For yourself and those around you there are activities which will combat the effects of stress and fatigue. Through regular fitness activities and healthy diet habits, everyone's mental and physical health can benefit. Both strengthen our ability to handle the effects of long-term stress. I recommend you evaluate what you can do to pro actively improve your physical and mental health to keep you ready and able to contribute to the success of the mission here.

And if you find that you or one of your coworkers, cannot cope with the stress or other issues you face, there is help and I encourage you to use it. There are a range of programs through our chaplain's office, and Airman and Family Readiness



Col. William Flanigan

office that are designed to assist you. It is sometimes not easy to admit to the need for help. Don't let that stop you from asking for yourself or for others who need it. There are some helping resources listed in the box below.

You have my sincerest gratitude for your dedication to this wing and this mission. Make no mistake that the contributions you make are vital to the global airlift mission of the Air Force. We can only continue to make those contributions, without injury or incident, if you, and your attitude, are healthy and robust.

At A Glance

Further resources can be found below:

446th Airlift Wing Chaplain: Bldg. 746, Room 103, 253-982-8187 (Primary UTA only)
446th Airlift Wing Family & Airman Readiness, Bldg. 1207, 253-982-5330
Financial Assistance through Care & Share, 253-982-5330
Military One Source: <http://www.militaryonesource.com>, 1-800-342-9647
National Military Family Association : <http://www.nmfa.org>

Get free stuff: Rewards add to recruiting program, generate incentive

By Airman First Class Patrick Cabellon
Wing Public Affairs

Reservists can get free awards just for speaking to friends, family members, and co-workers about the Air Force Reserve's many opportunities.

Reservist who submit people as referrals are eligible for awards through the Get One Now recruiting program.

"The Get One Now program offers awards ranging from iPods, satellite radios, and laptops to Reservists who get accessions," said Tech. Sgt. Mark Caldwell, in-service recruiter at Fairchild AFB, Wash.

The Get One Now program offers many awards to choose from if a referral joins the Reserve. The program has four reward levels based on how many referrals end up joining.

"Not only do you get awards, another

incentive to start getting referrals is getting bullets on your Enlisted Performance Report for doing it," he said. "The Reservist with the most referrals in the command can get invited to the recruiting end of the year conference," said Sergeant Caldwell.

The Get One Now program helps the Reserve by giving Reservists the larger incentive to provide direct referrals. The upside for the Reserve is that who have already been partially screened by the Reservist who referred them.

"Any 'Joe Blow' can come in off the streets may have a background that does not allow them to join the Air Force Reserve," said Sergeant Caldwell. "A referral from a Reservist is more likely to qualify him to join the Air Force Reserve as well as be the caliber of person which we want, a quality lead source," he said.

The Get One Now program does have

some limitations. Reserve liaisons, Air Force Reserve Command Recruiters and their families are excluded from the program. There is no limit as to the amount of referrals a Reservist can submit. Referrals must be submitted to <http://Get1now.us>, called into 877-786-2372, or via an online "chat," or e-mail.

Referrals resulting in an enlistment within 24 months of entry into the program qualify for the accession awards.

All members of the Air Force Reserve are automatically signed up with a Get One Now account and are sent a membership card with their Get One Now login information.

If you don't know or have forgotten your login username or password, call 877-786-2372 or use the "Contact Us" area of the Web site if you need assistance accessing your account.

MOBILITY

Continued from Page 1



Photo by Staff Sgt. Grant Saylor

Participants in the February mobility exercise here decontaminate at a simulated decon station before entering their work place.

intensity and fast pace of the exercise.

"As a Reservist, when you get thrown into an active-duty deployment scenario, it's like, 'Oh yeah, that's where my training comes in,'" said Airman Swain. "So this was really an eye-opening experience from the Reservist standpoint."

Colonel Angelo said he is encouraged by the results of the first MOBEX, but knows there is still work to do before the first flyaway.

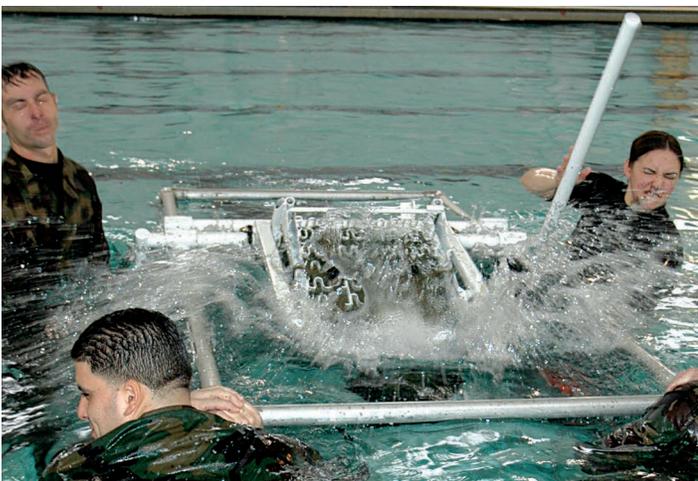
"We need to focus on personal readiness and ensure that, as individuals, we have the ability to survive and operate in a chemical weapons environment."

The ORI inspectors will grade Airmen on their career field mission essential task lists, ensuring that Reservists are ready to fly, fight, and win in the world of global combat airlift.

Cops get dunked: Swimming with helmets, vests proves a tough test



Photos by Airman First Class Patrick Cabellon
Staff Sgt. Freddie Garza, 446th Security Forces Squadron, dons his Kevlar helmet and interceptor vest in preparation for Humvee rollover training. As part of the rollover training, security forces Reservists got dunked into water, blindfolded and had to navigate out of one of the two simulated Humvee doors.



Training at a Fort Lewis pool simulates a Humvee rollover. Humvees are top-heavy and can easily be tipped into one of those canals in Iraq by a blast from an improvised explosive device.

By Airman First Class Patrick Cabellon
 Wing Public Affairs

Diving in a pool in BDUs in February isn't on a Reservist's normal list of things to do, but since doing it could help save their lives, 446th Security Forces Squadron Airmen dove right in.

The training, conducted at Fort Lewis on the February UTA, simulated what it would be like to be upside down in a vehicle. This training is so the security forces Reservists, who are scheduled to deploy to Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq, could safely learn how to escape.

"It's Humvee rollover training," said Capt. Ray Schierhoff, 446th SFS commander. "There are a lot of canals and waterways in around Kirkuk AB. Humvees are very top heavy; an improvised explosive device could possibly flip a Humvee over and into a canal full of water, leaving the occupants inside disoriented."

Because of the number of incidents involving flipped Humvees into water, getting practice and experience under controlled conditions is meant to prepare SFS members when it occurs.

The Fort Lewis simulator, the "Dunker," is a square cage with vehicle doors that flips the seat-belted occupant into the water.

As each cop was dunked in the water, they had to navigate out a door and emerge, victorious; all while being blindfolded. They wear the Kevlar helmets and interceptor vests they would be wearing while in a Humvee, said Tech. Sgt. Conee Schaaf, training manager for the 446th SFS.

"I was pretty nervous at first before we got in, I don't exactly have the best swimming skills,"

said Senior Airman Salome Hansen, a member of the 446th SFS. "When we got in the water and started doing the training, I felt better."

"You have to stay calm and keep your wits about you, and you'll do fine," said Captain Schierhoff. "If you panic, your mind just becomes a blur and you can't think about what to do next."

The mission of the 446th SFS in Kirkuk will be to patrol as well as provide compound security, said Tech. Sgt. Beth Riser, flight sergeant for the 446th SFS. "We are to staff observation posts for maintaining security outside the wire."

Being prepared for that duty includes being ready for the unexpected.

"I was fine until they put the blindfold on me and then I really had to work at keeping calm," said Senior Master Sgt. Michelle Helpenstell.

"This training could save our lives," said Airman First Class Tara Toreno and Senior Airman Salome Hansen.



The "Dunker" is a contraption used to simulate a the interior of a Humvee. It is comprised of metal poles connected in a rectangular shape. It is hollow and has doors which attach to the sides to further simulate doors of a Humvee.

Determination takes talent to Texas

Reservist competes in 2009 Air Force Worldwide Talent Contest for third time

By Patti Jeffrey

62nd Force Support Squadron

Tech. Sgt. Katie Badowski is on a mission. It's her determination — and her talent — that brought this Air Force Reservist back to Lackland AFB, Texas for the third time in January.

Jan. 16-18, she competed at the Air Force's 2009 Worldwide Talent Contest where she sang as a hopeful for a spot in Tops in Blue. Sergeant Badowski is assigned to the 446th Services Flight.

"Competing in this talent contest is nothing like American Idol," Sergeant Badowski said. "To succeed, you need to believe in the mission — as a team, being there for others, trying to bring them a piece of home. It's not about you; it's about everyone on your team and who you're really there for. It's about giving back to the community. The experience changes your focus."

The experience also improves her skills each time she is selected to go. This year, after she received a permissive TDY from her deployed assignment at Dover AFB, Del., a surprise awaited.

"You always go through an intensive interview where they ask all the questions," Sergeant Badowski said. "I was surprised to find that this time around, they just asked me to tell them all about myself. So I was talking the whole time. Of course, they already knew me from previous tryouts, so they had all that paperwork."

It's not uncommon to see returning hopefuls, according to the Tops In Blue



Courtesy photo

Tech. Sgt. Katie Badowski Worldwide Talent Contest in hopes of making the cast of Tops In Blue.

Web site, which states that the event brings them back year after year, each time improving their skills from the competition process.

That's where Sergeant Badowski's determination sets in. She didn't make the cast for the 2009 Tops in Blue, but that didn't dampen her spirit. She says that even if you don't win a Roger or Wilco award (first and second place), it doesn't mean they're not interested in you.

"Everyone's application is entered into a talent pool," she said. "Not everyone can win the top two spots — there are too many competitors for that. Some give up and don't try to come back. But every time I go down to Texas, I learn more about what I need to do to improve — it's a huge learning opportunity. I plan to compete again next year. They'll have to take me some time!"

Sergeant Badowski is confident in the preparation process. She says that every competitor, new and returning, is placed in a group when they arrive. A team of coordinators is assigned to each group.

"Everyone meets the band, who will play for each competitor while they're on stage," she said. "And they won't let anyone get on stage without being prepared."

What types of skills do you need in order to be considered for performing at the Worldwide Talent Contest?

Sergeant Badowski advises newcomers to "look at what you're thinking of

doing for competition, and then translate it into performing in front of thousands of people."

Here are her other tips, gleaned from three rounds of competition:

- Round out your experience to improve in all areas of performing. Take dance classes, fitness classes, coordination exercises, instrumental and voice coaching.

- Get out there and get used to performing. Volunteer for community playhouses, church choirs, town choruses — as much as you can do on stage.

- The more experiences you have of different kinds, the better it looks on your application and your tryout video.

- Once you submit your application package, it's a waiting game. However, be prepared to move fast once you're called. Plan ahead. Don't make plans you can't change. Get your finances in order. Be flexible with your class schedule if you're in school. Have both Plan A and Plan B in place.

- If you aren't selected this time around, don't sit around. Strive to continually improve and apply again next year.

Her last piece of advice is to focus on what's important. She says that the focus isn't on being a star, but rather about being ambassadors of goodwill to the community.

"I notice they (the team coordinators) always have a good military bearing; they're also watching your behavior not only when you perform, but the entire time you're there," she said. "After the contest is over, every team goes into the community to perform. My team performed at the BX; another team visited the hospital."

To learn more about the Worldwide Talent Contest and Tops in Blue, visit their new Web site at www.topsinblue.com. Reserve and Guard Airmen selected for the cast are put on active duty for the touring season, so don't be misled by the Web site's declaration that Tops In Blue is an all active-duty U.S. Air Force special unit.

The new site gives you an easy way to fill out and submit your talent application, upload your audition video and receive confirmation that your application is in the system.

I plan to compete again next year. They'll have to take me some time!"

- Katie Badowski

446AW



Days to remember

March 30, 1953

A Convair XC-99 established a new, world load-lifting record of 104,000 pounds.

Promotions

Senior Master Sergeant

John D'Aprile, 446th AMXS
Dennis Harvey, 446th CES

Master Sergeant

Brian Barbee, 446th MXS
Christopher Hamel, 446th ASTS
Nathan Wright, 446th CES

Technical Sergeant

Bernie Bernante, 446th AES
William Hicks, 446th MXS
Corey Peters, 97th AS

Staff Sergeant

Kevin Beers, 446th MXS
Scott Bright, 446th SFS
Brendan Caldwell, 86th APS
Sangil Choe, 86th APS
Richard Casper, 446th AMXS
Russell Fullingim, 446th ASTS
Heather Rottweiler, 86th APS
Justin Shattuck, 446th CES
Johnathon Valentine, 446th AMXS
Gabriel Velezmoya, 313th AS

Senior Airman

Aileen, Escalicas, 446th MSS

Kyle Knox, 446th AES
Ryan Perry, 728th AS
Cameron Shoerberger, 446th AMXS

Newcomers

Captain

Tyler Watson, 446th AMDS

Master Sergeant

Travis Hargitt, 446th CES

Technical Sergeant

Jennifer Leveck, 446th AES

Staff Sergeant

Richard Fakkema, 446th CES
Michael Harmon, 446th AMXS
Michelle Morante, 86th APS
Christal O'Malley, 313th AS
Christopher Volkert, 446th MXS

Senior Airman

Michelle Balabagno, 97th AS
Angela Fallert, 446th AMXS
Selena Flanery, 446th MSS
Ryan Goehring, 446th ASTS
Terrence Gryc, 446th ASTS
Anthony Paige, 446th AMXS
Shannon Wasch, 446th CES

Airman First Class

Joshua Boyce, 446th SFS
Caleb Heder, 446th AES
Andrew Moser, 36th APS

Retirements

Captain

Eric Ottenbacher, 446th ASTS

Senior Master Sergeant

Franklin Barnes, 446th CES
Virginia Jordan, 36th APS

Master Sergeant

Marc Kauppinen, 446th ASTS
Michael Hoover, 446th CES
Rita Herrington, 446th AES

Technical Sergeant

Gordon Elliott, 446th CES
Robert Hanna, 446th AMXS
Brandon Le, 446th AMXS
Michael Bray, 446th MSS
Malia Clark, 36th APS

Staff Sergeant

Laurence Broncheau, 86th APS
Gretchen Woodhouse, 446th ASTS

Get your news the green way

By Airman First Class Patrick Cabellon
Wing Public Affairs

The 446th Associate Press is "going green!" In an era fraught with cell phones smaller than your hand, gigabytes, and wireless Internet, the 446th Associate Press is doing away with a paper form. The newspaper has slowly begun the process of going electronic.

Going electronic has many benefits, aside from the cost savings. Receiving news updates is just a click away. And not just for Reservists. Anyone can access this public Web site from any computer by going to www.446aw.afrc.af.mil. From there, you're only a click away from subscribing to the 446th Airlift Wing Public Affairs office's list service. Double-click on the scroll located to the right of the feature story, enter your e-mail address and simply hit "send." It's that easy!

Once you have subscribed to the Web site, you will receive a weekly e-mail with links alerting you to fresh news, photos, deployments, activities, and much more.

Instead of waiting for stories and information about the wing to be published once a month,



Get your news faster by becoming an E-partner at www.446aw.afrc.af.mil. This site is accessible from any computer - work, home, or anywhere you surf the Web.

articles will be posted weekly.

Subscribing to the Web site can be done from the comfort of your own home while you sip on a hot steaming cup of coffee. Best of all, the subscription is free of charge and open to everyone.

Just Briefly

What opportunities do women have today?

Do anything

They can do anything men can do now. They can go to war, go overseas and are in leadership positions.



◆ Senior Airman Jesse Master
728th Airlift Squadron

Command

More women are in command roles today than in my father's day. Women are not only filling these positions, they excel in them.



◆ Maj. John Olmeda
446th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron

Self-empowered

A sense of feeling self-empowered, where their destiny is triggered by their own desires and dreams.



◆ Tech. Sgt. Vince Bocci
446th Airlift Wing

Achieve

To achieve their goals because the opportunities are formalized through AFIs. Everyone now has the chance to succeed.



◆ Staff Sgt. Lyn Yin
446th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron

Bring your family to McChord Aug. 8 for Wing Family Day

All Reservists and their families are invited to attend the wing Family Day scheduled for Aug. 8.

This event celebrates the support our families give us. Family Day planning meetings are held every UTA Saturday at 11 a.m., in the wing conference room (Bldg. 1214).

Please call Tim Ely, wing executive officer, at 982-5527 if you want to help organize the event or need more information.

First of two Guard and Reserve Teen Summits set for July

The first of two Air Force Reserve/Air National Guard Teen Leadership Summits will be July 13-17, 2009.

These summits are for Air Guard and Air Force Reserve family members ages 15 to 18. Airfare and transportation while at the Summit, as well as camp fees, lodging and meals are covered by the Air Force. Parents cover getting their teen to and from the airport, baggage fees and spending money for snacks, souvenirs and meals during travel.

The first summit will be at Wahsega 4-H Center, Dahlonega, Ga. Activities include a high/low ropes course, rock climbing, white water rafting, environmental education and leadership classes.

The deadline is April 6. For application forms and criteria, check www.georgia-4h.org/AFRANGTeenSummit.

Budget office sets new steps for rejected travel vouchers

Effective immediately, the 446th Airlift Wing Financial Management office will collect all travel voucher rejects. The ejected vouchers will be distributed to the appropriate squadrons using the accordion folder in the financial management office.

Since the financial management office is tracking the vouchers, all corrected travel vouchers must be returned to the budget office.

It is hoped this new tracking system will reduce the processing time for vouchers.

Seven-digit dialing now the norm for making calls on base phones

The base telephone switch has upgraded its software. All on-base telephone users must now dial seven digits (382-XXXX or 982-XXXX) to complete a call or forward their phone to another number (*70 982-XXXX).

Any user attempting to dial a five digit number will receive a recorded message informing them that their call cannot be completed as dialed and to dial all seven digits.

Two selected as wing Officers of the Quarter for fourth quarter

The officer award winners for the fourth Quarter of 2008 are: Field Grade – Maj. Chris Cullen, 313th Airlift Squadron, and Company Grade – Capt. Eric Schneider, 728th Airlift Squadron.

Job openings around the wing include safety, equal opportunity

The wing safety office has a position open for a ground safety assistant (1S0X1). Traditional Reservists who are staff sergeants or above, with a high school diploma, a score of 55 or above in the General (ASVAB) category can apply. Please contact Lt. Col. Kevin Welin or Senior Master Sgt. Dave Ponce, 446th Airlift Wing Safety at 982-2050.

The 446th Airlift Wing Military Equal Opportunity office needs people who are interested in re-training into the EO career field. To apply, submit a letter of interest explaining why you would be an asset to the EO career field, two resumes and references (both military and civilian). This vacancy will close once a qualified candidate is selected. For more information, please contact Master Sgt. James Briggs at james.briggs1@mcchord.af.mil or check the 446th AW/MEO SharePoint page.

Join Elmo for April PBS special made for military children

Sesame Workshop will air a PBS special April 1 aimed at helping military families cope with changes.

Actor/singer Queen Latifah and singer John Mayer will join Elmo to present, "Coming Home: Military Families Cope with Change." The special carries a message for children whose parents suffered a physical or psychological wound in combat. See local television listings for times.

McChord now one of six testing centers for FAA written exams

The Voluntary Education Testing Center at McChord has been granted authorization by the Federal Aviation Administration to administer all FAA written examinations. It is one of six FAA testing centers throughout DoD to be authorized for this program.

Exams include Commercial Pilot; Recreational Pilot and Private Pilot; Instrument Rating, Aviation Mechanic General, Power plant, and Airframe; and Parachute Rigger; Flight and Ground Instructor; Flight Engineer; Aircraft Dispatcher; Airline Transport Pilot, and Sport Pilot.

Call The Education and Training Center at 982-5695 for more information and to set up an appointment.

NCO leaves legacy of travel vouchers

By Staff Sgt. Nick Przybyciel
Wing Public Affairs

When Master Sgt. Norm Skau passed away in 2007, he left a legacy formed over the 20 years he served as a loadmaster in the 446th Airlift Wing.

According to his coworkers at the 313th Airlift Squadron, Sergeant Skau was the type of guy who would do anything for anybody. A friend, a patriot, a loving husband – that’s how his friends and family remember him. However, the legacy doesn’t end there.

There was one idiosyncrasy of Sergeant Skau’s that is beginning to develop lore of its own. For five years before his passing, the well-traveled loadmaster didn’t file a single travel voucher.

“I really don’t know what he was thinking. Maybe he thought it was some kind of savings account,” said Tech. Sgt. Barry Peele, a loadmaster from the 313th AS. Sergeants Peele and Skau were friends for nearly 10 years.

Footing the bill out of his own pocket, Sergeant Skau traveled 30 separate times on official duty, often spending weeks away from station at a time. After he passed away, Sergeant Skau’s wife delivered to his squadron an enormous sack containing stashed-away travel receipts.

“After she brought the sack to me, we spent six or eight months working to put everything together,” said Sergeant Peele. More than a year after Sergeant Peele began the epic paperwork project, Sergeant

Skau’s travel vouchers were completed and about \$29,000 was paid to his family toward the end of 2008.

However, getting to this point was no easy task: It was a savage journey taken on by fierce financial warriors and committed friends who cut their way through numerous levels of bureaucracy to help out the family of a lost friend.

Starting from scratch, a separate voucher had to be completed and submitted for each trip, which proved to be a complicated process because Sergeant Skau didn’t save all his receipts.

While some trips were missing a receipt or two, other trips didn’t have any receipts at all.

To figure out all the places Sergeant Skau traveled over the last five years of his service, Sergeant Peele combed through a database of flight authorizations to find every mission Sergeant Skau flew on. He reconciled those records with the receipts.

For trips with no receipts, Airmen who flew with Sergeant Skau were located and their expenses dug-up from those trips. This gave the finance office a base amount to pay out for the receipt-less vouchers.

It’s not like he went TDY five times in a couple years. We’re talking about a loadmaster who traveled for five years!

Senior Master Sgt. Lou Desjardins

After arduously piecing everything together, Sergeant Peele delivered a massive binder full of vouchers and supporting documentation to the 446th AW Finance office.

“I’ve never seen anything like this. It’s not like he went TDY five times in a couple years. We’re talking about a loadmaster who traveled for five years!” said Senior Master Sgt. Louis Desjardins, 446th AW pay office NCOIC, who worked on the claim.

Sergeant Desjardins, who has earned the nickname in the 446th AW as the “financial wizard,” set about working the claims through a bureaucracy that is not exactly renowned for its simplicity.

Headquarters had to review the entire claim for authenticity. Each voucher had to be audited by the Defense Finance Accounting Service. Finally, research had to be accomplished to find funding, since Sergeant Skau’s travels spanned five different fiscal years.

Getting the claim through all these hoops was Sergeant Desjardins’s responsibility. However, it was one he didn’t mind in this unique case.

“It felt good to help get it all settled. There was a lot of bureaucracy, but everything worked out in the end,” he said.

When asked if he recommends Airmen save their travel vouchers as a good savings strategy, Sergeant Desjardins just shakes his head in a dejected manner. His only response was a muttered one-word answer: “No.”

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