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CONTACTUS

Tracey Steele

Editor
315-4472

tsteele@nwfweeklynews.com

Susan Fabozzi

News Assistant
315-4450

sfabozzi@nwfweeklynews.com

News

(850) 315-4450

Fax: (850) 863-7834

E-mail:

news@hurlburtwarrior.com

Advertising

863-1111 Ext. 1322

Mail

2 Eglin Parkway NE,
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548

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Grit & glitz

Hurlburt Airman Jenna Smeenk to be crowned Miss Rodeo Florida

By LAUREN SAGE REINLIE

Northwest Florida Daily News

On Saturday, 24-year-old Jenna Smeenk will trade in her military fatigues for a cowboy hat and crown.

At a stable in Santa Rosa Beach, the Hurlburt Field airman will be crowned Florida's rodeo queen, a title she's been working toward almost all her life on the rodeo pageant circuit.

The dream of becoming a rodeo queen is one the small-town South Dakota native has never let go, even after joining the Air National Guard, accepting a job at Hurlburt and traveling to Iraq and Afghanistan in intelligence operations with the Air Force.

The glitz and glamour of the pageant world and the grit and guts required for military service may seem incongruent, but they have worked well for Smeenk.

"I don't know any other rodeo queens who are in the military," she said earlier this week. "I'm the first from Florida to win the title, but it's great I can make them both tie into each other."

Smeenk grew up on a 10,000-acre cattle ranch in tiny Belle Fourche, S.D., near Rapid City. Her family always had horses.

"Growing up, my sister and I spent more time on our horses' backs than we did inside," she said week.

She and her sister Trisha, two years her senior, rode their horses bareback and without bridles through the wooded terrain until dark. They played cowboys and Indians, and put war paint on their horses.

"We would get into all kinds of stuff," she said. "My mother would always say, 'I can't believe you two are out doing that.'"

When Smeenk was about 5 years old, she attended a stock show in the Black Hills. Across the arena, she spotted a beautiful woman wearing a crown — her first rodeo queen.

She ran over to her.

The woman stooped down to pose for a picture with the young Smeenk and gave her an autograph. It was love at first sight.

"I thought, 'Man, I want to do that. I want to be that girl,'" Smeenk said

The rest, as she says, is history.

Shortly after, she and her sister started competing on the pageant circuit and per-



COURTESY PHOTO

Above, Jenn Smeenk competes as a high school student in 2007.

Below, Hurlburt Field Staff Sgt. Jenn Smeenk poses for a promotional photo.

forming well in both horsemanship and the beauty and public persona categories. (Her sister, also a rodeo queen, was crowned Miss Rodeo USA in 2012, a title Smeenk intends to pursue the next few years.)

One thing Smeenk had not imagined at that young age was that she would join the military. She made the decision in 2007 shortly before she graduated from high school.

"I needed to either go to college or find something else to do with my life," she said.

Her parents weren't in the military, but her sister had joined the South Dakota Air National Guard on the recommendation of a cousin in the Army.

She encouraged Smeenk to join. Not only would it be a good experience, but the military would help pay for her college education, something her family could not afford.

A few months after high school graduation, Smeenk signed a six-year contract.



SEE GLITZ PAGE 6

Three AFSOC Airmen receive Sijan award

By **RACHEL ARROYO**

Air Force Special Operations
Command Public Affairs

Three Air Force Special Operations Command Airmen at the tip of the spear received one of the Air Force's most prestigious awards, the 2012 Lance P. Sijan USAF leadership award.

The award recognizes Airmen who exemplify the highest forms of leadership not only at work but in the community and their personal lives.

This is the first time AFSOC Airmen have been selected in three of four categories.

Lt. Col. Nathan Green, commander of the 4th Special Operations Squadron, Hurlburt Field, Fla., is the recipient in the senior officer category.

Capt. Blake Luttrell, a special tactics officer assigned to the 21st Special Tactics Squadron, Pope Field, NC, is the recipient in the junior officer category.

Senior Master Sgt. Davide Keaton, a pararescuer assigned to the 720th Operations Support Squadron, Hurlburt Field, Fla., is the recipient in the senior enlisted category.

The award requires candidates demonstrate leadership through scope of responsibility, professional leadership, leadership image and community involvement.

All three Airmen have something in common when it comes to leadership - people are their priority.

Green commanded AFSOC's largest, manned flying squadron containing AC-130Us.

He also led the integration of seven Emirati

special operations forces airframes into coalition operations, according to the award citation.

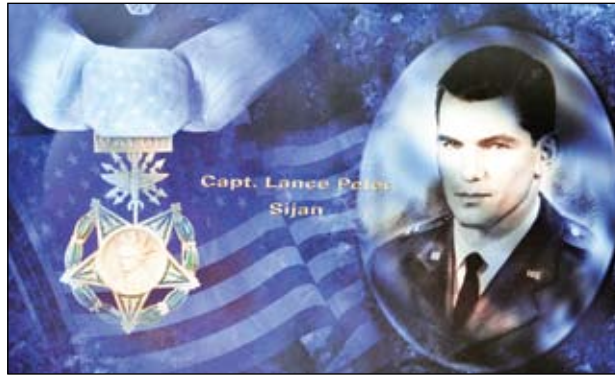
Green said he is extremely grateful to be honored with this award. He credits his leaders, mentors and family for shaping and supporting him throughout his Air Force career.

"I am speechless and very humbled to be able to lead our Airmen, especially in AFSOC," he said. "This award is a testament to them."

Communication is central to his leadership style. The Airmen have great capabilities to put the commander's intent in action so long as that intent is conveyed clearly, he said.

"There are many facets to leadership - sometimes you have to be a coach, sometimes a teacher," Green said. "You have to lead by example, and you have to trust your people."

Luttrell was awarded



USAF PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

The annual Capt. Lance P. Sijan Award recognizes the accomplishments of officers and enlisted members who have demonstrated the highest qualities of leadership in the performance of their duties and the conduct of their lives.

the Silver Star, the nation's third highest combat decoration, in January 2012 for gallantry in combat. He pulled his wounded team medic from a cave while under intense enemy fire and administered immediate medical treatment.

As the only Airman on an Army special operations forces team, he engaged in

combat operations spanning 150 days including 25 high-risk missions resulting in 29 enemy combatants eliminated, according to the award citation.

He also instructed Afghan Army and local police force members on close quarter battle, assisting the transition effort in Afghanistan.

Luttrell says he learns just as much if not more from his people than they do from him.

"A leader is someone who is willing to listen to input, but isn't afraid to make tough decisions," he said.

Keaton, who completed his own tenth Global War on Terror deployment in 2012, also guided 14 deployments across four theaters that resulted in 3,023 combat operations and 568 enemy combatants eliminated, according to the award citation.

While stateside, he also saved a 74-year-old woman from drowning in a submerged car when an automobile accident caused her to run off the road into a lake. An onlooker appeared with a hammer, Keaton said. He grabbed it, broke the window and removed her from the vehicle.

Like Green, Keaton, who characterizes himself as a really down-to-earth

guy, said he is also humbled to be selected for the Sijan award.

Keaton credits the special tactics career field for emphasizing the importance of getting the job done and encouraging Airmen to test their limitations, like Sijan was called to do.

To Keaton, leadership means taking care of your people.

"The most critical part of any project you work on are the people," he said.

The Lance P. Sijan USAF leadership award bears the namesake of the Medal of Honor recipient who was shot down in his F-4C Phantom fighter jet over Vietnam in 1967.

For 45 days, Sijan evaded enemy forces, and when he was captured and tortured, he refused to divulge any information beyond what is permissible by the Geneva Conventions until he died in the Hanoi Hilton, January 1968.

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Gunship guru saves over \$14 million

By SENIOR AIRMAN MELANIE HOLOCHOWOST

Air Force Special Operations Command Public Affairs

ideas and seeing them to fruition. His most recent action saved the Air Force more than \$14 million.

Bill Walter, Air Force Special Operation Command Strike Requirements Branch program analyst, has a long history of brainstorming money-saving

In November 2011 Walter received a tip from the U.S. Army Ammunition Program Office about possible 40 mm parts in Greece. The modified 40 mm "M2 A1" gun is used on the AC-130

gunship.

"The United States gave a bunch of 40 mm guns to allies during the late 1940s and early 1950s under the Marshall Plan," Walter said. "The Greek Army ended up retiring the weapon in 2005, so parts were just sitting in a warehouse without any purpose."

Walter inquired about the 40 mm parts, and with the help of U.S. Army Lt. Col. Pete Huie, Greek liaison officer, Walter reclaimed the equipment.

"Huie sent me photos of the barrels, which were 1950s vintage," Walter said. "Interestingly, many of them appeared to be in new condition and in the original packaging."

Since AFSOC is the sole remaining user of the 40 mm modified "M2 A1" gun

in the United States and among very few users in the world, Walter traveled to Greece to inspect and mark parts for shipment in November 2011.

"The fact that these parts existed was brought to us. We analyzed it and realized that we have the potential to gain on this. The risk was very low," Walter said. They picked me to go because I've been working with that gun since 1978, so I knew exactly what to look for."

Once he arrived in Greece, Walter began putting his experience with the 40 mm gun to use.

"I spent two days combing through several arsenals searching for 40 mm parts," he said. "Once all parts were identified and marked, they were taken to the Port of Athens to await shipment."

The group's efforts were worthwhile. The group reclaimed 139 barrels, 5



COURTESY PHOTO

Dimitrios Arkoumanis (from left), a Greek liaison officer counterpart, a Greek soldier and Bill Walter, Air Force Special Operations Command Strike Requirements Branch program analyst, identify a reclaimed 40 mm barrel with a spot of yellow spray paint near Athens, Greece, Nov. 30, 2011.

SEE GUNSHIP PAGE 6

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Utility relocation begins in advance of overpass at gate

By **LAUREN SAGE
REINLIE**

Northwest Florida Daily News

Crews began relocating utilities Monday, Jan. 14, to prepare for construction of the new overpass on U.S. Highway 98 at the entrance to Hurlburt Field.

In December, the state Department of Transportation awarded a \$13.9 million contract for the project intended to relieve traffic congestion on U.S. 98 and provide better access to the Hurlburt gate.

Two new two-lane bridges will be built on U.S. 98 over Cody Avenue. Construction should begin this summer.

Col. Jim Slife, commander of the 1st Special Operations Wing said traffic congestion at the intersec-

tion has been a source of frustration for Hurlburt and surrounding communities for years.

"I see this as a tremendous opportunity for both those of us who commute to Hurlburt Field and those who drive past the installation," he said in an email.

The overpass should extend about 3,750 feet west of the intersection and 2,500 feet east, according to the DOT.

In addition to the overpass, the project will also include improvements to utilities, drainage, structure, traffic signals, traffic management systems, lighting, signs and pavement markings.

Temporary lane closures will occur during utility relocation, said Tanya Branton, a spokesperson for the DOT. Officials will provide



SPECIAL TO THE DAILY NEWS

This rendering shows the overpass planned for U.S. Highway 98 at Hurlburt Field's main gate on Cody Avenue.

advance notice.

The relocation should be complete by the time construction begins this sum-

mer, she said.

The contract for design and construction of the overpass was awarded to Supe-

rior Construction Company, LLC, and Michael Baker Corporation in December.

It came in under budget.

Last spring DOT officials stated they had set aside \$21.2 million for the project.

The \$7.3 million in cost savings was passed on to other projects in the DOT district, Branton said.

Officials said traffic will likely get a little worse before it gets better, but they are working to provide alternatives during construction.

Dan Wilcoxon, chief of military construction at Hurlburt Field, said they are working closely with DOT and Okaloosa County to coordinate potential secondary gate access points during construction.

The options being considered would go into effect around July.

The entire project is expected to be complete in the winter of 2014, Branton said.



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GLITZ FROM PAGE 2

Basic training was an eye-opener, unlike anything she had imagined, she said.

"I think everybody in basic goes through this feeling of 'what did I get myself into?', but you have already made a commitment to it," she said.

She made the best of it, and when she got out she felt an enormous sense of accomplishment and closeness with the

other members of her flight.

She's had a great experience in the military since then.

"I really couldn't imagine my life any other way," Smeenk said.

Now a staff sergeant, she joined up with the 745th Special Operations Squadron at Hurlburt to provide intelligence information and mission support to pilots. She has volunteered for two

deployments.

On Saturday, Smeenk's sister, the rest of her family and her entire squadron will see her crowned Miss Rodeo Florida at Gulfside Stables in Santa Rosa Beach.

The event is open to the public.

Smeenk said she chose the stables for her coronation because the staff there helped her greatly while she was training for the pageant. She

also wanted to show her friends and fellow airmen who aren't familiar with the rodeo world what it's all about.

Horses will be available for trail rides after the ceremony.

After she gets her crown, Smeenk's duties as queen will begin.

"I'll basically hit the ground running," she said.

She's booked at rodeos and events every weekend until the end of March. Most are in Florida, but she will travel out of state when money and time allow.

She said it's going to be a challenge to balance that with her work in the Air Force, but she'll be able to make it happen.

"The squadron I work at is very supportive because they understand what a huge deal this is to me, and I really appreci-



STAFF SGT. JENN SMEENK

ate them for that," she said.

On weekends and any leave time she gets, Smeenk will don her crown at rodeos and stock shows, where she's apt to stoop down for a photo and sign an autograph for a little girl who will want to grow up to be just like her one day.

GUNSHIP FROM PAGE 4

breech rings and several other miscellaneous parts.

After identifying the parts, it took just over a year to complete the import paperwork and receive permissions.

In mid-December 2012, Walter said the 40-foot shipping container arrived at Eglin Air Force Base.

"We secured all parts and began the painstaking task of inventory, inspection and coordination to enter the parts into supply," Walter said. "With the exception of shipping, these parts were free of charge."

In 1950, a barrel alone originally cost about \$12,000. Today, cost estimates to manufacture new barrels are more than ten times that amount.

"Normally, finding many 'out of production' parts is almost impossible, but in this case, we were very lucky to find a treasure trove of 'brand-new, old parts,'" Walter said.

"The Defense Logistics Agency is responsible for contracting manufacture of common, high-wear parts, but supplies of complex parts such as breech rings and barrels are scarce, unavailable, and economically unfeasible to manufacture," Walter said.

The entire event recovered parts valued over \$14 million but only cost \$14 thousand for travel and shipping.

In addition to the cost savings, Walter said AFSOC now has more than enough barrels to last for the remainder of the gun's lifecycle on the AC-130 gunship.

"It was just like going into a museum, I just felt awestruck. It was like I stepped into another time, like stepping back fifty or sixty years," Walter said. "It was very nostalgic, but at the same time I was thinking 'wow, we can make good use of this stuff.'"

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THE VETERAN'S VOICE OF NORTHWEST FLORIDA

A NEWSLETTER BY THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD OF OKALOOSA AND WALTON COUNTIES



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10 Reasons to Hire a Vet

By Vince Kendrick

Welcome to the winter edition of the Veteran's Voice of Northwest Florida. Frequently, both veteran jobseekers and employers struggle with understanding the skills that a veteran brings to the table. From a veteran standpoint, a Vet focuses on the job skills that have been attained, but other aspects of military service may be forgotten. From an employer's point of view, an employer may not understand to the fullest extent what a military veteran can bring to a company. We, the Veteran Employment Representatives from JobsPlus, want to remind the business community what they are getting when a veteran of the military is hired. The following was originally written on the HireVetFirst website in 2004 and still holds true today and illustrates ten reasons to hire a military veteran:

1. Accelerated learning curve.

Veterans have the proven ability to learn new skills and concepts. In addition, they can enter the workforce with identifiable and transferrable skills, proven in real world situations. This background can enhance an organization's productivity.

2. Leadership.

The military trains people to lead by example as well as through direction, delegation, motivation, and inspiration. Veterans understand the practical ways to manage behaviors for results, even in the most trying circumstances. They also know the dynamics of leadership as part of both hierarchical and peer structures.

3. Teamwork.

Veterans understand how genuine teamwork grows out of a responsibility to one's colleagues. Military duties involve a blend of individual and group productivity. They also necessitate a perception of how groups of all sizes relate to each other and can create an overarching objective.

4. Diversity and inclusion in action.

Veterans have learned to work side by side with individuals regardless of diverse race, gender, geographic origin, ethnic background, religion, and economic status as well as mental, physical and attitudinal capabilities.

They have the sensitivity to cooperate with many different types of individuals.

5. Efficient performance under pressure.

Veterans understand the rigors of tight schedules and limited resources. They have developed the capacity to know how to accomplish priorities on time, in spite of tremendous stress. They know the critical importance of staying with a task until it is done right.

6. Respect for procedures.

Veterans have gained a unique perspective on the value of accountability. They can grasp their place within an organizational framework, becoming responsible for subordinates' actions to higher supervisory levels. They know how policies and procedures enable an organization to exist.

7. Technology and globalization.

Because of their experiences in the service, veterans are usually aware of international and technical trends pertinent to business and industry. They can bring the kind of global outlook and technological savvy that all enterprises of any size need to succeed.

8. Integrity.

Veterans know what it means to do "an honest day's work". Prospective employers can take advantage of a track record of integrity, often including security clearances. This integrity translates into qualities of sincerity and trustworthiness.

9. Conscious of health and safety standards.

Thanks to extensive training, veterans are aware of health and safety protocols both for themselves and the welfare of others. Individually, they represent a drug free workforce that is cognizant of maintaining personal health and fitness. On a company level, their awareness and conscientiousness translate into protection of employees, property, and materials.

10. Triumph over adversity.

In addition to dealing positively with the typical issues of personal maturity, veterans have frequently triumphed over great adversity. They likely have proven their mettle in mission critical situations demanding endurance, stamina, and flexibility. They may have overcome personal disabilities through strengths and determination.

Advice from a Vet Rep: "I have applied for 12 different jobs and have not had one interview! What is going on?"

By Amber Sweeney

As the newest member of the JobsPlus Veteran Service Team and as the Military Spouse Advocate, I will offer some guidance that may answer that very question and eliminate some of the frustrations of job seeking. Many job-seekers I speak with tell me that they have filled out so many applications they do not remember the exact number. Good news, there is a solution to increasing your chances of getting a call back when you are applying for a job!

First, let's discuss your resume. In this job market, your resume must be tailored to each job for which you are applying in order to be competitive in the interview selection process. Remember, your resume is simply a marketing tool to get you an interview - the interview will get you the job.

Second, I want to encourage you to see your job search as a full time job and be prepared to spend a lot of time researching and applying for each job posting that captures your interest. Employers want to know you took the time to ensure you meet or exceed the job requirements laid out in the advertisement for the position. Also, you will need to identify those qualifications in the top half of your resume and cover letter.

Third, I recommend that you contact the employer several days after the application has been submitted to inquire if they received it and if the position has been filled. Employers like to see that you are a motivated job-seeker and contacting them is a good way to show that you want the work. If they indicate that you were not selected, consider asking them for feedback on possible improvements you can make for the future.

Finally, when you do get that interview, be sure to ask for the business card of the person who conducted the interview and send them a thank you card. Less than half of all interviewees do this and it will help you stand out in the crowd!

For more personal service and help with your job search, visit our JobsPlus One-Stop Career Centers and meet with one of our seasoned Career Counselors and attend any of our Career Success Workshops.

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THE VETERAN'S VOICE OF NORTHWEST FLORIDA

A NEWSLETTER BY THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD OF OKALOOSA AND WALTON COUNTIES



Obtaining Federal Employment and Veteran's Preference

By Vince Kendrick

As Local Veteran Employment Representatives, we are frequently asked how to obtain employment with the Federal Government. One important criterion for Veterans is knowing how Veteran Preference helps in attaining a Federal Job. The website, www.fed-shirevets.gov is designed to provide just such Federal Veteran employment information.

Veterans' Preference

Veterans' Preference gives eligible veterans preference in appointment over many other applicants. Veterans' preference applies, to virtually all new appointments in both the competitive and excepted service. Veterans' preference does not guarantee veterans a job and it does not apply to internal agency actions such as promotions, transfers, reassignments and reinstatements.

It is important to understand that not all veterans are considered veterans for the purpose of Federal civilian employment and not all active duty service is qualifying for veterans' preference. Only veterans discharged or released from active duty in the armed forces under honorable conditions (honorable or general discharge) are eligible for veterans' preference. If you are a "retired member of the armed forces" you are not included in the definition of preference eligible unless you are a disabled veteran OR you retired below the rank of major or its equivalent.

Preference Eligibles

There are basically two types of preference eligibles,

disabled (10 point preference eligible) and non-disabled (5 point preference eligibles).

You are a 10 point preference eligible if you served at any time, and you:

- Have a service connected disability, OR
- Received a Purple Heart.

You are a 5 point preference eligible if your active duty service meets any of the following:

- 180 or more consecutive days, any part of which occurred during the period beginning September 11, 2001 and ending on a future date prescribed by Presidential proclamation or law as the last date of Operation Iraqi Freedom, OR
- Between August 2, 1990 and January 2, 1992, OR
- 180 or more consecutive days, any part of which occurred after January 31, 1955 and before October 15, 1976.
- In a war, campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized or between April 28, 1952 and July 1, 1955.

If you are not sure of your preference eligibility, visit the Department of Labor's Veterans' Preference Advisor.

Preference Groups

Preference eligibles are divided into four basic groups as follows:

- CPS - Disability rating of 30% or more (10 points)
- CP - Disability rating of at least 10% but less than 30% (10 points)
- XP - Disability rating less than 10% (10 points)

■ TP - Preference eligibles with no disability rating (5 points)

Disabled veterans receive 10 points regardless of their disability rating.

When Federal agencies use a numerical rating and ranking system to determine the best qualified applicants for a position, an additional 5 or 10 points are added to the numerical score of qualified preference eligible veterans. When an agency does not use a numerical rating system, preference eligibles who have a compensable service-connected disability of 10 percent or more (CPS, CP) are placed at the top of the highest category on the referral list (except for scientific or professional positions at the GS-9 level or higher). XP and TP preference eligibles are placed above non-preference eligibles within their assigned category.

You must provide acceptable documentation of your preference or appointment eligibility. Copy 4 of your DD214, "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty" is preferable. If you are claiming a 10 point preference, you will need to submit a Standard Form (SF-15) "Application for 10-point Veterans' Preference" and verification of your disability from the Department of Veteran Affairs.

Military Spouses Preference

A military spouse is eligible under this authority if the active duty spouse meets one of the following criteria:

1. Active Duty Spouse Permanent Change of Station (PCS): As a military spouse you must:
 - Be authorized to relocate on the PCS orders
 - Actually relocate to the new duty station.

Military spouses can only be appointed within the reasonable daily commuting distance of the new duty station and the appointment must be made within 2 years of the PCS. You will be asked to provide a copy of the PCS orders.

2. 100% Disability: You are eligible if your active duty spouse:

- Retired under Chapter 61 of title 10, United States Code with a 100% disability rating from the military department;
- Retired or was released from active duty and has a disability rating of 100% from the Department of Veterans' Affairs or the military department.

3. Service Member's Death: If your spouse was killed while on active duty and you are not remarried, you are eligible. You will be required to provide documentation of your spouse's disability or the death and your marital status at the time of death

There is no geographic limitation in the previous two categories.

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Transition GPS: Transforming the Transition Assistance Program

The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) has been redesigned into a comprehensive, mandatory program through the efforts of an interagency team from the Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Department of Labor (DOL), Department of Education (ED), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Small Business Administration (SBA).

The redesigned TAP, known as Transition Goals Plans Success (GPS) or Transition GPS, changes the current, 20-year old program into a cohesive, modular, outcome based program that provides opportunities and aids in successful transition into a "career ready" civilian. Transition GPS bolsters and standardizes the transition services that Service members receive prior to separating from the military to make them employment ready as well as being prepared to enter into higher education, attend career technical training, or start their own business.

This new transition program will extend the transition program from 3 days to 5-7 days. It will strengthen, standardize, and expand counseling and guidance for service members leaving the military and transform the military's approach to education, training, and credentialing for service members.

Transition GPS will be implemented throughout the Armed Forces by the end of 2013 and includes the following key components:

Pre-Separation Assessment and Individual Counseling: Through the new transition program, separating service members will have individual counseling to discuss their career goals and start their transition process. Subsequently, members will have a needs and goals assessment coupled with a counseling session about benefits, resources, and available assistance across a wide scope of military separation topics. Each service

member will develop an Individual Transition Plan that documents his or her personal transition, as well as the deliverables he or she must attain to meet the new transition program's Career Readiness Standards.

5-Day Core Curriculum: The five-day Transition GPS Core Curriculum will include a financial planning seminar, a workshop offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs on available veterans' benefits and services, and a re-designed employment workshop offered by the Department of Labor, which includes information and assistance with developing a resume as well as obtaining a "Gold Card" to receive priority services at any One-Stop Career Center in the country, career guidance, job and training referrals. Transitioning service members will also undertake a Military Occupational Code Crosswalk to translate their military skills, training, and experience into civilian occupations, credentials, and employment. An Individual Transition Plan session will allow Members to seek guidance from subject matter experts, identify career goals, and develop a roadmap for their transition.

Career-Specific Additional Curriculum: In addition to completing the Transition GPS Core Curriculum, transitioning service members will also have the option of participating in a series of two day tailored tracks within the Transition GPS curriculum: (1) an Education track, for those pursuing a higher education degree; (2) a Technical and Skills Training track, for those seeking job-ready skills and industry-recognized credentials in shorter-term training programs; and (3) an Entrepreneurship track, for those wanting to start a business.

CAPSTONE Event: Before their separation from military service, service members will participate in a CAPSTONE event, which will verify that transitioning service members completed the Transition GPS curriculum and achieved Career Readiness Standards. Service members who require additional assistance will be referred to supplemental training opportunities. In

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addition, through the CAPSTONE event, all service members will be offered a 'warm handover' to appropriate government agencies and organizations that will be able to provide them continued benefits, services, and support as veterans.

Military Life Cycle Transition Model: The new transition program will incorporate career readiness and transition preparation into the entire span of a service member's career. In the past, transition and preparation for the civilian workforce occurred late in a service member's time in the military – near the point of separation. Under this new program, these concepts will be incorporated earlier to ensure that the counseling, assessments, and access to resources to build skills or credentials occur at earlier stages of a service member's military tenure.

For more information, service members should direct questions to the local Transition Office for their respective Military Service or contact a local Veteran Employment Representative at a One-Stop Career Center nearest you.

Florida's Military Family Employment Advocate Program

Did you know that, according to a recent report from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, the unemployment rate for military spouses is approximately four times the civilian unemployment rate and military spouse earnings are significantly lower than those of their comparably educated civilian peers?

Active Duty military families are faced with a variety of challenges, including frequent relocations, recurring deployments, lengthy periods of separation and heightened anxiety and uncertainty during periods of conflict. A military spouse's ability to gain job skills and maintain a career often contributes to the financial well-being of the family and satisfaction with military life. Even though a military spouse may be employed for a

shorter time than a non military spouse, it may be the best short term investment made by a particular employer. Employers look for quality and not just quantity or longevity.

The Military Family Employment Advocacy Program at JobsPlus recognizes the challenges faced by military spouses and the importance of military families to our communities and economies and has been established to assist the military spouses in overcoming any obstacles to employment. Individuals eligible for assistance through this program include spouses and dependents of:

- Active Duty Personnel from any service branch
- Florida National Guard Members
- Military Reservists

Amber Sweeney is the Military Family Employment Advocate for Jobs Plus in Okaloosa and Walton Counties which services all military installations in this region. She has been a military spouse for twelve years and has moved to nine bases with her soldier husband during that time so she understands the many challenges that our military families face. When you meet with Amber, you will find someone who is able to help you navigate the employment process. Some of the ways she is able to assist active duty military family members in gaining employment are:

- Employment Counseling
- Job Search Assistance
- Skills Assessments
- Resume Assistance
- Job Referrals
- Career Choice Counseling
- Job Development Contacts
- Resource Services

Amber can meet with you on an individual basis at either our Fort Walton Beach JobsPlus Center, Crestview JobsPlus Center or at the Eglin Education Center in Room 114. The flexibility in meeting with clients at all these different locations

allows JobsPlus to better serve our military community. Call or email today for an appointment to take advantage of this great benefit to you as an active duty military dependent!

To contact Amber Sweeney call 850-833-7587, email asweeney@jobsplus02.com, or visit one of our One-Stop Career Centers in Fort Walton Beach on 409 Racetrack Rd. NE or in Crestview on 212 N. Wilson Street.

On-The-Job Training Program May Be For Your Business

By Don Holloway

Is your business growing? Are you thinking of hiring? Do you need to train a new hire in specific skills? We may be able to make it more affordable for your company! Through the JobsPlus On-the-Job Training (OJT) program, your business may qualify for substantial reimbursement of your potential new hires' wages and training costs. Based on the skills sets of the OJT employee, the program provides an opportunity for your business to obtain financial reimbursement up to 50% of a qualified OJT employee's wages during the training period up to 1040 hours. It is a "win-win" situation as the employer saves money, the new employee gains skills, and the company grows.

A few good reasons to check out the On-the-Job Training Program:

- OJT is designed to assist employers in hiring candidates in need of specific occupational training so they can be retained in regular, full-time employment.
- OJT provides your business with an opportunity to offset a portion of the cost of hiring new personnel and the opportunity to reinvest in your company.
- OJT is short-term training and may have a length between one to six months, depending on the participant's training needs and the set of skills to be learned.

For more information or to see if your business is eligible for the program, contact a Business Service Representative at your nearest JobsPlus One-Stop Center.

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Retirees not near bases to lose TRICARE Prime Oct. 1

The military's managed-care option — TRICARE Prime — will be ended Oct. 1 for retirees, their family members and military survivors who live more than 40 miles from a military treatment facility or from a base closure site, TRICARE Management Activity announced Wednesday.

Most of these 171,400 beneficiaries will need to shift health coverage from Prime to TRICARE Standard, the military's fee-for-service health insurance option. For beneficiaries who use more than preventive health care during the year, the shift will mean higher out-of-pocket costs.

Defense officials expect the move to save the health care system up to \$55 million a year.

The rollback in the number of Prime service areas will not affect active duty members or their families living far a military base for tours as



Tom Philpott

recruiters or in other remote assignments. Their health insurance through the separate TRICARE Prime

Remote program will not change.

But grown children of members or of retirees who elected coverage under TRICARE Young Adult insurance will, like retirees, lose access to managed care providers under Prime if they reside more than 40 miles from a base.

TRICARE had considered ending Prime in remote service areas of the West Region on April 1 to coincide with changeover for that region's TRICARE support contractor. On that date, the TriWest Healthcare Alliance will give way to UnitedHealthCare Services of Minnetonka, Minn.

"The primary concern was the beneficiaries. We didn't feel like we had enough time to notify them and help them through the transition," said S. Dian Lawhon, director of beneficiary education and support at TRICARE Management Activity headquarters in Falls Church, Va.

Congressional committee staffs also had complained about a staggered start across regions to a major benefit change. So the Prime service area rollback will occur in the North, South and West regions simultaneously next fall. This will cause another set of challenges in remote areas of the West Region that an April 1 start there would have avoided.

TriWest needed years to build its current network of providers far from military bases across the region. UnitedHealth will now be paid additional money under a contract change order to build its own remote

networks of providers. Those networks will only operate until October.

How successful UnitedHealth can be in luring providers, or even beneficiaries, to new networks that will be dissolved quickly is anyone's guess, but the scheme has skeptics.

"They are just kicking the can for six months at significant expense to the government," said one TRICARE contracting official with knowledge of the move. "When they have a (defense budget) sequester looming, proceeding down that path really doesn't make a lot of sense."

However, TRICARE's far more critical challenge is to educate affected beneficiaries that their Prime coverage will end and most of them will need to shift to TRICARE Standard. An aggressive information campaign is planned with the first of three letters of explanation and warn-

ing to be sent to affected beneficiaries and families within 30 days, Lawhon said.

Under Prime, beneficiaries get their care from a

designated network of providers for a fixed annual enrollment fee, which for fiscal 2013 is set at \$269.28

SEE TRICARE PAGE 13

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TRICARE FROM PAGE 11

for individual coverage or \$538.56 for family. Retirees and family members also are charged a co-pay of \$12 per doctor visit.

Under TRICARE Standard, beneficiaries choose their own physicians and pay no annual enrollment fee. When in need of care, retirees must pay 25 percent of allowable charges themselves. They also pay an annual deductible of \$150 for individual or \$300 per family. Total out-of-pocket costs, however, cannot exceed a \$3,000 per family catastrophic cap.

Some beneficiaries who see local Prime coverage end will be able to enroll in a remaining Prime network near base. To do so, they would have to reside less than 100 miles from that exiting network and would have to waive the driving-distance standard that TRICARE imposes for patient safety. That standard when enforced required that an assigned network provider be within a 30-minute drive of the beneficiary's home.

If displaced Prime beneficiaries meet the two requirements, then an existing network will make room for them regardless of number of beneficiaries enrolled, Lawhon said. But joining a new network also will mean new doctors. So most displaced Prime beneficiaries are expected to choose to use TRICARE Standard instead to get care locally and, in many cases, from the same physicians who treated them under TRICARE Prime.

"People who use Standard are very, very pleased with it," Lawhon said.

As a group they report higher scores on customer satisfaction surveys than do Prime users, she said.

The push to end Prime in areas away from bases began in 2007 with design a third generation of TRICARE support contracts. But it took years to settle on winning contractors for the three regions, however, because of bid protests and award reversals. Health Net Federal Services has

run North Region under the new contract since April 2011. Humana Military Healthcare Services has had the South Region under the new contract since April 2012. Along with TriWest, these contractors have continued to run remote Prime networks under temporary order while waiting final word from TRICARE on imposing Prime area restrictions written into original contracts.

The driver behind new restrictions on Prime is cost. Managed care is more cost efficient for the private sector but more expensive for the military to offer than traditional

fee-for-service insurance. This is true in part because Congress won't allow Prime fees to keep pace with health inflation. So more beneficiaries using Standard means less cost to TRICARE.

Of beneficiaries impacted by the Prime area rollback, more than half — almost 98,000 — live in the South Region. Roughly 36,000 are West Region beneficiaries and more than 37,000 are in the North Region.

Tom Philpott is a syndicated columnist. You may write to him at [Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centreville, VA 20120-1111; or at milupdate@aol.com.](mailto:MilUpdate@AOL.com)

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The most fearsome weapon is evolving

By **RAQUEL SANCHEZ**

Air Force Special Operations Command Public Affairs

The first MC-130J to be converted into Air Force Special Operations Command's newest variant of the gunship, the AC-130J Ghost rider, arrived at Eglin Air Force Base.

Modifications to the airframe will be completed in ten months and will be a milestone in the recapitalization of the AC-130H/U fleet.

The AC-130J Ghost rider will inherit the AC-130W

Stinger II's precision strike package, which was developed to support ground forces in overseas contingency operations.

Insurgent activity in urban environments created the need for an airframe that could deliver direct fire support to ground forces, with the ability to precisely engage enemies with low-yield munitions.

"These new weapon systems and small diameter bombs will provide overwatch and further standoff distance to cover a wider



COURTESY PHOTO

The first MC-130J to be converted into Air Force Special Operations Command's newest variant of the gunship, the AC-130J Ghost rider, arrives at Eglin Air Force Base, Jan. 3. Modifications to the airframe will be completed in ten months and will be a milestone in the recapitalization of the AC-130H/U fleet.

range of space for our warfighters on the ground," said Maj. Stuart Menn, U.S. Special Operations Command Detachment 1 commander.

The precision strike package includes dual elec-

tro-optical infrared sensors, a 30-mm cannon, griffin missiles, all-weather synthetic aperture radar and small diameter bomb capabilities. The sensors allow the gunship to visually or elec-

tronically identify friendly ground forces and targets at any time, even in adverse weather.

"The precision strike package that is going into this aircraft is proven down range," said Todd McGinnis, USSOCOM Det. 1 AC-130J modification manager.

Pairing weapons with a networked battle management system, enhanced communications and situational awareness upgrades the J-Model's ability to deliver surgical firepower.

"Now we get the successes of this precision strike package and marry it up with the advantages of the J-model bringing the best two C-130s together in a new weapons system," said McGinnis.

The AC-130 primary mission is close air support, air interdiction and armed reconnaissance.

Close air support missions include delivering fire support to ground forces that are fighting enemies

and convoy escort. Air interdiction missions are conducted against preplanned targets or targets of opportunity. These missions also include strike coordination and reconnaissance.

The AC-130 gunship has proven to be a reliable and fierce weapon system used by special operations forces since the 1960s. AC-130s had roles in Urgent Fury in Grenada, Just Cause in Panama, Desert Storm in Iraq, Continue Hope and United Shield in Somalia, as well as Iraqi Freedom, and Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. In each operation, AC-130s were credited with many life-saving overwatch missions.

According to the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review, "AC-130 gunships have been invaluable in supporting operations against insurgent and terrorist groups in Iraq and Afghanistan. These units have therefore been in heavy demand even as a portion of the fleet approached the end of its service life."

The AC-130J has the speed of the MC-130J, the precision strike capabilities of the AC-130W and carries forward the heritage of the AC-130H/U.

A total of 37 MC-130J prototypes will be modified as part of a \$2.4 billion AC-130J program to grow the future fleet, said Capt. Andrew Reed, USSOCOM Det. 1 AC-130J on-site program manager. The first AC-130J is expected to be completed Nov. 2013 and expected to be ready for initial flight testing by Dec. 2013.

"This will be the most advanced gunship that will be in the inventory," said Menn.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The AC-130 gunship was named the number one most feared weapon by the Military Channel

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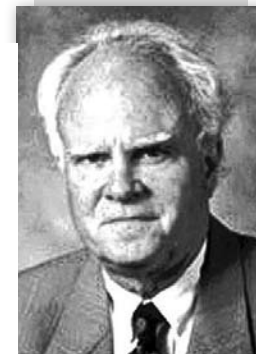
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It's easy to place an in-column classified ad in the Hurlburt Warrior.

Call 850-864-0320

OR

Bring this form in person to:
Northwest Florida Daily News
2 Eglin Pkwy NE
Ft. Walton Beach, FL

HURLBURT WARRIOR Classified Request Form

DEADLINE TUESDAY AT NOON PRIOR TO PUBLICATION

Ad Category _____

If no category is requested, it will appear in the Miscellaneous category.

25 word limit • Please print clearly or type

Name _____

Home/Cell Phone () _____

Signature _____

NO FORMS ACCEPTED WITHOUT SIGNATURE

Military Dependent Retiree

Classified Ad Copy:

Duty Phone _____

FREE CLASSIFIED AD RULES:

- Free classified ads are for the one time sale of personal property by **military members and immediate family, and military retirees.**
- **Non-military individuals and all businesses** should contact the Hurlburt Warrior's publisher, the Northwest Florida Daily News by calling **850-864-0320.**
- **Ads must not exceed 25 words** and must list a home or cell phone number.
- Duty telephones are used by the Warrior staff for verification purposes only. The Hurlburt Warrior staff reserves the right to edit or refuse classified ads due to inappropriate content, space considerations or for other reasons.
- Only **one ad may be submitted per week**, unless PCSing. A copy of PCS orders must be presented in person at:
**Northwest Florida Daily News
2 Eglin Parkway NE
Ft. Walton Beach, FL**
The submission deadline for classified ads is **Tuesday at noon prior to publication.**

PETS 2100



German Shepherd Puppies



Pure-bred GSD pups for adoption, \$850; Call Teresa at 813-300-9631

PETS 2100

Foster Person wanted ASAP for 2 dogs for 2 years (while I am stationed overseas), 67lb.(M) and 47lb.(F) 4 yrs. old Am Staffordshire terrier mixes. Expenses paid. email: ucnc Chew@yahoo.com or Call 850-543-6370

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APPLIANCES 3110

Whirlpool Washer and Dryer (almond) \$200 ea Call Tom in Valparaiso, FL (850) 729-1990

ELECTRONICS 3190

WANTED

Quality Hi-Fi Stereo Equip, Guitars, Amps, Vacuum Tubes & Testers, Record Collection, Antique Radios. Old / New 850-314-0321/543-7025

JEWELRY/ CLOTHING 3270

We Buy Gold Jewelry & Diamonds **We will loan you \$500-\$5,000 Cash!!** 700 Beal Pkwy FWB Call TOM Now!! 850-974-2462 www.usgoldpawn.com

MISCELLANEOUS 3300

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9 piece pearl drum set, maple shell, chrome finish, double bass, 6 toms, snare, 8 cymbals and stands, all hardware, DB pedal, sacrifice, \$1200. 850-678-0513

SPORTING GOODS 3340

7.62 x54r 440 rounds spam can, \$99.50 each. 5.45 x39 1080 spam can, \$235 each. Call Mike 850-226-8275

APARTMENT RENTALS 6110

\$299 Moves You In!

2bd/1ba Starting at \$659 *Pet Friendly* Westwood Apts 850-581-2324 Text FL37397 to 56654

Shalimar-1, 2, 3 & 4 Br \$599-\$899 Water Incl. Pool, Laundry CH/A No Dogs Mon-Sat 651-8267 Text FL35335 to 56654

CONDO/TOWNHOUSE 6130

FWB TH, 2br/2.5ba, 1 car garage w/opener, Laundry room, W/D Hookups, Fenced Yard, Centrally Located \$900 mo+dd, 850-651-9878 or 850-974-4437

NEW TODAY

FWB: 3bd 2ba one car garage, great neighborhood, close to both bases, \$1100 / month 850-864-4084/582-2535 Text FL38553 to 56654

NEW TODAY

Townhouse on Sound 2bd / 2.5ba, Attached Garage, gated, pool, W/D hookups, W/S/G Landscaping included 1 mile from Hurlburt \$1125/ month Small pets on approval. Call 315-729-8928

HOUSE RENTALS 6140

FWB- 3 br, 2 bath in Crosswinds Landing. Avail 1/20 between Eglin & Hurlburt \$1,195 mo. Call 319-213-7239 Text FL37702 to 56654

FWB- 4bd 2ba Garage, Fenced yard, CH/A Very Nice. No Pets or Smokers \$1100/ month 850-533-6595

FWB, 3Br/2Ba, \$1,495 mo., Fncd yard, 2,000 sq ft, Half mile from Hurlburts back gate, Pets OK, Emerald Village, 850-244-2100

Navarre: 2, to 5/bdrm, fncd yd, garage, Patio, W/D hkkup, A/C and CF \$735-\$1399/month Call 850-939-2493

HOME FOR SALE 7100



4 Bd/4 Ba 14 Nancy Ln, SRB. 2,821 SF. Corner lot. Horse-shoes around in ground pool & spa w/screen enclosure. Professionaly landscaped w/ sprinkler system/wood d fence. 3 car gar. (971 SF). Stone exterior. Ranch style. Icyne insulation, hardwood floors. Surround sound/alarm system, baby cam. Ed Wal-line beach access. \$719K 504-390-6053 for showing or info. See Open House sect. for Date/time

HOME FOR SALE 7100

4Br/2.5Ba Beautiful Home with Pool and Large Party Deck on quiet cul-de-sac, 3 miles west of Hurlburt, Many up grades, \$248,900; Call 850-974-8827

NEW TODAY

Crestview 3bd/2.5ba 1544sq ft one car car garage, all appliances \$109,900 Contact Mrs Burns 850-246-0087 or contact Mr. White 228-209-3979

L.O.K

Individual wants to buy house for investment. 850-651-0987 Text FL31748 to 56654



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