

WING Tips

DECEMBER 2013, VOL. 14, No. 10





COMMENTARY

Physical Fitness is an important part of AF career

By Col. William "Buck" Dodson III, 108th Medical Group chief of Aeromedical Services

A new version of Air Force Instruction 36-2905, Fitness Program, was recently released in October and has already been implemented. There are some changes from earlier iterations that have an impact on Airmen.

Changes from the 2010 version include: standardizing the number of failures - four in a 24 month period - of the Fitness Assessment (FA) that would cause a review process for retention versus discharge; revised component weighting of 60 percent for the Run/Walk, 20 percent for the abdominal circumference, 10 percent for the push-ups and 10 percent for the sit-ups; establishing a minimum passing score in each component (total score to pass is unchanged: 75 percent; allowing a determination of body mass index (BMI) if abdominal circumference is failed; and allowing determination of body fat assessment if AC and BMI are failed.

As with all AFIs, these details and those that follow are subject to official changes that occur after the AFI is released. Also, certain guidance in AFIs may be augmented in the case of the Air National Guard by other sources such as Headquarters ANG, Joint Force HQ at the state level, and by individual Wing HQs.

There is a highly detailed table of 19 different actions that can be taken depend-

ing on the number of times a member has failed in a 24 month period. It says "This table is only illustrative and is not binding. Unit CC's exercise complete discretion in selecting responsive action(s)." The 19 items range from "verbal counseling" at the top to "separation" near the bottom. On page 51, in section 10.1.5.4, it states that in addition to the four failures in 24 months, before a unit commander can recommend discharge, the member has to have "failed to demonstrate significant improvement (as determined by the commander) and that a military medical provider has reviewed the Airman's medical records to rule out medical conditions precluding the member from achieving a passing score."

Sometimes, due to a medical situation, a member may be placed on restrictions. Currently, there are three categories of restrictions: Mobility, Duty, and Fitness. A restriction in one category may or may not result in a restriction in another category. A Fitness Restriction may cause a member to be exempt from a component of the FA or the entire FA. Since prolonged restrictions can affect mission readiness, the U.S. Air Force has had all wings create a deployment availability working group (DAWG) which is required to meet quarterly to review prolonged restriction situations of any variety: Mobility, Duty, or Fitness. In



reference to fitness, DAWG may look at numerous fitness situations to determine a member's mission readiness: exempt from the entire test, exempt from the AC component, has exemptions/restrictions that go into a second year, has multiple fails, etc. In AFI 36-2905, there is text regarding when the FA can be done following certain restrictions that have gone beyond 30 days: currently, in general it's 42 days except for

See, PT, on Pg. 4

Cover: Senior Airman Marion C. Fisher measures a cargo pallet as Airmen from the 108th Contingency Response Group train 108th Logistics Readiness Squadron members in the cargo assembly function at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., Nov. 2, 2013. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen/Released)



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Inaccurate records can damage promotion chances



By Janis El Shabazz, Air Force Personnel Center Public Affairs

If your records meet a board tomorrow, would they accurately illustrate your suitability for promotion or retention? Are your evaluations, time in service, time in grade and decorations correct? Are your professional military education records complete? Do you know what your promotion recommendation form says?

If you can't say yes to every question, you are not managing your career, and that mistake could cost you, Air Force Personnel Center officials said.

"There is no legitimate reason to be unsure about your records," said Lt. Col. John Barlett, the AFPC officer promotions branch chief. "Not too long ago, Airmen had to physically visit the personnel center here in Texas to review their records. Now Airmen have 24/7 access from their home or office computer. Each Airman is ultimately responsible for ensuring their records are accurate and up-to-date."

In 2012, the Air Force began using electronic records for officer promotion boards and senior NCO evaluation boards.

Since this shift to all electronic records, Airmen can access their records on myPers through the Personnel Records Display Application. PRDA affords members the opportunity to view their records and to see which items will meet upcoming boards. Airmen who routinely review and update their records online will benefit, Barlett said.

"Your records tell retention boards why you are a valuable military member and tell promotion boards why you're ready for the additional responsibility that comes with the next grade," Barlett said. "In addition, developmental education and command opportunities are based on your records. If you don't keep them updated, you may be telling future boards that your career doesn't matter to you."

Enlisted members can also go into myPers and access PRDA to see which EPRs and decorations were reviewed by evaluation boards.

The first electronic boards process for officers was during

the July 2012 central selection boards and the first electronic enlisted evaluation board was the June 2013 senior NCO supplemental board.

Following a board release, officers can securely access the complete record of performance reviewed by board members, as well as their officer selection brief, copies of any letters they submitted, and their most recent promotion recommendation form.

PRFs and retention recommendation forms will be accessible in PRDA once the board results have been released. Because access to PRDA is based on identity, documents like the PRF and RRFs are available only to the member, Barlett said.

"Identity-based access provides an added layer of security to protect your information while still providing you an opportunity to review the documents far easier than when they were only available in hard copy," he said.

Members can also review their as-is board-related record on the myPers website and once a board has been released, they simply log on to the site and select "board" under "available category" to view the record as it met a particular board. Listings are organized by applicable board identification.

To access enlisted record reviews, go to myPers, scroll down to the "I would like to" section and select "view my records." Click the link and follow instructions to access PRDA.

Airmen who need to make record corrections should contact their local military personnel section.

"The move to online records not only makes the process of creating boards easier, but, it also provides the added ability for all Airmen to view their personnel documents in a user-friendly form anytime and anywhere they choose," Barlett said.

For more information about records access and other personnel issues, visit the myPers website at <https://mypers.af.mil>.





SAFETY TIPS: HOLIDAY STYLE

By Senior Master Sgt. James V. Granato, 108th Wing Safety Office

As we approach this Holiday Season and a brand New Year, one cannot help but reflect on the past year and some of the near misses that we have had. I know I strive to do things better and to learn from my mistakes. My father used to say to me, "accidents don't happen, they're caused." As I am much older now I realize how true is that statement.

Not only should we practice operational risk management (ORM) at work, but also in our daily lives. This is as simple as breathing. Before you do something stop and think that if I do this, this could happen. That is the basic principal of ORM. Here are just a few friendly safety reminders for this upcoming Holiday Season.

1. Use ladder safety when hanging your lights.
2. Don't overload your circuits.
3. Look for signs of your tree drying out.
4. Check for faulty wiring.
5. Protect your back and your heart when shoveling snow.
6. DO NOT DRINK AND DRIVE!!!!

I could go on and on, but I think you get the picture. So enjoy your family and friends during the Holidays and please do it safely. On behalf of the 108th Wing Safety Office - Lt. Col. Martin Ryan, Master Sgt. Porfirio Diaz and myself - Happy Holidays, everyone!!!! See you next year.

108th Wing members accept the CC Challenge

By 108th Wing Public Affairs Office

Five members from the 108th Wing could be found running around at Central Park in New York City Nov. 9, looking for clues that could help them win the second annual CC Challenge scavenger hunt.

Stocked with a map, gadgets and their wits, Capt. April Doolittle, Senior Master Sgt. Jill Moore, Tech. Sgts. Armando Vasquez, Ginger White and Don Woods, were able to solve correctly nine out of the 10 riddles, which allowed them to come in third place out of 28 teams that competed at the event.

The event, which is sponsored by New York Yankee's pitcher, CC Sabathia and his wife, Amber, raises money for The PitCCh in Foundation, which aims to enrich the lives of inner-city youths. The PitCCh in Foundation (PIF) was established in 2009 and incorporated as a 501(c) (3) organization in 2010 with a goal to support and enrich the inner-city youths through educational and athletic activities programs that will help teens raise their self-esteem.

The 108th Wing team was able to compete in this year's event thanks to the generosity of Strikeouts for Troops and Freedom Alliance, who sponsored several military teams for this event. These two non-profit organization have a goal to honor and support America's military heroes and their families.

The 108th Wing team is looking forward to next year's CC Challenge and will compete to win the event, as well as ensure that they finish ahead of the other military teams, just as they did this year.



Scandal has lessons for Airmen

By Col. Quinn Gummell, 9th Reconnaissance Wing vice commander

Last month an offensive lineman on a professional NFL team walked out and quit the team due to a perceived hostile work environment, allegedly characterized by demeaning, racially-biased communications and financial extortion by at least one team captain, and other senior members of the team. Though a lot of details are yet unknown, the events thus far are sufficient to provide a lesson for our own military community.

Like a professional sports team, our Air Force is comprised of motivated people, held to a high threshold of performance, where teamwork is essential to success. How does a professional athlete, who has passed so many hurdles, and is presumably fulfilling a dream to participate at the height of his profession suddenly up and quit? We might ask ourselves what would drive a dedicated and professionally fulfilled Airman, proudly serving our nation, to become similarly disenchanting.

Let's start at the top. Like a head coach or general manager, commanders are ultimately responsible for what happens in their organization. The unit climate is actively set by the things the commander says and does; passively set by the items which are ignored or allowed to pass without comment; and reflected in the appointment of subordinate leaders. Within the troubled NFL team, it appears that leadership accepted at least some level of hazing toward newer/younger players. Beyond being an ineffective leadership tool which destroys morale, hazing and other demeaning "rites of passage" typically spiral into increasingly harsh treatment that quickly surpasses all misguided intent and results in physical or emotional injury.

Selective enforcement of "acceptable" levels of this destruc-

tive behavior is impossible, and commanders who explicitly allow some of these activities tacitly approve all of them. That the individual in question did not discuss the issue with any other figures of authority within the organization speaks to a lack of basic trust in the leadership chain. Clearly the distressed lineman felt his leadership condoned the activities he was subjected to.

Mid-level leaders, either team captains or other "players council" members, appear to be complicit, either by their own actions or through concurrence by silence, in maintaining the established environment. While seemingly unaware of the most egregious activities, they were certainly aware of other incidents.

What about the "Wingmen"? Although teammates were reportedly unaware of the most extreme instances, they were all apparently subjected to at least some level of hostility and harassment themselves. Also, while the most serious allegations rise from a relatively short time period, they merely culminate a progressive string of increasing severity. While some would fail to get involved either out of fear or lack of concern, a proactive Wingman (of the sort we should aspire to be) would be engaged, take notice and question the negative impacts to the teammate.

Regardless of how that team's situation plays out, there are important lessons for all of us. Commanders need to foster an environment free from hostility and not tolerate any such behavior, no matter how "minor". Supervisors need to nurture a workplace where subordinates feel safe coming forward with their concerns. Finally, all of us should strive to be great Wingmen, standing up for, and supporting, each other when necessary.

PT

Continued from Pg. 2

pregnancy which is 180 days post-delivery.

It's important for our fellow 108th Wing members to be timely and thorough in reporting to the Medical Group new diagnoses, medications, and restrictions. Even if members were seen at a military or VA facility (for numerous reasons, there may be a long lag time before our MDG receives information from these sites), it is critical that the member reports the diagnosis to MDG. A member can come by the MDG clinic to drop off new information during duty hours in between drill weekends as well as on drill weekends. PHA day is the best time, while on MDG training day you may want to call first to make sure a MDG member is present to take possession of your paperwork. Another easy way to accomplish these updates is to call your personal provider's office and tell their staff to fax the information to 609-754-5767, then to confirm receipt by calling our main voice number at 609-754-2635. A great boon to the process of getting sufficient information to us is to give us your current cellphone number so we can call you if something fails to arrive, if clarifications are needed, etc.

People are our greatest asset and we want to help them to stay in the ANG whenever possible. That said, with a positive attitude, we informally refer to our DAWG as the "Super" DAWG. Why – because we do more than the USAF minimum in order to be pro-

actively part of the solution. How do we do this? We meet more often than required, we invite optional visitors to help make our processes the fastest and most accurate possible, and our medical providers make themselves available to review medical records and to talk with any member with restriction issues - not just members who are multi-fails or who may be entering or already in the medical evaluation board/related processes. Although your ANG providers, as traditional members, aren't authorized to diagnose and treat, we can talk with members who then can share our opinions with their personal providers. Such visits or phone conversations with an ANG provider about factors affecting FA scores might touch upon diet, exercise, and/or hormonal issues.





Senior Airman David M. Savino checks the snugness of cargo webbing as Airmen from the 108th Contingency Response Group train 108th Logistics Readiness Squadron members in the cargo assembly function at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., Nov. 2, 2013. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen/Released)



Joshua Pechin, son of Lt. Col. Keith Pechin, 150th Special Operations Squadron, has earned the opportunity to test for his Junior Black Belt. This course has taught him goal setting, focus, and dedication with an emphasis on physical fitness. He has been studying karate at a Mount Laurel karate school for the past four years, where he is also a member of the school's demonstration team, which performs at local area events. He was awarded his Black belt on Nov 23, 2013. (Courtesy photo)



From left to right, Senior Airman Nicholas Smith, Staff Sgt. Joseph Walsh, Senior Airman Guss Jenkins and Tech. Sgt. Armando Vasquez, pose for a group photo with two young fans at the Metlife Stadium, Dec. 1, 2013. The 108th Wing Airmen were part of the opening ceremonies for the New York Jets vs Miami Dolphins game. (Courtesy photo)

Combined Federal Campaign is now open for your support

By Maj. Paul Koester, 108th Wing Combined Federal Campaign coordinator

The 2013 Annual Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) has begun, and will run until Dec. 8.

This is the 50th year that this program has been in existence. The campaign is designed to promote and support philanthropy for military and civilians who work for the federal government through a program that is employee focused, cost-efficient, and effective in providing all federal employees the opportunity to improve the quality of life for all.

At any given point I could ask you how much mail you receive, or phone calls you answer asking for a donation or support. Many of these organizations may be listed in the CFC charity list, but the difference is that the guidebook gives you the necessary information to make an informed decision.

The guidebooks will be available by the November drill, please

take a few minutes to review the charities listed. Unit keyworkers will also be coming to you in the next two months asking if you would like to provide a donation to your favorite charity.

I have listed the unit keyworkers here for your convenience:

Wing: Maj. Paul Koester, paul.koester@ang.af.mil; Mission Support Group: Maj. Joseph Stewart, joseph.stewart.3@ang.af.mil; Operations Group: Tech. Sgt. Shanna Gielski, Shanna.gielski@ang.af.mil; Maintenance Group: Senior Master Sgt. John Swantek, john.swantek@ang.af.mil; Medical Group: Master Sgt. Loretta Pratt, Loretta.pratt@ang.af.mil; Contingency Response Group: Staff Sgt. Ariel Hansen, ariel.hansen@ang.af.mil; 204th Intel: Tech. Sgt. Justin Gielski, Justin.gielski@ang.af.mil.



Tips for a Successful Career in the Air National Guard

By Lt. Col. Michael Baldi, 108th Maintenance Squadron commander

The below advice are for all unit members, regardless of your status. They apply for traditional, technician, and active guard/reserves (AGR) alike.

When it comes to your career, there are few things that you have complete control over. Supervisors, commanders, senior leaders, all have influence on the direction of your career path. With that said, embrace the areas where you have total control.

When I was a younger officer, my father told me his three keys to success in the Air National Guard, and they are still relevant today. Number one: Do your job! That is, do what you are being paid to do. As tax payers, we want the government to ensure that every dollar spent is spent wisely and prudently. Number two: Take care of your people. You do not have to be a commander to make sure the people you work with have the resources and support to get the job done. Number three: Stay out of the office politics. This simply takes time away from the reason you are there, reference number one.

In addition to my father's advice, I would like to share my three keys to success in the ANG. I call them the 3Ps. They are PT, Performance, and PME. We all know that the fitness program has taken on a whole new light lately. Let's face it, it's not

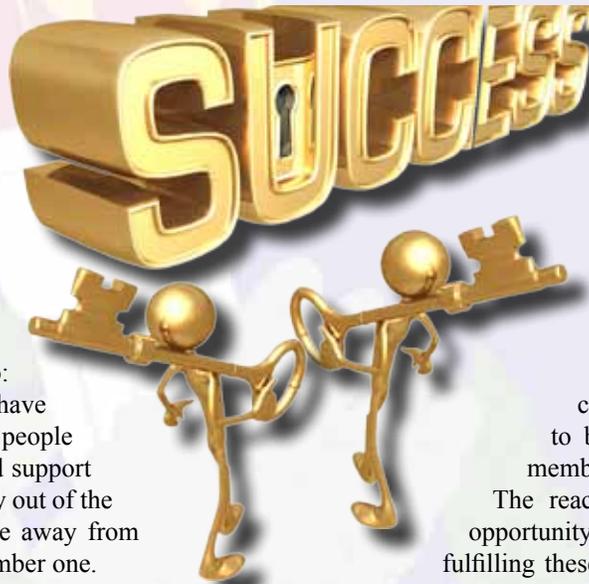
just about reenlistments, promotions, or PME (more on that in a few). I propose it is more about deploying in austere conditions, doing your job, returning home safely, and living a long life collecting on that pension you have been working so hard for. Being physically fit will grant you all of those possibilities. My dad

spoke about doing your job. I would suggest you do your job with such vigor that your supervisor, commander or senior leaders know that if they have a must-do task, they know you are the one that can get it done for the unit. Your boss expects you to do your job. You should expect yourself to perform in an exemplary manner. Finally, Professional Military Education is part of the career path for both enlisted and officer. These are milestones in your

career that are mandatory. You can choose to be proactive or reactive. The proactive member signs up as soon as they are eligible.

The reactive member waits until a promotion opportunity or job opens up before they consider fulfilling these obligations. Don't be that person who self-eliminates from potential opportunities because you weren't prepared.

In summary, do the best you can every day, seek to improve, and challenge yourself.



Airman 1st Class James Brown, Crew Chief, 108th Wing Contingency Response Group, participates in annual M-16 training at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., Nov. 3, 2013. The 108th Security Forces Squadron conducts weapons readiness courses to ensure members are properly trained in their use. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Adrian R. Rowan/ Released)



Staff Sgt. John Zeller, Combat Arms Training Instructor 108th Security Forces Squadron, instructs Staff Sgt. Jose Villegas, Aircraft Maintenance, 108th Wing Contingency Response Group, during annual M-16 training at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., Nov. 3, 2013. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Adrian R. Rowan/ Released)

BOOM! YOU'VE BEEN FUELED!



Tech. Sgt. Jennifer Bowen, boom operator, guides the flying boom from the KC-135 Stratotanker towards the receiving aircraft, a C-17 Globemaster, during an air refueling mission Dec. 5, 2013. The mission provided an opportunity for the the pilots and boom operators to hone their air-refueling skills aboard a KC-135 Stratotanker. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Armando Vasquez / Released)

RE-ENLISTED!



Col. Robert Meyer, far right, 108th Wing commander, performs the Oath of Enlistment at the Re-enlistment Ceremony of 108WG Airmen at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., Nov. 2, 2013. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Kellyann Novak / Released)

It's never too early to prepare for tax season

By Terri Moon Cronk, American Forces Press Service

With a month left before the start of tax season, service members should begin gathering documentation to file their 2013 taxes, the director of the Pentagon's office of family policy and children and youth said.

In a recent interview with American Forces Press Service and the Pentagon Channel, Barbara Thompson suggested visiting the Military OneSource website for tax filing resources, and to learn what will be necessary to file, such as W2 forms, Social Security numbers and receipts for deductions such as child care, education, medical expenses and donations, among other write-offs.

And tax preparers at Military OneSource will do short-form tax filing free of charge for service members and their families, Thompson said.

Relocations and deployments have tax implications, Thompson noted. For example, deployed service members can receive an extension to file taxes after the normal April 15 filing date, she said. "It's very helpful to have someone who is experienced to help you through the cumbersome issue of taxes and tax returns," she added.

The tax preparers at Military OneSource are up to date on changes in tax laws, and can answer military-specific questions, Thompson said.

Installations also offer volunteer income tax assistance to service members and their families, while certain banks and credit unions provide education and training on tax preparation, Thompson said. She advised that service members organize their taxes by starting a file beginning each Jan. 1 for the following year's tax papers, such as receipts and other write-offs.

"You don't want to wait until the last minute," she said.

Service members and families who prepare long-form taxes with deductions such as mortgages and rental properties might want to consider hiring a tax expert to file for them, Thompson said. "It's best to get advice to make sure you have everything covered," she added.

People who do their own taxes need to stay on top of current tax information, Thompson said. "Sometimes tax laws change, so you have to be really smart about doing your own taxes," she added. States' tax laws often vary, too, she said, and because of relocations, some service members have to file local taxes in more than one state.



"That's where [tax consultants] can really be of great value to make sure you know what the requirements are for states," Thompson said.

Filing federal and state tax returns usually results in either a tax refund or money owed back to the government. Expecting to receive a tax refund, but instead finding out that money is owed can be a shock, Thompson said. Looking at W2s to determine how much money in taxes is being withheld is a good indicator of whether or not one will owe money, she suggested.

Service members who receive a tax refund face important decisions on what to do with the money, Thompson said.

"Do you use it to buy down debt, or put it in a savings account?" she asked, advising people to not blow their tax refunds in a spending frenzy of unnecessary purchases.

A tax refund also can be deposited into a retirement savings account, she added. "It's important to think about what you're going to do with that money," she advised, "and how you can best utilize it for your financial well-being."

Meeting with a financial planner to learn the "lay of the land," and what tax deductions might apply to a service member's finances is a good idea, Thompson said. "It's really important to be savvy about that."

For more information about the financial services provided by Military OneSource, please visit their website at www.militaryonesource.mil.



MAN ON THE STREET

“What are your plans for Thanksgiving?”

Photos by Staff Sgt. Brian Carson, 108th Wing Public Affairs Office



“I’m going to the Macy’s Day Parade, then dinner with family”
- Tech. Sgt. Tenisha Schexnayder



“Spending time with my son. It’s his first Thanksgiving.”
- Staff Sgt. Latasha Parker



“Looking forward to smoking a turkey since we are having our family over.”
- Maj. James Buckman



“My mom is coming up from North Carolina.”
- Senior Master Sgt. Jacqueline Hartsfield



“Cooking rice and turkey at home for the family”
- Master Sgt. James Sandovalovalle



“Having dinner at my in-laws house and spend time with my family.”
- Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey McGrath



“Spending time with family. My parents are coming from Illinois.”
- Master Sgt. Ashley Shatkus





FRONT AND CENTER: LAHOYA O. THOMPSON



Photo by Master Sgt. Mark C. Olsen

Time in Service:	<i>Nine Years</i>
Job with 108th:	<i>Aircrew Flight Equipment</i>
Civilian Job:	<i>Federal Technician</i>
Favorite Food:	<i>Anything Spicy</i>
Favorite TV Show:	<i>Scandal</i>
Favorite Music Genre:	<i>R&B</i>
Favorite Sport:	<i>Basketball</i>
What do I do in my Spare Time:	<i>Reading & Working out</i>
Person I Most Look Up To:	<i>My Parents</i>
My Hero is:	<i>My Dad</i>
Dream Vacation:	<i>St. Lucia</i>
My Goals for the Future:	<i>Finish my Degree</i>
What I like about the 108th:	<i>Everyone Smiles</i>
If I Was Commander for a Day:	<i>Implement mandatory nap time after lunch!</i>



holiday



Free Holiday Photos

- * FREE session for military personnel and family
- * Digital images available via downloadable link

Where:
108th Wing Public Affairs Photo Studio
Bldg 33-27, Joint Base MDL

When:
Tuesday, December 10, 2013 | 4PM - 6PM
Reservations: 732.685.9867

