26 OWS Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 1

Jan 2002

First Issue! We need a name!

Welcome to the first issue of the 26 OWS newsletter. We want this to be a forum for new services at the "hub", changes that will affect you in your career, outstanding achievements by our personnel, weather tidbits and info from and for the field.

We need a catchy name for the newsletter. Got some good ideas? Send them to the editor at

leslie.sexton@barksdale.af.mil

26 OWS Airmen Lead the Pack!

26 OWS personnel have taken the lead and excelled in the 8th AF and Barksdale AFB Awards Programs. In the last few months they have earned honors such as Officer/NCO/Airman of the Quarter and the Month at 8th AF and base level. Some of our top performers are:

SrA (sel) Michelle Lucas:(608th AOG and 8th AF Airmen of the Year, Barksdale AFB Airman of the Quarter and nominee for Airman of the Year). A1C Lucas has also been selected for BTZ promotion to SrA.

A1C Daniel Mike : The first 8AF nominee to nab the BAFB Airmen of the Month (Dec 01) in 2 1/2 years.

A1C Brian Smith (D Flt): 8AF Airman of the Month.

BTZ Promotions: A1C Michelle Lucas and A1C Chris Morales

Annual Award Nominees:

CGO: 2LT Richard Stedronsky/OIC D Flt

SNCO: MSgt Robert Segreti/NCOIC B Flt

NCO: TSgt (sel) John Robbins/Training Flt

AMN: SrA (sel) Michelle Lucas/Forecaster D Flt

Civilian: Ms. Clarissa Emrick/Systems Flt

Congratulations to all our winners and nominees!

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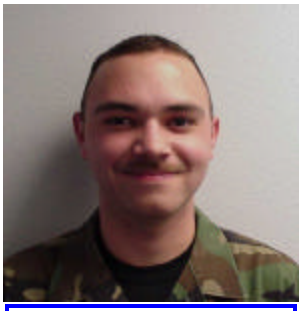
2Lt Stedronsky

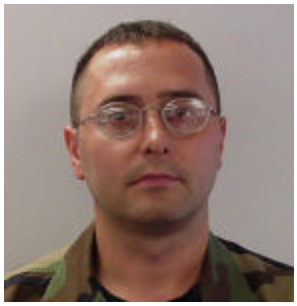
MSgt Segreti

A1C Mike



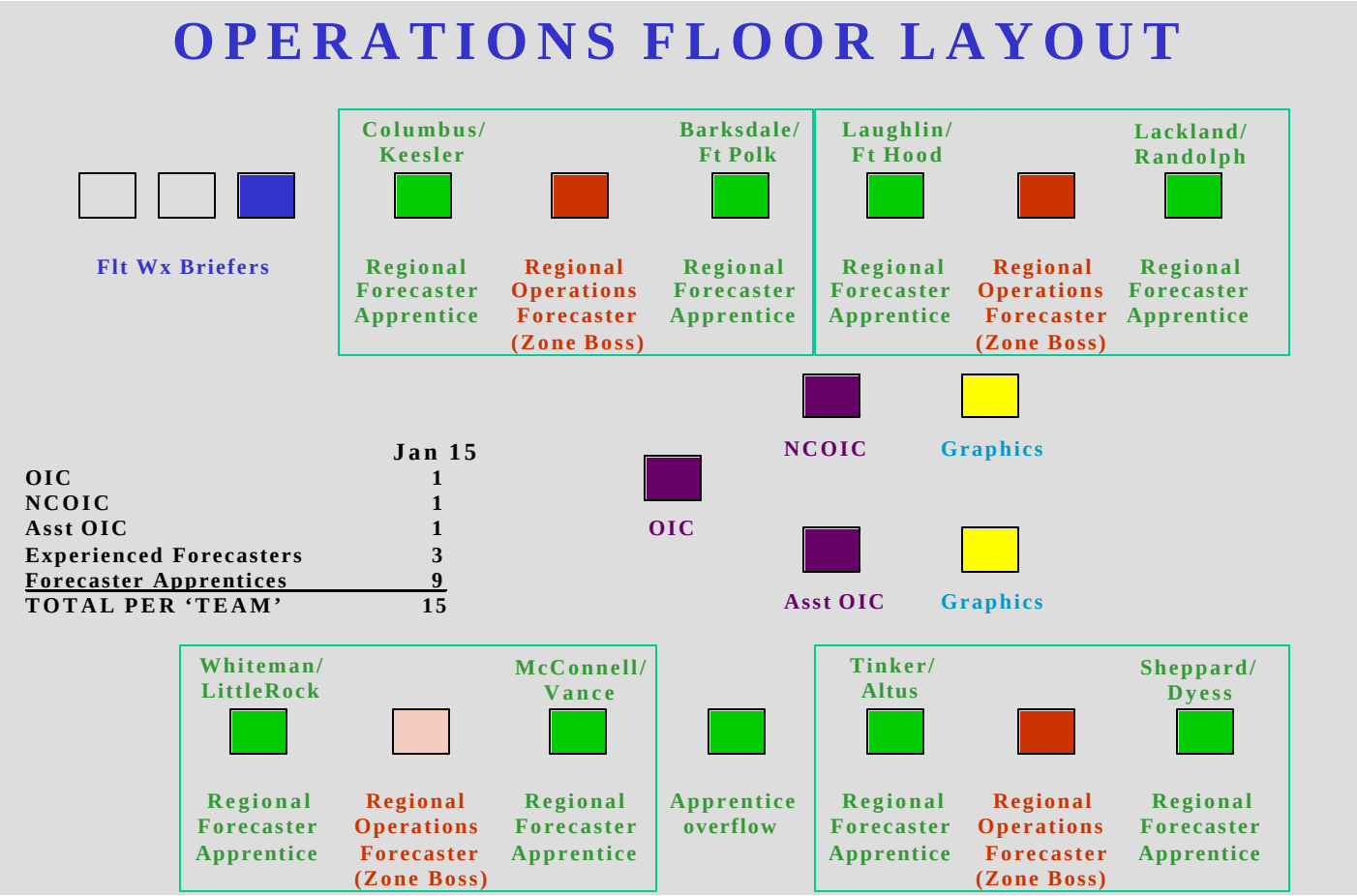
SrA (sel) Morales

SrA (sel) Lucas



TSgt(sel) Robbins

NEW LOOK FOR THE OPS FLOOR



	Jan 15
OIC	1
NCOIC	1
Asst OIC	1
Experienced Forecasters	3
Forecaster Apprentices	9
TOTAL PER 'TEAM'	15

Responsibilities by Position

Apprentice: Metwatch/Data Collection (Local scale)

(Regional Forecaster Apprentice) Produce TAFs, and resource protection products for two bases in their zone.

Zone Boss: Metwatch for a four base region (Local scale)

(Regional Operations Forecaster) Review all TAFs/resource protection products issued by interns, before they are sent to the QC Que; Ensure they are meteorologically sound and technically correct. Ensure horizontal consistency of products within the region. Give OJT and mentor interns.

NCOIC/Asst OIC: Metwatch for respective Zone (Meso scale)

Produce all required graphics products.

Review and send to web, all products in the QC Que (i.e. graphics, TAFs, WWAs).

Ensure horizontal consistency of products within the zone.

Handle customer relations within the zone.

NCOIC -- Responsible for all enlisted personnel issues

OIC: Metwatch AOR (Synoptic scale).

Assist with QC of all products.

Ensure horizontal consistency of all products produced by the OWS. Ensure products are representative of actual weather and/or model of the day.

Model comparison and select model of the day.

Handle customer relations for the operations floor.

Orchestrate work-load / load shedding on ops floor.

Handle operations administrative issues.

Execute the Plan of the Day.

OPS FLOOR PRODUCTION

*Flight Weather Briefings YTD - @ **4300***

*Resource Protection Products YTD - @ **3000***

*Daily Terminal Forecasts - **30***

Installations Currently Supported

*Active Duty – **16***

14 full time support

2 part time support

*Guard/Reserve - **46***

Enlisted Skill Level Upgrade Fundamentals

What's the 5- or 7-skill level upgrade training (UGT) process for enlisted weather apprentices/forecasters and why is it important? Understanding the process helps a forecaster apprentice and supervisor get through the developmental wickets and reduces the upgrade period. Through the process a member's forecasting capabilities will be enhanced as they absorb in-depth career field knowledge and develop/apply forecast skills.

So what are the UGT requirements for enlisted weather apprentices/forecasters?

-To upgrade to 5-Skill level apprentices complete mandatory career development courses and mandatory quality training packages (QTPs); perform 15 months (9 months for retrainees) of UGT; be certified on all required CORE tasks identified in the Career Field Education and Training Plan (CFETP) and other tasks identified by the supervisor; and finally obtain their supervisor's recommendation. UGT start date is normally the date arrived station.

-To upgrade to 7-Skill level forecasters must hold a 5-skill level; be at least a SSgt; complete 12 months UGT; complete the Craftsman (7-level) course; and finally, obtain their supervisor's recommendation.

By achieving knowledge and performance requirements (CDC/QTPs, CFETP CORE tasks...) within the UGT schedule and applying the enhanced new skills, members will consistently produce better quality forecasts. Do your part, whether you're a member in UGT or the supervisor, by understanding and effectively managing the UGT process.

For additional information on the UGT process, speak with our Unit Education and Training Manager (SSgt Vazquez) or other Training and Standards Flight staff.

Submitted by WXT (SMSgt Steven Yelenic)

Bits n Pieces

Why Winds are Important!

In 1915, Germany's use of poisonous gas backfires when wind blows the poisonous chemical back onto German lines and destroys 4 Prussian regiments.

"In any combat operation or any conflict, weather's probably your No. 1 concern," Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said this week. "It's no different in Afghanistan."

From the Chief

Glass Houses

Most forecasters have probably relieved an off-going shift, reviewed the forecast, and thought, "what in the world were they thinking?" If you're tempted into thinking along this line, step back and ask yourself, "I wonder if anyone ever questioned the validity of one of my forecasts?" I'll bet they have! Fact is, we all forecast from within "glass houses", and need to be careful of the stones we cast. I'm not saying we shouldn't question our peers' forecasts, since familiarizing ourselves with each others' thought processes can only make us better forecasters. As we improve our individual skills we also enhance the overall AFW forecasting process by maintaining positive communication flow during forecast discussions and placing ourselves in the OWS or CWT forecasters' position.

Maintaining positive communication during the forecast discussion is paramount to a successful "team built" product. Although we strive for perfection, rarely (if ever) are forecasts perfect. Sure, we may provide an accurate onset and duration of forecast phenomena. However, even on a clear and a million day, we have individual opinions on the forecast derived through collecting, analyzing, predicting, and tailoring a huge mass of available weather data. Listen and try to understand why the other forecaster believes the atmosphere will "react" in a certain manner. Avoid getting emotional or maintaining a negative outlook on the communication process because either could result in ceasing the information flow or producing a less accurate forecast. Both the CWT and OWS must avoid forecasts based on gut feeling, and in doing so, forecasters should be able to put themselves in their counterpart's position.

The OWS requires forecast product coordination with the supported CWT customer. Before casting stones, those at the OWS must realize the CWT tailors forecast products to meet the war fighter's needs and/or to brief their wing leadership. In addition, those in the CWT should understand that in most cases the OWS has 2, 3, or more instructor meteorologists, experienced forecasters, and/or apprentices involved in the forecast process. This does not infer every forecast, weather watch, warning, or advisory will be fully agreed upon by both parties, but a consensus should be reached in nearly all cases through civil discussion about the available data.

During a relatively short 6-month tenure here at the OWS, I will say I'm pleasantly surprised with the amount of positive communication between the CWTs and OWS. Sure there are forecast disagreements. However, in each case we all learn, not only adding to our forecasting tool kits, but also how to get along with weather folks across the AOR. Remember the stones cast today may eventually crack the panes of your own "glass house" tomorrow. I thank each of you for the opportunity to serve as the 26 OWS Superintendent, and I look forward to meeting many of you in the upcoming years.

CMSgt Bob Haines, 26 OWS Superintendent

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Submitted by Captain Elton Gray (26OWS/WXO/CC)

Q. Now that the OWS is FOC, what are the responsibilities of the OWSs and the CWTs?
A: Obviously, I cannot discuss all responsibilities here, but generally speaking, reengineering places the OWSs in the "middle" of The Forecast Funnel. They support the CWTs by producing Synoptic/Mesoscale products for the CWTs to use to create their MEF(s).
OWSs combine the raw and modeled data with individuals forecast
expertise to produce a variety of weather forecast products for their individual areas of operations.
The CWTs then tailor this information to support their flying community as well as other base customers via their MEF.
CWTs receive (via reach back or broadcast) information from the OWSs and fuse the operational level products with perishable meteorological data (e.g., radar, lightning strike plots) and their supported weapons system requirements to provide a mission-tailored forecast for their operational customers.
Ref AFMAN 15-135 para 1.1

Q: How does this change the way the TAF is used?

A: *Aerodrome forecasts, issued in TAF code, are forecast tools that facilitate flight planning in accordance with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). OWSs will*

issue and amend TAFs for common flight planning thresholds described in AFMAN 15-129, Aerospace Weather Operations Processes and Procedures. CWTs will assist OWSs with "eyes forward" relay of changes in weather conditions.

Ref AFMAN 15-135 para 7.14

Q: Should the MEF and the TAF always match perfectly?

A: No. The TAF is no longer used for operational decisions, therefore it becomes a tool for the CWTs to use to create their MEF. The MEF will have mission limiting criteria for their customers that will not be included in the TAF.

Mission specific, customer-focused weather information will be provided by the CWT in the form of a MEF.

OWSs should refrain from amending for mission-limiting weather criteria that are better supported by the local CWT in MEFs to their customers.

This allows the CWTs to be far more flexible and responsive to their customers needs and requirements.

The MEF becomes the official forecast the customer will use to make operational decisions.

Ref AFMAN 15-135 para .7.14.1

Ref AFMAN 15-129 para. 2.5.3.5.2.6

Ref AFMAN 15-135 para .1.1.1

Q: Will standardizing specification/amendment criteria for the OWS TAF affect the CWTs input to the TAF?

A: Absolutely not! Our procedures will not change with regards to communication with the CWTs. For the first two hours of the TAF, we will rely on our "eyes forward" for final input. By standardizing the criteria in compliance with AFMAN 15-129, we are giving back the to the CWTs the ability to be more responsive to the requirements of their

(Continued from page 5)

customers by giving them the flexibility to work within our broader amendment criteria. *CWTs may supplement the TAF, MOAF, or maneuver area forecast as necessary in MEFs to meet the requirements of supported agencies. However, the CWT will not provide a MEF that crosses standard operational thresholds (i.e., TAF and MOAF amendment criteria, WW & WA criteria) without first coordinating the change with the supporting OWS, unless it is critical to flight safety or when weather conditions are rapidly changing and prior coordination is not possible.*

This will also allow the OWS forecasters to be more responsive to representative amendments to the TAF.

Ref AFMAN 15-135 para 3.3.4

Q: How do we eliminate confusion when our customers are off station and want to access the TAF?

A: All customers should be educated to the new procedures under reengineering and in compliance with AFMAN 15-135. When off-station, pilots should not rely or even access OWS TAFs. These are weather products for weather people. The weather forecaster giving the briefing should access the supporting CWTs MEF to prepare their brief.

Operational customers should rely upon the MEF for mission planning, and should rarely have reason to access the TAF issued by an OWS.

Ref AFMAN 15-135 para. 7.14.1

Q: How will operational customers and/or forecasters access our MEF.

A: One way to access the MEF, is to call the supporting CWT. The 26 OWS is also posting MEFs on the OWS website under the respective Unit Tailored Pages for our customers. The procedures are quick and easy for the CWTs, and only takes a minute to set up the link. Anyone who is not currently posting their MEF to their Unit Tailored Page and would like to, please give the OWS a call.

Q: In what format should our MEF be?

A: The format for your MEF will be dependent on the requirements of your individual bases and customers.

The MEF is any forecast applied to effect a decision regarding the commitment of military forces. Flight weather briefings are basic MEFs. CWTs fully integrated with their flying community will yield more detailed and relevant flight weather information not normally contained on a DD Form 175-1 or other briefing form.

Ref AFMAN 15-135 para 1.7

Q: Who are the customers for our MEF?

A: *MEFs apply to both flying and non-flying missions.*

Although the warfighter is normally the CWTs primary customer, other base/post personnel require weather support to accomplish their missions. For example, transportation, maintenance, civil engineering, and logistics activities are affected by certain weather conditions. CWTs must know all of their customers to develop MEFs that meets their needs.

The MEF is produced as a stand-alone product. CWTs should aggressively pursue educating post or base customers on the difference between the TAF and locally issued MEF. The TAF in this case is only used for flight planning purposes IAW WMO requirements, and the MEF is the official forecast for the post or base.

Ref AFMAN 15-135 para 1.7, 3.2.3.1, 7.14.2.1