



26 OWS NEWSLETTER



“Lights Out” at the “Hub”

Emergency Action Practice in the 26th OWS

Submitted by: 1Lt Jay Anderton
26OWS/CWF; 2Lt Mindy Chavez and
2Lt Jeff Gipson 26OWS/WXO

Evacuating your main work areas is something you never want to do—but have to be ready for at any time. A few months after a 12-hour evacuation fire gutted the next-door 8 AF HQ building, the 26 OWS had to implement emergency procedures twice within a three day period. This was followed by a scheduled outage in the following week. Fortunately, quick action by 26 OWS personnel and support from across Air Force Weather (from the Combat Weather Flights to AFWA) ensured that weather operations continued to support Air Force and Army missions in the south central US.

Wednesday 2 October was already a busy day for the 26 OWS. Hurricane Lili was rapidly intensifying into a potentially deadly Category 4 hurricane bearing down Louisiana while a frontal boundary moving through Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas was bringing moderate and severe thunderstorms. As if this was not stressful enough, a

circuit breaker failed on the Operations Production Floor just before 1600 local. Since the outage was not the result of commercial power failure, the emergency generator did not start. Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) units scolded in annoying chirps, keeping computers and bright digital clocks alive for a few minutes. Left suddenly in the dark, thirty surprised forecasters looked curiously around with everything on the operations floor and hallways dead with the exception of phone lines.

Then D team swung into action. Lt Jeff Gipson, D Team OIC, instructed forecasters to call their Combat Weather Teams (CWTs) while he contacted other agencies listed in the 26 OWS backup procedures. Credit goes out to the CWTs for quickly taking resource protection responsibility, the Air Force Weather Agency for taking over the Point Weather Warning and graphic responsibilities, and the 15 OWS at Scott AFB who took up the load of transient flight weather briefings. Since the rest of the building had power, SrA Michelle Lucas quickly led A1C Desiree Herring and A1C Erica McGuire to a still-lit training lab to attempt login and metwatch. Unfortunately, the outage also disabled the operational servers, so their attempt to access the system failed. At the same time, TSgt Richard Alred and SrA Michelle Lucas evacuated to the Barksdale CWT, two blocks away. Armed with a laptop computer, they set up limited metwatch

thanks to Capt Gail Weaver of the 2 OSS CWT, who quickly provided space and access to a LAN drop. Amidst the confusion of the evacuation, D Team leadership recognized SrA Lucas for her energy and leadership while maintaining a calm demeanor.

Within an hour, base Civil Engineers and MSgt Lee Benson of the 26 OWS Systems Flight isolated the problem: a faulty 100-amp circuit breaker. Civil Engineers reset the breaker, bringing the lights back on. Systems administrators powered back on their 22 servers, then supervised power-on of the Operations Production Floor’s 30 workstations, one by one. As each forecaster turned on a computer, systems administrators monitored amperage levels in the circuit. Powering up the two flight weather briefer computers spiked the amperage

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We Serve Tornado Alley!



Commanders Comments



STAYING READY

As I write this, Iraq has provided a “yes, but” to the UN Security Council demand that it accept unhindered access by weapons inspectors to prove that Iraq has disarmed in accordance with UN Security Council directions following Iraq’s expulsion from Kuwait back in 1991. However, the “but” part of that “yes, but” was pretty impressive—nine pages of caveats, excuses, and hedges. In the meantime, President Bush has made his policy objective quite clear—as Commander in Chief (and with the backing of Congress) Iraq will either disarm or the US and its allies will take action to disarm Iraq. At the same time, Al Qaeda has released a tape our government believes shows Osama bin Laden threatening more attacks against the US and our allies.

So what does this mean for us as members of the 26 OWS? Quite simply, we must stay ready to meet whatever missions our nation needs us to accomplish. The vast majority of those will remain in our South Central US area of responsibility (AOR)—“Tornado Alley.” This certainly includes the bases and missions we routinely support, many of which provide critical and unique capabilities for our country. If anything, this workload could increase to cover gaps left by deploying CWTs. It may also include responding to a terrorist attack within the CONUS in general (such as supporting increased NORAD/NORTHCOM operations to help prevent an attack) or our AOR specifically (like providing weather information critical to “consequence management”—cleaning up after a nuclear, biological, or chemical attack on the US).

We may also be called upon to deploy additional team members to support operations overseas. Such deployments could involve deploying overseas or in CONUS as dictated by events. The nature and importance of our CONUS mission means that relatively few of us would do this, but the impact would be felt by the entire unit in terms of surging to get our CONUS mission done in their absence. Just remember that we will not be under a unique burden—the rest of the US military would be surging with us, and we could get National Guard/Reserve augmentation to help.

The most important step we all can take is being mentally prepared to be flexible and determined to keep

getting the mission done no matter what it takes. Having our personal readiness actions done is a vital first step in this process. For those of us with families, having contingency plans to ensure they are taken care of if we are called to deploy or face a sudden surge in workload helps tremendously reduce the stress of reacting to unexpected events.

Mental preparation also involves being ready to quickly shift positions within the unit. This process has already started as some unit members have moved between flights or into different positions within our teams on relatively short notice, and may continue. Although the importance of flight/team cohesion means we will keep this to a minimum, the bottom line is that we will do what it takes to match scarce resources against our most critical operational missions.

Another thing we can all do to be ready is to keep aggressively seeking ways to do things smarter and (if necessary) to stop doing lower priority missions/tasks. For example, we have sent a memo out to our CWTs asking their pre-coordination on a list of AF-MAN 15-129 products we generate that, while useful, they could “live without” if they had to. Having this done gives us another option for focusing our efforts on the keeping our most critical products as high quality as possible. Our ongoing unit self-inspection is another example of something we are doing to make sure we are both covering all of our mission requirements and flagging anything we might be doing that “upon further re-

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and elicited, “Shut off those computers,” from the system administrators, “and use only two of the four monitors for terminals already tested.” Undaunted, the Operations Flight prepared to operate with half of their normal monitors. Meanwhile, 1Lt Jay Anderton let the Combat Weather Flight (responsible for producing 26 OWS graphic products) to a Training Flight classroom. All of this balanced the power load between different circuit breakers and allowed the 26th to quickly get back in business.

By 1830 local, one half hour before shift change, all forecasters on the Floor logged into the network, and all graphics forecasters logged into the classroom computers. During shift change at 1900, all forecasters called their bases and briefed that the oncoming shift would assume responsibility at 1930. Unfortunately, the faulty circuit breaker still needed replacing, and Civil Engineers told an exhausted Systems Flight that it would take a week for a new breaker to arrive. The 26 OWS would continue operating in “power saving” mode until then.

The 26 OWS was still operating in “power saving” mode on 4 October 2002. This Friday seemed to be a rather benign weather day. But it soon became a lot more exciting for Lt Mindy Chavez (Operations Flight C-Team OIC) and her team. At 1050 local forecasters heard their UPS units hum and beep as their computer monitors flickered. Just as quickly, the monitors stabilized and the UPS stopped beeping. Unknown to the forecasters, a major commercial power failure had struck a large portion of Barksdale AFB. The building’s emergency generators kicked on after commercial power flickered and died, providing electricity to the Floor.

Also unknown to the forecasters, the outage followed a several-second brown-out (as the flickering monitors showed). The fluctuating power damaged electrical motors and equipment throughout the building. Several people noticed the heavy smell of electrical-fire smoke and contacted the fire department as well as letting the duty Operations Flight and Combat Weather Flight teams know they should prepare for possible evacuation. The forecasters called their CWTs and powered down their computers just as the fire alarms sounded. Everyone evacuated to the parking lot where zone bosses TSgt Suzanne Miller and SSgt Ray Touchstone took role for accountability.

Mr. Derek Quinn, flight weather briefer-in-

charge, immediately evacuated to the Barksdale CWT to resume Flight Weather Briefings, once again thanks to the hospitality of Capt Weaver and her team. SSGts Brian Malone and Joe Forsten led A1C William Overbeck and A1C Clifton Moore to the CWT, taking along laptops to perform limited metwatch. At the same time, the Combat Weather Flight grabbed its classified laptops to move to their alternate location—only to discover that their alternate location had also been evacuated (several buildings around Barksdale experienced the same problem as protesting equipment responded to the power surges by emitting smoke). This left Mr. Harry Druckenmiller and the Combat Weather Flight in the parking lot guarding their classified equipment for the next two hours. When the fire marshals cleared the building for re-entry, the airmen of the 26 OWS slowly powered on their computers and monitors, and by 1400 local, the team was back in full operation. Recognizing the importance of setting up operations at the CWT, C Team leadership recognized Mr. Quinn and SSGt Malone for their quickness and thoroughness.

Things were a bit more relaxed during a planned power outage set up for 10 October to replace the faulty circuit breaker and restore “full power” operations for the 26 OWS. Once more the Air Force Weather team (AFWA on Point Weather Warnings, 15 OWS for flight weather briefings, and Combat Weather Flights throughout the AOR working TAF and warning responsibility for their bases) picked up the weather operations ball and ran with it. In addition to replacing the offending breaker, the 26 OWS Systems Flight took the opportunity during the outage to re-distribute the electrical load. As a result, flight weather briefers have their own computers, forecasters can utilize all four monitors per workstation, and the Combat Weather Flight is back on the Operations Production Floor where they can work side by side with the Operations Flight.

All of these events underscored the importance of being prepared. It also gave the 26 OWS a chance to “shake down” our evacuation procedures and learn some lessons on how to do things better when/if “next time” arrives. For example, having recently taken on more responsibility for Point Weather Warnings and expanded graphics production, the squadron learned the need and importance of constant Emergency Action Checklist updates. Obtaining emergency lighting on the floor, coordinating a central location for building evacuations, better defining the limited metwatch roles of evacuees to the Barksdale CWT, and smoothly handing off flight weather briefing responsibilities are a few more of the ways the

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“Putting a Face to the Name”

A1C Bryan Lachney

Home Town: Pineville, LA

Ops. Floor Position: Forecaster for Zone 2A for “D” (Dawg) Team.

What's the most challenging aspect of your job?

Timing of MVFR/IFR conditions and stationary frontal activity.

What's the most rewarding aspect of your job? The personalities of the people I work with and the experience I am gaining from working in an active portion of the Conus.

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view” we may not need to be doing. All of us need to keep a professional eye on how we do our daily tasks and to raise constructive suggestions on how they might be done smarter—or at all.

The bottom line is that we are military professionals serving our nation in a time of war. Things are likely to be very turbulent in the next few months, and we need to understand that, accept it, and press on. I am very proud of the way we have responded as a team to evolving missions and events. Keep it up, and be ready!

Lt Col Condray
Commander, 26 OWS

Goals while in the Air Force: To gain the respect of my coworkers and one day retire with honor as a Senior NCO.

Team Leader Quote: 2Lt Parsons: “Bryan is an extremely motivated and sharp young airman. His upbeat attitude contributes greatly in maintaining good relationships with the CWT’s. I expect he will go far with his career.”

CWT TAKES OVER GRAPHICS

On 01 Oct 02, the 26 OWS Combat Weather Flight (CWF) began producing all of the FITL graphics for the 26 OWS AOR. This move allows us to concentrate our expertise into a single team -- and one that is completely focused on producing first-class graphics products to support your missions. In the short term, you may experience some occasional delays in our 0-48 hour charts, as we want to ensure a thorough QC on the graphics our new CWF team is producing. You will also notice that our 3-5 day planning forecasts will be delayed by 4-5 hours, so that we can utilize the 12Z data to fine-tune these planning products. We hope these changes will have minimal impact on your operations. If you have any concerns over these planned changes to the graphics production times, please feel free to call our graphics team supervisors at DSN 781-3170/3158/3171/3069. Your feedback is always welcome and much appreciated.

Capt. Carter/CWF



Sheppard AFB Weather Station "Cleans Up" and Helps Local Families in Need

The Sheppard Weather Station conducts quarterly community service projects to help people in need.

They plan and complete one volunteer project as a team every quarter of the calendar year. The team members started their community service the first quarter of 2001. They brainstormed and created four of the projects from scratch but also joined in on some other larger scale projects.

All projects were done on members' off-duty time on weekends, and personnel who were TDY or deployed performed community service at their respective locations, as well.

The team has accomplished a variety of projects in the local area this year.

First, they participated in "Christmas in April," painting and repairing an elderly couple's home.

Then, they cleaned and repaired exterior portions of the Wichita Falls Hospice, giving terminally ill people a much-improved environment in which to spend their last days with family members.

They did yard work and interior work at the home of a disabled widow of a retired military member,



Members of the Sheppard Weather Station perform yard work at the home of a disabled widow of a retired military member for their third quarter community service project. The team conducts one volunteer project every quarter to help people in need. The photo was taken by Capt David Craft, Commander 80OSS/DOW. In the photo are (clockwise from top) MSgt Mike Chandler, (T)Sgt John Lawless, MSgt Brad Wasson, 2d Lt Cory Barack, and SSgt Ryan Glidden.

which provided much-needed improvement to the home, where she lives alone.

Next they will clean up and begin repainting the Veterans of Foreign Wars building on Access Rd., in order to prepare it for a Veterans' Day ceremony being held there.

Other projects have included participating in "Valentines for Vets" at the veterans' hospital in Bonham, Texas; landscaping and repairing the downtown YMCA's playground; answering phones during a local telethon; and painting the children's play area at a local teen emergency shelter.

Submitted by 2Lt Cory R. Barack,

Science Officer, Weather Operations Flight, Sheppard AFB, TX

Training, Training, Training

As we move into the transition season you will see more widespread heavy rainfall occurrences. Here are a few items to look for when forecasting these heavy rain events:

1. **Synoptic Patterns/Regimes:** Texas Low, Tropical Systems, Gulf Low, Quasi-Stationary Fronts with weak surface waves, Slow-Moving Occluding/Occluded Low
2. **Model Data:**
 - a. Deep Relative Humidities (850-500mb) over 80% covering the same general area for more than six hours
 - b. Cumulative upward vertical velocities (≥ 20) persisting over the same general area for more than six hours

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SYSTEMS UPDATE

In an effort to respond to customer needs, we have added links to several of our web applications for direct linking to products. On the Upper Air display ('Quick Links', 'Upper Air') and the FITL product display ('Quick Links', 'Mission Graphics'), we have added a row of links below the buttons that resolve to the latest image by itself (no html). Use these links in your Powerpoint presentations and the like.

We will be adding this functionality to more pages in the upcoming days; if you have specific products you need this type of link to, please let us know via the feedback page.

MSgt Lee Benson, Systems NCOIC

HAIL AND FAREWELLS

Welcome to all of our new 26OWS members. There are a lot of new folks roaming the hallway these days. Say "Hi", ask if they need any help and make them feel at home. Welcome to all our new airman coming in from FTAC and the schoolhouse. See the [Intranet](#) page for more.



Top: TSgt Ivey; TSgt Hoffmann; Bottom: SSgt Moyer; SSgt Soley.

"Mare's tails and mackerel scales make tall ships take in their sails."

A mackerel sky refers to cirrocumulus clouds, which often precede an approaching warm front, which will eventually bring veering winds (changing from northeast and east over to southwest and west) and precipitation.

<http://www.wxduke.com/proverb.html>

Congratulations to our newest Arrivals:

Cain Reid , born Oct 07 to A1C Cailin Humphries and her husband, Kyle

Jacob Ethan, born Nov 06 to A1C Susan Bradley



KUDOS, KUDOS, KUDOS

26OWS Award Winners

8th Air Force Quarterly Award Winners Jul-Sep 02

Amn: SrA(s) Gretchen M. Craine, D Team

A1C Craine has also been selected for BTZ promotion to SrA. Congratulations!

26OWS Monthly Award Winners

A1C Michael Ragsdale, Silver Flt, Nov 02

A1C Monica Santos, CWF, Oct 02

A1C Josh Smith, CWF, Sep 02

A1C Magen Chitwood and Amn Daniel Endris, have been chosen to represent the 26 OWS as proud members of the Barksdale AFB Honor Guard!



GREAT JOB!

Congratulations to all our airmen who have passed their End Of Course exams.

Congratulations to MSgt (sel) Chuck Norman on his reenlistment in the Air Force. At right, Captain Dean Carter administers the Oath of Enlistment .

Want to recognize outstanding individuals in your unit? Got something to share? Send pictures and information to:

leslie.sexton@barksdale.af.mil

Sports Shorts



On 27 Oct 02, 1Lt Jennifer Hettinga completed her fifth consecutive run of the Marine Corps Marathon. She ran the marathon with her father, retired Army Colonel David Holland, who has finished the marathon 26 times. Her father beat her this year with a 20 minute lead although she has beaten him 3 out of 5 runs. While she isn't letting us in on her time, she has run previous races under 4 hours.





From the Chief



26 OWS CDC Testing...Flat Out Getting IT!

"I'd like to take a moment to thank our 26th Operational Weather Squadron forecaster apprentices, their supervisors, the Operations and Training Flight's staff members and our contract SAIC trainers for the recent tremendous wave of CDC End-Of-Course (EOC) successes. Since employing mandatory EOC pretests, the total team effort has been nothing short of spectacular. Our First Term and retrainee apprentices responded with an amazing 78 straight passing scores for first time testers!! Oh, we've had a couple of minor setbacks, but you all have done extremely well. Especially considering that 106 of 129 3-levels on-station arrived since 1 Sep 01 pushing our administrative and training workload off the chart. Each of you have answered the call and went far above and beyond. Considering the chain of events, I'm more proud of your total training team effort than I've been in over 22 years.

We're still in the midst of a major training spin up and need to remain focused on the task at hand. Our influx of apprentices will slow and we need to prepare ourselves for the mission outside the hallowed walls of the 26th. Along with continuance of CDC success, we need to adequately prepare for task qualification, mobility, seasonal, and ancillary training. The commander and I are extremely proud of your efforts, and we salute you for making the 26th the best it can be. Aim High!"

Thanks,

Chief Haines

The 26 OWS Regional and Zonal forecast discussion bulletins are available through the AWN under the following headers/PIDs:

[FOUS10 KBSS, PID 6758, Regional Discussion](#)

[FOUS11 KBSS, PID 6759, Zone 1 Discussion](#)

[FOUS12 KBSS, PID 6760, Zone 2 Discussion](#)

The Regional Discussions are issued at 07Z and 18Z and the Zonal Discussions go out at 08Z and 19Z.

Discussions are also available on the 26 OWS web page under **[Forecast Funnel, Mesoscale](#)**.

Road Trip to Camp Robinson

The airmen from the 26th Operational Weather Squadron started slowly walking into the lobby of the Comfort Inn in North Little Rock, bleary eyed and disappointed. The mostly cloudy skies we had awakened to were not a good sign, and after watching the Weather Channel and talking to a TDY aircrew at Little Rock Air Force Base, our hopes of a helicopter ride were looking even more dismal. Broken to overcast skies, ceilings less than 2000 feet, 15 knot winds, light to moderate turbulence, and isolated thunderstorms in the area were keeping most of the helicopters at Camp Robinson Army Air Field grounded.

The twenty-minute drive in light drizzle through Little Rock and the Arkansas countryside to Camp Robinson was peaceful. After processing at the main gate, we finally made it to the Army Post that we have been supporting with daily aircrew briefings. The 114th Aviation Battalion of AASF, based out of Robinson AAF, trains pilots in the UH-60 "Blackhawks" and the UH-1 "Hueys". They also fly drug interdiction missions for the Arkansas Army National Guard. We walked into their briefing room to find a welcome sign for us on the board at the front of the room. CW4 Childress, CW3 Bailey and CSM Warren were there to greet us when we arrived. While we waited for the weather to clear, we watched a few movies that covered the mission and the operations performed by the Aviation Battalion at Camp Robinson.

After nearly two hours of talking face to face with the crews we had been briefing over the phone for the past year, we were told to get ready to go up in the Blackhawk. CW4 Childress would be the training instructor for the flight. We were given a flight path planner that showed we would be going northwest to Walnut Ridge, then over a training area to the east, and finally back to Camp Robinson. After two months of planning, we were finally in the air!

We were enlightened to see exactly how much the pilots depended on our weather forecasts. Every few minutes they were getting updates over the radio on where the storms were moving to and where they should fly to avoid them. We flew over the marshlands around the Post as the thunderstorms moved in. Since the storms prevented the crews from taking the original route they had planned for us that morning, they took us over the small ridges to the north to show us an area where they experience occasional turbulence when strong winds interact with the terrain.

We then descended for a 'nap of the earth' flight, which was their way of saying they were going to fly on the deck at high speeds, following the tree lines and/or rivers for navigation. We were also

able to try a 'zero gravity' move that involved turning sharp banks at a 30° angle to the ground with both doors open. We were told afterwards that these banks were not nearly as steep as the 70° angles that the Blackhawk is capable of executing.

We were able to stay in the air for an hour before the thunderstorms moved in and forced the pilots to land. The Crew Chief took us to the Dixie Pig Diner, a local favorite, where we had lunch and met more of the pilots we had been briefing. They were interested to know how hard we have been working to understand their mission in order to better support them. They were glad that we had enjoyed what they called a short flight.

While getting ready to leave, we were presented Arkansas National Guard coins by the Battalion Commander, Lt Col Rucker, along with an invitation to come back for another flight. However, we were told that we could only come back if we brought better weather with us.

Submitted by A1C Teresa Colwell

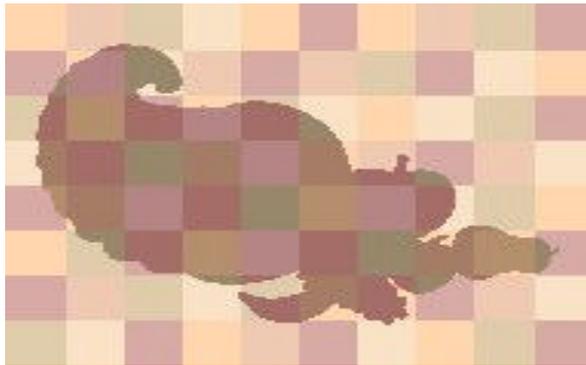
CONUS Ops/B-Team



squadron is continually improving procedures.

So remember—as solid and secure as your workspace looks, you never know when your regular duty day will be interrupted by a sudden evacuation. The more planning you do in advance, the better prepared you will be when that day comes. Good luck!

*The Men and Women
Of
The 26 OWS
Wish a Happy and Safe
Thanksgiving
To all our
CWTs and Customers
And your families.*



Cool Weather Related Sites:

Info on Constellations for this lat/long:

<http://www.wunderground.com/sky/ShowSky.asp>

Phil Plait's Bad Astronomy, dedicated to eradicating myths about Astronomy:

<http://www.badastronomy.com/>

Weather You Know It Or Not

What is the Largest Nonhuman Death Toll from a Tornado?

On 26 April 1994, a tornado swept through a turkey farm in Barron County, Wisconsin, destroying the farm and killing approximately 10,000 birds.

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c. Model precipitation amount "bulls-eyes" persisting over the same general area for more than six hours

d. Low-level convergence/max wind band persisting over the same general area for more than six hours.

Observed Data:

1. High storm precipitation totals upstream:
 - a. Doppler total precip. estimates
 - b. Observation reports (6rrrr and 7rrrr groups)
2. Strong radar echoes moving over the same locations indicate training.
3. Metsat - Cold cloud tops persisting over the same locations.

Continuation Training is on Icing. The Comet Icing Module and the Icing Test are both located on the 26 OWS Training web page.