



26 OWS NEWSLETTER



A1C Daniel Endris (2nd from right) and the Barksdale AFB Honor Guard were instrumental in transporting the remains of the Columbia Space Shuttle Crew with dignity.

To Serve with Honor

by A1C Endris

Being a member of the Barksdale AFB Honor Guard has been a tremendous honor for me. I've been a member for almost three months now, and I've enjoyed every minute of it. It's a truly rewarding and humbling experience to pay tribute to those veterans who have gone before us, who have fought for the freedoms we enjoy in this country today.

The Honor Guard performs a wide range of ceremonies. While our primary duty is military funerals, we also perform formal retreats, cordons for promotions and military weddings, and color guard for retirements and other special occasions around the base and Shreveport/Bossier communities. Barksdale covers a very large area for funerals from the northern half of Louisiana to virtually all of Texas east of Dallas and Houston. Most of the funerals I've done have been an average of two hours away. Being a member of the Honor Guard has also helped me become more involved in base functions. I had never been to a retirement or promotion ceremony until I per-

formed a color guard for them. Probably one of the most memorable details I've been on thus far was a color guard during the National Anthem for the PBR rodeo held here recently at the CenturyTel Center. Performing a detail in front of relatively small crowds isn't so bad, but when you're in front of 10,000 or more people, it's a different story!

Training is an essential part of what we do. If we are not gone on a detail, we're practicing. Whether it is funerals, color guard, or even the proper way to fold the American flag. Funerals receive the most attention. Everything from carrying the casket, to folding the US flag, to the twenty-one-gun salute is done over and over again until it's perfect. Every move has to be precise, just as it is written in the AFI's, because

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Welcome Chief Ortner

Hello! I'm CMSgt BJ Ortner, the new superintendent for the 26th Operational Weather Squadron (26 OWS). I've been on the job here at Barksdale for less than a week. First days here, all the young faces amazed me. Many appear apprehensive or unsure of their place in AFW, but they are eager to learn, eager to excel, and eager to do more. I have a great deal to learn about the inner workings of an OWS, but I too am eager to learn.

I've been in AFW for nearly 25 years and most of my assignments have been at the combat weather team (CWT) level working directly with Air Force and Army operators. In fact, I came here from the 30th Weather Squadron at Fort Hood, Texas where I spent the past 5 years working with some of the finest weather observers, forecasters, officers, and civilians. The squadron was always under manned with low experience, same as many other ACC locations, but as weather people always do the squadron excelled. Combat weather teams, often consisting of no more than two or three people, continually deployed to Macedonia, Bosnia, Kuwait, and most recently to Iraq. They provided detailed weather intelligence to combat operators often under harsh conditions. I truly believe these small teams could not have provided quality weather support if it not for the support of the OWS and AFWA structure. The help of the USAFE and each of the CONUS OWSs to provide accurate and relevant products have been first rate!

I was on a MAJCOM staff when the concept of regional weather centers was born and we have come a long way since that time. AFW re-engineering was never designed to reach a static or end point. We must and will continue to fine-tune and improve our processes. The OWS and the CWTs must work together--we cannot ignore each other. Someone asked me who are the customers for an OWS. I believe that is an easy question—it's the same AF and Army operators I've supported the past 25 years at



the base/post level. In the end, they are the most important. Weather operations conducted at the CWT, OWS, or at AFWA must always be directed toward supporting combat training and operations for the U.S. military and our allies. That is what makes us different from our civilian counterparts. I've seen weather make or break a mission. It is the job of all AFW personnel to insure aircrews, commanders, operational planners, and others fully understand the current and future state of the atmosphere and how it may impact their operations.

ACC manning overall is getting better. This new generation of weather technicians is now hitting the ground running at ACC base/post weather stations. The 26 OWS manning and experience is getting better too. In addition we are completing an internal organizational structure change that will also help improve our products. Finally, I'm excited and looking forward to have a part in the continual shaping of AFW. If I can be of assistance, please contact me at DSN 781-0211 or E-mail: barry.ortner@barksdale.af.mil.

Around the AOR



Left and above: Funnel Cloud at Ft. Hood TX. Taken by a member of the 3WS on his way to the main post. (No name was given)



Right: Hailstones from severe wx moving through Sarpy County, NE (near Omaha) on 4 May, 2003. Submitted by SrA Daniel Mike, 26 OWS



Below: Severe storms moving through Whiteman AFB, MO on 4 May, 2003.



SrA Brandon Bartley, a former 26 OWS forecaster, somewhere in Iraq with the 101st Airborne. This was taken by an unknown embedded photo journalist.

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all eyes are on us. Attention to detail is crucial. It can get old after awhile, but it's well worth the extra effort when you see the impact you've made on the families who have lost their loved ones. Military bearing is also stressed to the utmost importance. It important to press on and not react to mistakes made when performing a detail. Usually those watching don't know when something is done wrong.

Honor Guard works on a six-week cycle. The first two weeks are spent permanently with the Honor Guard, followed by two weeks here at the 26th. The last two weeks before returning to Honor Guard are spent in a standby status. I spent my first active rotation learning how to perform the wide variety of ceremonies. It was a lot to remember, but it all sank in pretty quick because we kept going over it nonstop. I didn't perform any details during this time, mainly because the first two weeks are a training period and it takes a long time to get the uniform altered. However, I had the opportunity to go to a couple funerals as an extra just to see how it was done at an actual gravesite. It helped when I performed my first funeral because I felt more prepared and confident in what I was doing.

I've been in the Air Force for about a year and a half now. It's been very rewarding and enjoyable thus far, but I've have learned to develop a deeper appreciation in the career I've chosen since joining Honor Guard. The three core values are taught from day one of BMT, and nothing less is expected of an Honor Guard member. The standards are high, and the pride of being part of this prestigious group is inexpressible.



Reach out and Bomb Someone...



Submitted by 1Lt Jacob Thomas

509 OSS/OSW Whiteman AFB, MO

The air war of what some of the media are calling "Gulf War II" began over Baghdad with Tomahawk cruise missiles closely followed by F-117 Nighthawks and B-2 Spirits. While some of the B-2 missions were flown from a forward deployed location, the majority originated from Whiteman AFB, Mo. The 509th OSS Weather Flight supported 45 combat missions from both locations in the span of 20 days. The result was 600+ weapons dropped with a bombing accuracy unmatched previously in any conflict.

The meteorologists from Whiteman AFB took part in this historical confrontation by constructing long duration flight weather briefings. We also deployed one member to a forward operating location along with a handful of B-2s. The briefings for the flights originating from Whiteman AFB included five air refuelings, take off and landing forecasts (36 hours apart), target weather, winds, hazards, and weather for 23 divert bases; all of which were made at the 509 OSS/OSW. This was on top of the daily tasks required for operating a weather station and supporting wing resources. When the time for the pre-take-off briefing

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approached, all facets of the weather package were brought together and quality checked by fellow forecasters. When all was said and done, 20 man-hours were spent on average per briefing for almost 20 consecutive days. Aircrew feedback was instrumental in fine-tuning these products, however all combat sorties returned with accolades for their outstanding weather support. This feedback was crucial in identifying any discrepancies with actual weather versus their pre-takeoff briefing.

One example dealt with flight level winds. After receiving feedback from the aircrews, special attention was given to try and correct any differences. The B-2 had a very narrow window to hit its assigned target due to the busy airspace over southwest Asia. With flights averaging 18 hours one-way, the margin for error was extremely slim. The B-2 targeting computer used inputs from a weather model that was found to be forecasting winds 20-50 knots slower than what was observed. A five-minute delay because of strong headwinds could make the aircrews miss their window. Other models were verified against both skew-T data and PIREPs in the region. The best source of information was selected and the problem was minimized. Wind speeds were much closer than previously forecast and aircrews no longer had to worry about a weather impact while completing their mission, ensuring more "bombs on target".

The 509th Bomb Wing set another milestone in showing that the B-2 could deploy to a forward operating location and generate combat sorties from both locations. The weather warriors at Whiteman are growing more and more adept at supporting long duration combat missions from Missouri and now from anywhere else. It's quite possible, and maybe probable, that this type of combat mission briefing will become more and more common as technology and aviation progress. So if you absolutely, positively need bombs on target anywhere, anyplace; the 509th Weather Flight will be there.

Major Eric Grelson Takes Command at Camp Red Cloud.

The former Operations Flight Commander took command of Det 1, 607th Weather Squadron on 16 June 2003. [Link to associated story.](#)



Congratulations

to 1Lt Michele LoBianco, 26 OWS/CCE on your selection for Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training (SUPT)



Congratulations to our newest Arrivals:

Addison Christopher Thomas, born Mar 28 to A1C Crystal and A1C Kyle LaRose

Jason, born Apr 2 to SrA Sarah and A1C Jason Conner

Ishmael Emmanuel, born Apr 10 to A1C Marquisha Thompkins

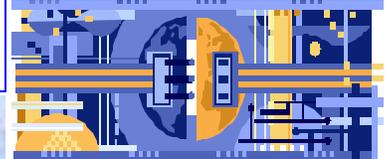
Nicholas John, born May 17 to Nick and Yaling Fillo

Noah Reid, born Jun 4 to A1C Sarah and George Helwig



What 's New At the Hub?

Conus Hazard FITL Charts



On Feb 17, 2003, the 26 OWS went operational with the Stitched CONUS HAZARDS FITL products. These point in time charts, three years in the making, were brought to fruition by technicians and forecasters of the 26 OWS Combat Weather Flight. For three years Air Force Weather has been attempting to devise a solution to the need for an integrated CONUS flight weather hazard product. This product, it was hoped, would allow the customer the benefit of each different area forecaster's intimate knowledge of their particular AOR on one easy-view product. This would eliminate the hassle and extra time involved in visiting the four separate CONUS OWS websites to get the big picture of weather hazards across the US; something particularly useful for pilots flying long distance sorties.

The project began in late December 2002. The problem was twofold: Principally, how was Air Force Weather going to take four unique, stand-alone regional products and place them onto a single CONUS map? Secondly, who was going to be responsible for the fusion process? The 26 OWS stepped up to take the lead in this challenge. Working closely with the other CONUS Operational Weather Squadrons, a system was developed whereby the 26 OWS would receive products from each OWS to combine with their

own. During the daily production cycle, each OWS works together to ensure that Hazard Depiction Areas flow seamlessly from one AOR to the next, while maintaining meteorological integrity across the board. This process involves several phone conversations between the CONUS hubs during, and after, chart analysis to "match borders." Once the major "border issues" have been resolved, the stitching itself is actually quite easy to accomplish; a simple matter of connecting lines and making aesthetic nuances consistent.

The CONUS HAZARDS FITL products: icing, turbulence, and thunderstorms, are available to the customer Monday – Friday, twice daily, at the 12Z and 00Z forecast periods. The 00Z chart is updated twice daily at 18Z and 24Z, and the 12Z is amended when required. These products, which support NORTHCOM, HQ JFCOM, 8AF and NORAD, as well as Operations Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle, have been well received thus far. Customer feedback indicates increased popularity of the product, as well as a desire among its users to have the products available for additional forecast periods and on the weekends. Meeting the needs of the mission and the customer has been the catalyst for making this mission a success.

Good words from Altus AFB:

Here's an article from AETC related to the [combined weather support efforts](#) of the Altus CWT and 26 OWS!! Both teams split the support (CWT-Thur/Fri - OWS-Sat). We provided continual updates to DD Form 175-1's every hour on the half hour aiding in this expeditious effort.

I'm proud of the professional teamwork through initial coordination all the way through the forecasters working up the briefings; both teams aided this incredible show of Aerospace power and rapid mobility on an extremely short notice.

Thanks,

Chris Peterson, 2Lt USAF, Weather Flight Commander

Thanks from Vance AFB

Maj. Fleishauer,

Just wanted to pass along our base newspaper story (text only) printed this past week. It talks about our weather on May 9 and May 16. Once again, great teamwork between 26 OWS/ Vance CWT. Again, I made it a point to insure the base commander and leadership knew the 26 OWS was "watching, working, and warning" in conjunction with us and that the process definitely works. More great PR for reengineered operations. Please pass along our sincere thanks to your troops for their professionalism and dedication.

V/R

Capt. John B. Sandifer

Combat Weather Team Commander, Vance AFB, OK

Tornado hits Vance

By Master Sgt. George F. Jozens, NCO in Charge Public Affairs
Photo by Master Sgt. George F. Jozens (A tornado May 16 broke two windows in the Vance tower)

As usual the spring weather in this area of the country is unpredictable and sometimes severe, as is the case of the last couple Fridays at Vance.

On May 9, Vance had a severe thunderstorm with one-inch hail and May 16 a tornado touched down and skipped through the area.

"A severe thunderstorm warning was issued at 11:06 p.m.," said Capt. John Sandifer, Combat Weather Team commander. "A severe thunderstorm occurred at 1:53 a.m. Our predictions were correct and Vance had more than three hours lead time." That wasn't the end of the bad weather.

"We issued a tornado watch just before the thunderstorm hit at 12:51 a.m.," Captain Sandifer said. "Then a tornado warning was issued at 1:32 a.m. with the tornado occurring at Vance at 2:03 a.m. The weather systems worked again giving Vance people 31 minutes of lead time."

The tornado started in a neighboring area.

"The tornado initially touched down near Ames and followed a northeasterly track brushing the northern end of the runway and continued to Enid damaging a gas station on Highway 81," Cap-

tain Sandifer said. "After unconfirmed reports of damage in Ames, it appears the tornado skipped quite a bit and may have only contacted the ground occasionally once it arrived at Vance.

"The base received only minor damage including broken windows in the control tower, downed tree limbs and a damaged awning on the youth center," Captain Sandifer said. "The weather flight's north wind sensor recorded 137 mph wind when it was damaged and 76 mph on the south sensor. Garfield County Emergency Management officials and the National Weather Service are investigating the damage but it initially appears the tornado was likely a small F0."

In all, the base had good lead-time to take shelter.

"Our professionals in the weather shop did a fantastic job," said Col. A.J. Stewart, 71st Flying Training Wing commander. "Master Sgt. Joseph Andrukaitis, Technical Sgt. Russ Black and Senior Airman Doug Wright in addition to the 26th Operations Weather Squadron hub at Barksdale AFB in Louisiana, did an admirable job of watching and warning for these events."

Captain Sandifer offers some words of advice.

When the base siren sounds, do not call the command post or weather shop to ask questions. Non-mission essential calls task the limited manpower and greatly impact their ability to watch, warn and coordinate for severe weather. Command post personnel are extremely busy running critical notification checklists and coordinating with senior leadership while weather personnel are closely watching weather conditions and monitoring television and radio, while coordinating with county emergency management officials, command post, the 26th OWS and senior leadership.

Another source of confusion for people is the disparity between the National Weather Service weather watches and warnings and the base's alerts. The weather shop only issues watches and warnings for the base and the NWS warns by county or region. If severe weather is occurring near Vance, but won't directly hit the base, base weather won't issue a warning even if the NWS does.

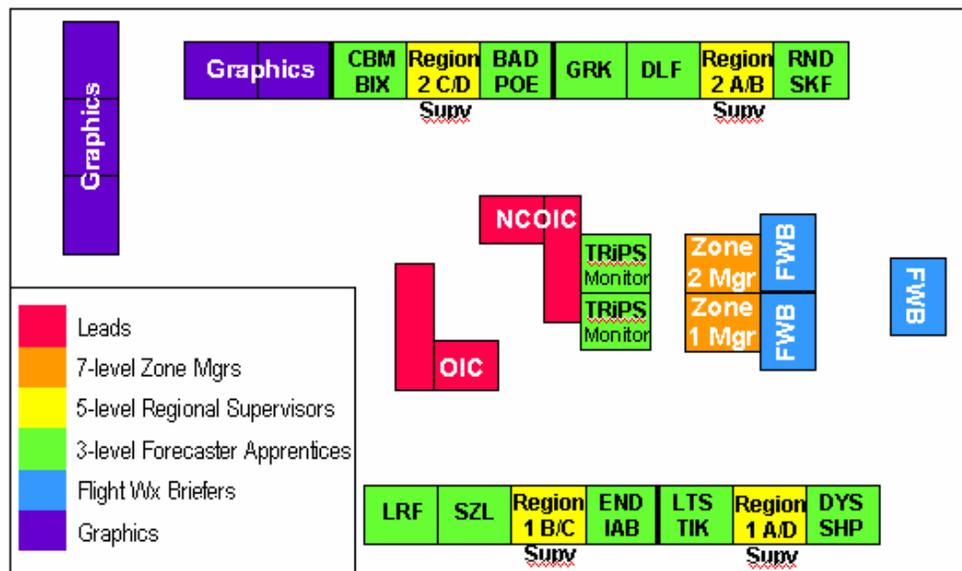
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Congratulations to the 26 OWS Systems Flight on being the ACC nominee for the Merewether Award. Front row from Left: MSgt Lee Benson (NCOIC SysFit), SSgt Pete Medhurst; TSgt Terrence Jones; SrA Jessica Champion; Ms. Clarissa Emrick (26 OWS webmaster); Ms. Leslie Sexton and Mr. Aaron Rathman. Back row from left: A1C David Wright; Mr. Mike King; Mr. Ron Maurer and Mr. James Kidd.

OPS FLOOR LAYOUT

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“On May 9, we felt strongly that a tornado was forming at Vance based on its radar signature and issued a tornado warning while the NWS did not,” said Captain Sandifer. “We did get one-inch sized hail, but fortunately, a tornado did not occur. The bottom line is to tune in to local weather sources and stay informed. If Vance weather issues a warning, take appropriate action because it expects the weather to hit the base. If the NWS issues a warning, listen for where the storms are headed and take appropriate action.”

Submitted by Capt. John B. Sandifer, CWT Commander, Vance AFB, OK.

The 1st Annual 26 OWS Combat Dining In was a huge success from the tapping of the kegs, to Lt Lobianco wallowing in the mud hole, to seeing Lt. Col Condray with a push broom. A good time was had by all. For those curious minds, the grog consisted of 5 flavors of Kool-Aid, root beer, coke, Oreos and gummy worms. A special thanks goes to the set up crew, MSgt Loy, SSgt Hutton, SSgt Edwards, SSgt Reed, A1C Martinez, A1C Bishop, A1C's Hubbard and Hubbard, A1C Berry and A1C Herring, as well as SrA Rocha for those succulent rib eyes.



Lt Col Condray and 8 AF CCM Ledoux



Below
Ready on the left.... Ready on the right....



Lt. LoBianco gets a helping hand.



Left: A1C Hubbard
and A1C Herring .
Right: SrA Rocha on
the grill.



Applause! Applause!

26OWS Award Winners

CY 2002 Air Force Weather Award Winners
 Spengler Award (Most Outstanding AFW IMA)
 SMSgt Thomas Needham
 (2 OSS/OSW, Barksdale AFB, LA)

26OWS Quarterly Award Winners Jan-Mar 2003

Airman - A1C Michael Ragsdale
 NCO - TSgt Terrence Jones
 SNCO - SMSgt Pat Flieg
 CGO - 2Lt Mindy Chavez
 Civ - Mr. Rich Gideons

8AF Airmen of the Month
 SrA Brandy Tamplain Jun 03

26OWS Monthly Award Winners
 A1C Daniel Endris, Apr 03
 A1C Matthew Staton May 03
 SrA Brandy Tamplain Jun 03



Congratulations to TSgt Richard Alred (above) and A1C Hamilton (below) on their reenlistments.



*Congratulations to SrA Monica Yoas
 On completing the requirements for her
 CCAF in Weather Technology.*

GREAT JOB!

*Congratulations to all our airmen who have
 passed their End Of Course exams and to those
 who have received their 5 level..*

The CWT at Altus has been busy...

- Lt Peterson, 97 OSS Flt/CC and CGO of the quarter!
- SrA Mullen awarded AFAM and is on his way to Turkey!
- SSgt Casillas deploys & reenlists \$\$\$\$\$!
- SSgt(S) Owens goes to ALS & will be PROMOTED 21 Aug!
- SSgt Lumpkin selected for TSgt & goes to OPUP class at KBIX!
- SSgt Wallace is Forecaster of the Quarter AND finally has the wheels turning to get his BS degree!
- MSgt Love has his orders to the ROK (A-R-M-Y training sir!)
- \$25K renovation project awarded, starts 18 July!

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

leslie.sexton@barksdale.af.mil



Congratulations To our Newest MSGT Selectees

MSgt (sel) Mitchell Gilbreath, B Team

MSgt (sel) Terrence Jones, Systems Flight



Congratulations to the following for their selection as SrA Below-the-Zone (BTZ): SrA (sel) Matthew Thompson, CWF; SrA (sel) Michael Ragsdale, B-Team; SrA (sel) Amy Rucobo, D Team and SrA (sel) Desiree Herring, D Team.



Photos courtesy of the 97 OSS/OSW, Altus AFB, OK. Thunderstorm microburst, they missed the outflow, but got the rain shaft.



Websites of Interest...

Information on your [Air Force Benefits](#).

What's your environmental IQ? Take the [Quiz](#).

[WeatherNet Camera](#)



Weather Lore...

*"Trace in the sky the painter's brush,
The winds around you soon will
rush."*



The "painter's brush" are cirrus clouds. These are high-level ice clouds that often precede the approach of a storm system.

SkyWatch

Thanks to all the units that submitted items for the newsletter. I appreciate the great input and feedback from you all. Please keep them coming.

Leslie Sexton,

Editor, 26 OWS Newsletter