



BAY NOTES



News from the USAF Band of the Golden West

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In this Issue:

- Commander's Corner.....p. 1
- Holiday Concerts.....p. 2
- Fire, Fire, Fire.....p. 3
- From Tours to Technology.....p. 4
- New Arrivals.....p. 5



October performance at McAfee Coliseum for the Oakland A's *Salute to the Armed Forces*



Commander's Corner
Captain R. Michael Mench

The USAF celebrated its 59th anniversary this past year and as we look forward to celebrating 60 years as our own service, the Band of the Golden West enters its own new dimension in the digital world! This is the inaugural issue of our digital newsletter. We are still in the growing stage of this new delivery system, and hope you stay with us as we continue to make it useful, timely and above all, informative.

Since our last newsletter nearly 2 years ago, our band has continued to support the USAF at home and abroad in over 1000 performances for millions of people and appreciative crowds. In June and July of 2005, the band supported its first deployment to the Middle East and Africa by sending our popular music ensemble *Mobility* to support deployed troops in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. I am extremely proud of the members of *Mobility* for the support and touch of home they gave our brothers and sisters in arms directly in theater. As we move forward in the coming years, we will continue to support deployments with musical support for both ceremonial and troop morale wherever we are needed.

As you'll read in this newsletter, we suffered a catastrophic fire to our equipment truck as we began our 4th of July tour to southern California. Nobody was hurt, but we lost nearly \$300K in equipment. Thanks to our VERY dedicated members we were able to revamp the entire tour with alternate ensembles. Although the crowds might have been shocked to see a 5-member woodwind quintet or a 20-member jazz band instead of our 45-piece concert band, they were all grateful for the dose of patriotism we were able to bring them on our nation's birthday. I must also thank our leadership at Air Mobility Command who graciously gave complete financial support to the reconstitution efforts of our equipment.

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(continued from page 1)

We continue to attract the best and the brightest to our career field, and in this issue we will highlight three of our newest members. With that said, we must also announce the retirement of two members who gave a career in service to their country. SMSgt Mark Shrode gave 28 years and TSgt Candis Hanson gave 20 years of dedicated and artistic service. Their presence is missed, and we wish them both continued success and health as they move forward with new wings.

All the best,

Capt R. Michael Mench



Operation Spread Holiday Cheer

Airman First Class D. Ryan Williams

This holiday season featured a wide array of performances from the United States Air Force Band of the Golden West.

Keeping with yearly tradition, the USAF Band of the Golden West Concert Band, under the direction of Captain R. Michael Mench, performed multiple holiday concerts in the east-bay area during the week of the 3rd through the 9th of December. Concerts were presented in Hayward, Lodi, Fairfield and Vacaville, CA. These holiday performances featured the band's stylistic versatility in showcasing its instrumentalist and vocalist musicians. Colors were presented each night by the Travis Base Honor Guard. KUIK radio personality Lynda Rose returned to serve as narrator for the concerts, which also featured a visit from Santa Claus, who distributed jelly beans donated by Jelly Belly of Fairfield to concert goers. Vocalist A1C Rachael Trimble received enthusiastic applause for her performance of "The Twelve Days of Christmas," arranged by CMSgt Larry MacTaggart. The concert also included selections from Irving Berlin's musical "White Christmas," as well as a traditional sing-along which energized concert goers into the holiday season.



Saxophone Quartet Caroling

The Concert Band was not the only USAF Band of the Golden West ensemble performing during the holiday season. Following the last concert band performance in Vacaville, the band's chamber and small ensembles were "deployed" to several USAF bases and installations throughout the band's geographic area of responsibility. Their primary mission: "attack" Department of Defense employees with holiday cheer. These holiday "caroling" missions, brought holiday music directly to the desks and office cubicles of holiday-hungry active duty, guard and civilian Air Force employees.

The following ensembles visited these locations: Travis Brass Quintet—Travis AFB, Beale AFB, and the VA Hospital in Yountville, CA; Saxophone Quartet—at Mountain Home AFB, and Boise Air National Guard base in Idaho; Golden West Winds—Portland Air National Guard base, and the Veterans Administration Hospital in Portland, Oregon, and also in Washington at McChord AFB and Fairchild AFB; Vocal Quintet + Guitar—in California at March AFB, Los Angeles AFB, and Vandenberg AFB; and finally, the Clarinet Quartet—at Nellis AFB, Nevada and Edwards AFB, California.



Vocalists and Guitarist caroling at the Base Hospital

In total, this holiday season saw over 120 performances by various ensembles from the USAF Band of the Golden West.

Fire!, Fire!, Fire!

Technical Sergeant Lindsey Bartlett and Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger

Fireworks came early for commuters traveling through Solano County on June 30th. As they drove along I-80 passing by Cordelia, a small town just southwest of Travis Air Force Base, a truck lay burning at the side of the road. Unfortunately, the source of the fire was the tractor-trailer belonging to the USAF Band of the Golden West, which was carrying band equipment for the Concert Band's July 4th Tour.

TSgt Lindsey Bartlett, operations representative for the concert band, received a phone call at 11:30 am from dispatch at Travis transportation. Dispatch shared the devastating news that the band's tractor-trailer had just caught fire, only a few miles from the base.

TSgt Bartlett then called the band facility, where the rest of the band was meeting for a noon departure. She relayed the news to the band's command staff who quickly met to determine the next course of action. At the site of the fire, Mr. Larry Pacheco, the band's civilian driver, had acted in an outstanding manner; he safely drove the truck to the side of the road and away from busy traffic. Mr. Pacheco then exited the truck with a fire extinguisher hoping to extinguish the fire, but unfortunately the fire spread too quickly. Larry had received the only injuries from the blaze—minor burns to his hands.

Once the fire reached the fuel tanks, they exploded creating a horrifying sound heard throughout Cordelia. The ensuing fire engulfed the trailer, and created a plume of thick, black smoke. The fire department contained the fire so it wouldn't spread to nearby grasslands.

The holiday weekend's higher traffic volume created an extremely dangerous situation; as a result California Highway Patrol officers

closed all the interstate's westbound lanes for almost two hours, snarling traffic for miles in all directions. Once the fire was extinguished, only black debris of what use to be the band's equipment and a charred skeletal frame of the truck and trailer remained.



Flames engulf the band's tractor trailer



Firefighters inspect the damage

Approximately \$300,000 worth of mission-essential equipment was completely lost, including the sound system, music stands, percussion equipment, large instruments and uniforms.

In addition to the equipment, all of the band's sheet music was destroyed and impossible to replace before the scheduled concert that evening. Captain R. Michael Mench, the band's commander, decided to send the Golden West Winds woodwind quintet to Carmel to play the evening concert in place of the Concert Band.

The rest of the tour was performed by the Commander's jazz ensemble. As soon as possible, the woodwind quintet was contacted and departed for Carmel. The quintet barely arrived in time to take the stage at the Sunset Center largely due to the chaos on the freeways from "our" truck fire. Despite hearing news that the whole band would not be there to perform, Carmel's Sunset Center was filled to its 750 person capacity.

When told about the band's equipment trailer fire, the audience let out a horrified gasp, but concerns were eased with the quintet's mix of popular and patriotic selections, which were warmly received by the enthusiastic Carmel audience.

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(continued from page 3)

Meanwhile, back at the band building, jazz ensemble members quickly collected remaining equipment from the band facility, gathered spare uniforms, music and personal instruments. A replacement trailer arrived shortly and the jazz band departed.

The Commanders Jazz Ensemble performed the remaining concerts in Santa Maria, Temple City (Los Angeles), Ojai and at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library pleasing the crowds with a combination of big band favorites and patriotic arrangements.



A total loss

Operations and media representatives worked hard to contact concert sponsors and hotel managers to relay the news of the fire. All were saddened to hear about the equipment loss, but were relieved that no one was injured and enthusiastic to have substitute ensembles perform.

Following the band's tour, letters poured into the office of General Duncan McNabb, Commander of Air Mobility Command, regarding the professionalism of the band members. General McNabb wrote regarding the concerts, "The entire band represents the heart of 'service before self and excellence in all we do.' "



***Fuerza Musícal* energizes an enthusiastic audience in Newark, California**

From Tours to Technology

Technical Sergeant Gary Rosenak

After rockin' Barstow and Hollywood, California over the 4th of July, the Band of the Golden West's popular music ensemble *Mobility* geared up to support our veterans with performances at the "East Bay Stand Down" in Alameda and Dixon, California. These events brought together various agencies that sponsor programs to help homeless veterans get back on their feet.

The members of *Mobility* also teamed with selected horn players and percussionists from the squadron to form *Fuerza Musícal*, and presented a Latin Pop/Salsa concert for the public in Newark, CA on August 20. Vocalists A1C Andrew Jones and Airman Pamela Kelly added their talents to *Fuerza Musícal*, as did one of the squadron's newest members, guitarist A1C Dustin Trimble. A1C Andrew Jones will be permanently joining *Mobility* at the end of September to front the band along side our other vocalist SSgt Paula Goetz. (continued on next page)



A1C Andrew Jones

(continued from page 4)

Mobility will say goodbye to vocalist SSgt Niko Ellison as he moves to perform with the *Concert Band* and *Commanders* jazz ensemble. We are sure SSgt Ellison will continue to thrill audiences for those two groups with his incredible talent and stage presence.

In March, the Band of the Golden West hosted an in-house *M-Audio* clinic, and since then, our drummer, SSgt Troy Griffin, has been hard at work integrating this new technology into *Mobility's* live performances.

This computer-based program allows us to pre-record parts, otherwise left un-played, due to the number of personnel in the group. For example, if the audience hears four vocalists but only sees two, there may be some digital trickery involved! This digital manipulation, however, is only being used to enhance the music we perform and provide a higher quality product for our audiences. Kudos go out to our audio engineers, SSgt Steve Moore and A1C Lou Kohley, who are ultimately responsible for what you hear from the stage. They're always top-notch. That's it for now – we hope to see you at one of our future performances.



Mobility beside an Army Helicopter

New Arrivals

Senior Airman Greg Gallant

We would like to welcome three new wonderful musicians to the Band of the Golden West family. After winning highly sought after positions with the band, the lucky candidates attended basic training in San Antonio, TX to become indoctrinated in Air Force culture. Each new member brings a wealth of education, professionalism, dedication and experience to the music that will ensure our mission success for years to come. What a great way to begin careers as professional musicians! Expect to hear more from these rising stars in the future.

Airman First Class Andrew Jones



Vocalist A1C Jones is originally from Chicago, IL and joined the band on November 21, 2005. He attended the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University, working towards a Music Education degree with a vocal emphasis. A1C Jones was initially slated to enter the Ground Radio Communications field in the Air Force, but auditioned successfully with the Band of the West at Lackland, AFB in Texas while in basic training. When off duty, Andrew enjoys spending time with his wife and two children, playing tennis, and volunteering at the local chapel.

Airman First Class Melissa Rocha

Flutist A1C Rocha arrived for duty on April 7, 2006. Originally from San Juan Texas, A1C Melissa Rocha earned a Bachelor of Music degree in Flute Performance from the University of North Texas where she studied with Terri Sundberg. She then attended the University of Colorado at Boulder and received a Master of Music Degree in Flute Performance. While at UC Boulder, she studied with Alexa Still and was the recipient of the Virginia Blake Becker Flute Scholarship. A1C Rocha was named an outstanding performer at the 1998 Texas Flute Society Festival and was a finalist in the 2002 Mid-Atlantic Flute Fair Young Artist Piccolo Competition held in Washington D.C. Since joining the band, A1C Rocha was named Airman of the Quarter for April-June 2006. When off duty, A1C Rocha studies Latin music and culture.



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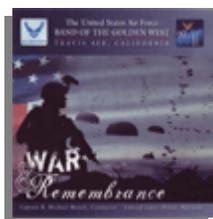
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Airman Pamela Kelley

A Roseville, CA native, vocalist Amn Kelley joined the band on February 6, 2006. Prior to joining the Air Force, she was a member of the Sacramento Jazz Society for 18 years and has performed throughout the greater Sacramento and San Francisco Bay area. In her spare time, Amn Kelly enjoys swing and ballroom dancing.



Coda



The USAF Band of the Golden West is pleased to announce the 2007 release of its latest recording, "War and Remembrance." This recording features stirring patriotic concert band selections and includes special guest Edward James Olmos, actor from Sci Fi Channel's Battlestar Galactica, narrating Aaron Copland's "A Lincoln Portrait."

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