



U.S. AIR FORCE

BAY NOTES



News from the USAF Band of the Golden West

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Saxophonist Technical Sergeant Jim Butler performs in Nairobi, Kenya as part of Mobility's recent deployment (for more see article on page 3).
(USN photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Scott Cohen)



Commander's Corner
Major Keith Bland

Spring is definitely in the air here in Northern California, and we're currently preparing music from one of my favorite American composers, George Gershwin. Gershwin's music always seems to capture a freshness of spirit and buoyancy of emotion, so it's been a wonderful way for us to welcome spring-time. The concert band presented a concert, featuring renowned pianist and Gershwin interpreter Dr. Richard Glazier, at the Vacaville Performing Arts Theater on April 4th.

In our last Bay Notes, we wrote about the deployment preparation of our popular music group "Mobility". In this issue, we have a great article by the unit's Noncommissioned Officer in Charge, Master Sergeant Tom Eckert, discussing their actual deployment experiences. We are so proud of all of our members for their tremendous service throughout US Central Command and so very thankful for their safe return home. This issue also features an article about the Concert Band's recent community relations tour to the Los Angeles metro area, written by principal trombonist Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger.

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We've had several personnel moves in the last few months. We welcomed two new clarinetists, Technical Sergeant Mark Craig and Senior Airman Greg Gallant returning from Germany, and guitarist Staff Sergeant Alex Nikiforoff, joining us from the Army Band program. We said farewell to guitarist Technical Sergeant Gary Rosenak as he departed for an assignment to Yokota Air Base, Japan—we'll miss his consummate musicianship and wry sense of humor. We'll also be saying goodbye in the next few weeks to Senior Airman Rachel Trimble and Senior Airman Dustin Trimble, remarkable musicians and two of the finest young Airmen I've been privileged to work with, as they depart for their new assignment with the USAFE Band in Germany. Thanks to all, and best wishes!

As our musical units travel around the western United States, we're so proud to represent the excellence of the men and women of the U.S. Air Force's Air Mobility Command. These professional Airmen fly about 900 sorties on a typical day encompassing a wide range of missions such as cargo and passenger movement, aerial refueling, and aeromedical evacuation. Mobility Airmen also deliver "soft power" at home and abroad, saving lives and alleviating suffering in the aftermath of natural disaster or other crises. It's a truly remarkable team, and we thank you for your continued support of all the men and women serving our nation today.



Major Bland leads the band in Torrance, CA
(USAF photo by Joe Juarez)

Command Chief Visits Band Facility



Air Mobility Command Chief Master Sergeant Barron (left) speaks with Major Bland, commander of the Band of the Golden West
(USAF Photo)

The Band of the Golden West recently welcomed Command Chief Master Sergeant Joseph E. Barron, Jr., from Air Mobility Command (AMC) at Scott Air Force Base to the band facility.

During his visit, Chief Barron toured the band facility, saw several ensembles in rehearsal and met with all band members. The Chief also answered questions from band members.

Chief Barron is the principal advisor to the AMC commander and his senior staff on matters of health, welfare and morale, professional development, and the effective utilization of over 114,000 enlisted personnel assigned to Air Mobility Command.

Mobility Performs For '08 Deployment

Master Sergeant Tom Eckert

The USAF Band of the Golden West popular music group Mobility spent most of 2008 preparing for our deployment to support Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Our bass player and Supply representative, Staff Sergeant Nate Bersee, had to scramble to cover some last-minute gear requirements and fortunately those concerns were all behind us by the time we departed Travis AFB.

After a 17-hour flight, we arrived at Al Udeid Air Base in the middle of the night. While not palatial, our housing was at least a hardened structure, a big step up from the tents which previous bands had utilized. We shipped much of our gear in advance from Travis and utilized gear that was already on the premises to fill out the rest of our requirements.

The first few performances for "Dune" (our deployed group name) were at Al Udeid, giving us a chance to make sure all of our gear worked properly. Our audio guy, Senior Airman Lou Kohley, cut our sound system down to the bare minimum. He actually did himself out of a job; we performed without a sound board for the entire deployment and Lou joined the band on stage, dancing, playing various percussion instruments, and generally clowning around with our trumpet player, Technical Sergeant Jon Ruff. I was told more than once that Jon and Lou made the show.



Members of Mobility perform at Camp Victory in Iraq.
(photo by Lieutenant Colonel Joe Vitale)



Members of Mobility travelling to a performance.
(photo by Lieutenant Colonel Joe Vitale)

Technical Sergeant Preston Keating. He is an expert performer on the cajone, a sort of one-piece drum set that lends itself perfectly to the more intimate, acoustic sound.

Our first trip was to Kandahar, Afghanistan where we played at a farewell cookout for 1,800 US Marines who were heading back to the US.

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I was so proud of our vocalists, Technical Sergeant Paula Goetz and Senior Airman Rachel Trimble, who went above and beyond to make our show entertaining for this deserving group. Paula jumped up on tables while Rachel handed out “percussion toys” and got audience members to join in the performance. It was a night to remember. I was pleased and relieved to note our Operations Representative, Technical Sergeant Jim Butler, was a detail man and left nothing to chance.

Our trip to Iraq was very memorable, but also quite tiring. We flew eight times in 16 days and lost a night’s sleep almost every time. Iraq afforded us our most memorable photo op: a chance to sit in Saddam Hussein’s throne at Al Faw Palace.

There were two memorable gigs in Iraq. The first was at Camp Sather where, to our great surprise, several people we knew from our Advanced Contingency Skills Training class showed up to hear our performance. After their putting up with “band geeks” through that rigorous training, it was rewarding to show our colleagues what we were all about. The second was at Balad Air Base on Halloween where Senior Airman Dustin Trimble, our guitarist and fitness guru, contributed a fine arrangement of some appropriate Halloween music.



Band members at Saddam Hussein’s former throne at Al Faw Palace in Iraq
(photo by Lieutenant Colonel Joe Vitale)

Back at Al Udeid, we traveled by van out to some local schools and were, literally, rock stars everywhere we went. We played at a school for the blind where we met a man whose main connection to the world was through music. He sat in with us on keyboards, at one point elbowing our regular pianist, Technical Sergeant Mike Williams, out of the way as if to say, “This is my gig; I’ve got it!”



Band Members perform on a hot day in Nairobi, Kenya for an enthusiastic crowd
(USN photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Scott Cohen)

Our last trip was easily the most enjoyable; in support of US Embassy community relations efforts, we went to Kenya. While performing at the US Ambassador’s residence, the German Ambassador joined us on keyboards as his date sang a rockin’ version of “Proud Mary”. A Kenyan trombonist came up to join me on some American rock. We had a blast; it was a little bit of a letdown when the evening was over.

My favorite day in Kenya was when we performed for an enthusiastic crowd of 1,800 at Egerton University. It was a hot, sunny day and the students must have roasted. Still, they were so into the music I think they ignored the temperature and simply loved everything we did. A number of young people asked how they might join the USAF, a testament to the band’s impact.

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"Dune" finally made its way home to the US in early December, landing at Baltimore Washington International Airport on our way back to California. At one point, I noticed there was a rousing cheer whenever service members passed through the door leading to the main wing of the airport. When it was my turn to go through, I was surprised to find a large crowd made up of members of Operation Welcome Home Maryland. They turned out to greet our whole planeload of service members returning from the war. I shook hands with many an old vet and with Cub Scouts from Pack 824, who had put together welcome packets of food and hand-drawn cards for all of us. I've completely lost count of the number of total strangers who went out of their way to welcome us home and can only say that I was humbled by the gesture. I'm proud of my group and honored to have had this opportunity to serve.

Golden West Winds Performs for German Bassoonist



Bassoonist Frank Forst (right) makes suggestions to members of the Golden West Winds at a recent Masterclass
(photo by Technical Sergeant Ken Buchanan)

The Golden West Winds woodwind quintet recently had the honor of performing for a masterclass with German bassoonist Frank Forst.

Forst was visiting the Northern California area to perform as a soloist with the California Youth Symphony and spent some time working with our band members.

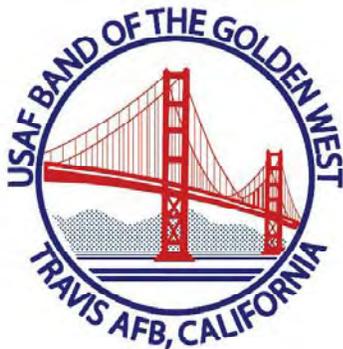
Following the masterclass, audience members had the opportunity to speak with quintet members about careers in the Air Force as military musicians and with Forst about music in Germany.

Current Openings:

The United States Air Force Band of the Golden West announces an immediate opening:

TROMBONE

Approximate starting salary \$36,000, 30 days annual paid vacation, full medical and dental benefits.
For consideration, send resume to: auditions@travis.af.mil



Band Recognizes Annual Award Winners

Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year



Master Sergeant Mike Goetz
(USAF Photo)

Noncommissioned Officer of the Year



Technical Sergeant Mike Williams
(USAF Photo)

Airman of the Year



Senior Airman Lou Kohley
(USAF Photo)

The Band of the Golden West recently announced the annual award winners for the unit. These members represent the best of the band, and epitomize the professionalism of the Air Force.

In addition, Technical Sergeant Mike Williams and Senior Airman Lou Kohley were also recognized as winners of the 2008 Air Mobility Command Outstanding Bandsmen awards.

Mobility Performs at Anaheim Convention



Mobility performs at the NAMM show in Anaheim, California
(photo by Technical Sergeant Ken Buchanan)

Mobility was invited to perform at the recent National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) music trade show held in Anaheim, California. The convention represents music retailers worldwide and was attended by over 88,000 with 1,500 exhibitors.

Mobility's performance was Saturday evening in the convention lobby and drew critical praise from all who heard the band.

In addition to Mobility, other performers at the NAMM show included Gene Simmons, pianist Alicia Keys and Beach Boys members Brian Wilson and Jeff Foskett.

Concert Band Presents Concert Tour in Los Angeles Area

Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger



Major Keith Bland (left) with clarinet soloist Master Sergeant Frank Milicia
(USAF photo by Joe Juarez)

The Concert Band, under the direction of Major Keith Bland recently returned from a highly successful tour to the Los Angeles metropolitan area.

Northern California's rainy season occurs during the winter months, so band members were excited to leave the cool, cloudy weather typical of Bay Area winters and head south to the sunshine and warmer temperatures of greater Los Angeles. The Concert Band's performance at the James Armstrong Theater in Torrance resulted in long lines of concertgoers eager to hear the professionalism of the US Air Force represented onstage by the band. Audience members were not

disappointed. Following a warm welcome by Torrance Mayor Frank Scotto, the band opened with **Donna Diana**, a rousing overture by Emil von Reznicek as arranged by Air Force arranger Chief Master Sergeant Leigh Steiger. The band also treated audiences to a lovely arrangement of **'Till There Was You** from Meredith Willson's musical **The Music Man**, featuring vocalist Senior Airman Pamela MacKenzie. The next night, concertgoers at Pasadena High School were thrilled to see select members of the Pasadena High School Band join the band onstage for a performance of Karl King's **Monterey March**.

The band's featured soloist for this tour was clarinetist Master Sergeant Frank Milicia, who performed the **Concert Fantasia**, Luigi Bassi's technical showpiece based on themes from Verdi's opera **Rigoletto**. The stunning virtuosity demonstrated resulted in ecstatic applause each night, and Frank was

Band vocalists Staff Sergeant Niko Ellison and Senior Airman Pamela MacKenzie shared the spotlight in a medley of selections from George Gershwin's wonderful opera, **Porgy & Bess**. In Port Hueneme's Oceanview Pavilion, the band was introduced by Mayor Jonathan Sharkey and performances included Roger Nixon's energetic **Fiesta del Pacifico** and Gioacchino Rossini's recently uncovered **March for Sultan Abdul Medjid**.



Students from Pasadena High School performed with the band
(photo by Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger)

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Each band performance also rewarded concertgoers with a patriotic finale, which included Staff Sergeant Niko Ellison narrating letters from servicemen while the band performed John Williams' reverent **Hymn to the Fallen** from Stephen Spielberg's movie, "Saving Private Ryan." A wonderful medley of **God Bless the USA** and **America the Beautiful**, arranged by Master Sergeant Dean Smith, brought audiences to their feet each night. A special medley of military service songs was dedicated to all veterans in attendance. Concerts were also presented at Scripps College in Claremont and California State University in San Bernardino. Following a packed concert at Santa Clarita's College of the Canyons, the band loaded up and returned home, humbled by comments from concertgoers such as: "...I am proud to be an American," and "(the) USAF Band of the Golden West is a credit to the Air Force and the Armed Services in general."



Concert Band performs at Torrance's James Armstrong Theater
(USAF photo by Joe Juarez)

Band of the Golden West Performs with Gershwin Pianist

Technical Sergeant Ken Buchanan



Pianist Richard Glazier
(courtesy photo)

On April 4th at 3pm the Band of the Golden West performed at Vacaville's Performing Arts Theatre with an all-Gershwin concert featuring Gershwin specialist Richard Glazier. Billed as "An American Celebration" the band played many Gershwin favorites such as **S'Wonderful** and **An American in Paris**.

In addition to giving a brief presentation about Gershwin's life, guest artist Richard Glazier was featured on **Rhapsody in Blue**. Glazier earned both Bachelor and Master Degrees in piano performance from Indiana University School of Music and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music. He has made formal classical debuts in New York, Boston, Los Angeles and Rome, and won several major international piano competitions, including the Pro Musicis Award and National Federation of Music Clubs Grand Prize.

Please visit our band's webpage: www.bandofthegoldenwest.af.mil

Arrivals

Clarinetist **Technical Sergeant Mark Craig** is originally from Dallas, TX and holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Southern Methodist University. He has performed with Bernadette Peters and John Houseman. Mark worked in the banking industry for 6 years, but returned to a career in music by enlisting in the Air Force in 1995. He was assigned to bands in Massachusetts and Germany before his arrival at Travis. Mark enjoys digital photography and travelling—he has been to 36 countries!



Technical Sergeant Mark Craig
(courtesy photo)



Senior Airman Greg Gallant
(file photo)

Returning to California is clarinetist **Senior Airman Greg Gallant**. Originally from the Boston area, Greg was previously assigned to Air Force bands in Virginia and Germany, but is excited to return to the Band of the Golden West. Greg holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the Longy School of Music, and also studied at the Hartt School of Music. When not performing, Greg enjoys Muy Thai (a type of kickboxing) and spending time with his wife Elana and their newborn son, Hugo.

Guitarist **Staff Sergeant Alex Nikiforoff** hails from Bismarck, North Dakota and graduated cum laude from the University of Northern Colorado with a Bachelor's degree in Music Education. Alex, no stranger to military bands, is a former member of the US Marine Band stationed at Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. He was also in the Colorado Army National Guard Band in Denver. After a successful audition, Alex enlisted in the Air Force in February 2009 and was assigned to the Band of the Golden West. In addition to his musical abilities, Alex enjoys playing with his dog, Charlie and watching **Man Vs. Food** on the Travel Channel.



Staff Sergeant Alex Nikiforoff
(photo by Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger)

Departures



Technical Sergeant Gary Rosenak
(USAF photo)

Departing for the Air Force Band of the Pacific at Yokota Air Base, Japan is guitarist **Technical Sergeant Gary Rosenak**. A Wichita, Kansas native, Gary graduated Cum Laude from Wichita State University and performed with the 214th Army Ground Forces Band before joining the Air Force in 1997. While at Travis, Gary served as Noncommissioned Officer in Charge of Mobility, the band's popular music ensemble in addition to his performing duties.



Senior Airman Rachel Trimble
(photo by Staff Sergeant Leo Smith)



Senior Airman Dustin Trimble
(USAF photo)

Vocalist **Senior Airman Rachel Trimble** and guitarist **Senior Airman Dustin Trimble** are departing Travis for the US Air Forces Europe Band in Germany. Both Colorado natives, Dustin and Rachel met while attending Colorado State University at Pueblo. Following graduation, they enlisted in the Air Force in 2006 and were assigned to the Band of the Golden West. Dustin has performed and recorded with several of the band's ensembles, and in addition to his guitar performance, has led the band's group fitness exercises. Rachel is a well-known soloist with the concert band and works as the band's travel voucher clerk. Dustin and Rachel were honored to be members of **Mobility** during last year's deployment, and are looking forward to exploring Europe.



Coda

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