



U.S. AIR FORCE

Bay Notes



News From the USAF Band of the Golden West

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Summer 2009

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Commander's Corner
Major Keith Bland



*The Golden West Winds Woodwind Quintet sit in with the Bonita Vista High School Band, Chula Vista, CA. (for more see article on page 3).
(Photo: TSgt Mark Craig)*

Greetings from Travis Air Force Base--hope everyone is having an enjoyable summer! We have an extremely active schedule this summer with several concert tours, local area events, and Air Mobility Command's signature international airlift competition, RODEO 2009. In this issue, you'll read about our fitness program. As all USAF Airmen are called to embody the warrior spirit, our service's renewed emphasis on developing and living a fit lifestyle has been embraced across the squadron. We have a Concert Band "journal" written by our featured soloist, Senior Airman James Lantz, an article by Technical Sergeant Paula Goetz about Mobility's recent tour to Oregon, and an article on the meaning of Memorial Day, highlighting two Memorial Day events we supported in the local area.

We have a number of personnel moves to report this quarter. It's always great to welcome new members as they bring a wealth of experience and new ideas to the unit, but it's also difficult to have to say goodbye. Our new band manager, Chief Master Sergeant Barbara Miller joins us from the USAFE Band, and we look forward to her exemplary leadership. Also coming from USAFE is guitarist Staff Sergeant Jason Cale—he's not only a tremendous instrumentalist but a great vocalist as well.

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We welcome Senior Airman Ron Glenn from the Band of the US Air Force Reserve at Robins AFB, who joins our saxophone section, and our newest member, pianist Airman First Class Brandon May from the "city of brotherly love", Philadelphia. This quarter we said farewell to bassist Technical Sergeant Jay Nordeen as he retired from the AF after a distinguished career. We'll miss his phenomenal bass playing as well as his jovial personality. Thanks to all, and best wishes!

As we just celebrated this year's Independence Day with concerts throughout Southern California, we want to remember all those who've bravely served the cause of liberty and justice in defense of our nation since its inception 233 years ago. We continue to be inspired by the dedication to integrity, service, and excellence of today's Airmen, and we thank each of you for your continued support!

THE BAND OF THE GOLDEN WEST SHOWS OFF ITS MUSCLE!

Technical Sergeant Mark Craig

Many civilians may not know this, but every Air Force Band career field member is subject to the same fitness regulations as everyone else in the United States Air Force. So every year, usually in late spring, the Band of the Golden West conducts its annual fitness tests. This year's results were outstanding.

The annual test consists of a 1.5 mile run, body composition, push-ups, and crunches. The band had over a dozen people score in the outstanding category, with six people scoring 100%!

(see photo below) One reason for the high fitness



Unit Fitness Program Manager, Technical Sergeant Christy Bailes, and Physical Training Leader Staff Sergeant Robbie Mayes, show off their guns! (Photo: TSgt Ken Buchanan)



Our fit test perfect scores: L-R: Technical Sergeant Jim Butler, Senior Airman Ron Glenn, Technical Sergeants Christy Bailes, Mike Williams, and Preston Keating (not pictured, Major Keith Bland) (Photo: TSgt Mark Craig)

scores is the dedication of our Unit Fitness Program Manager, Technical Sergeant Christy Bailes. TSgt Bailes has been running the program for five years, and along with her two Physical Training Leaders, sets a high physical fitness standard for all band members. With Air Force deployments increasing, it's becoming more important for all of us to be ready to deploy on a moment's notice. The Band of the Golden West proves that we're ready for whatever challenges we might face.

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NOTES FROM THE ROAD

A Concert Band Journal from Senior Airman James Lantz

Senior Airman James Lantz recently performed the virtuosic trumpet solo "La Virgen De La Macarena" with the Band of the Golden West's Concert Band on a Spring tour. The band traveled through the San Diego area, relaying the Air Force message in the local communities. For this installment of BayNotes, Airman Lantz was asked to provide a first person account of his role within the band as the featured soloist. This is his story.

April 28th, 2009

It is the first day of Concert Band rehearsal. This is always an exciting part of the tour preparation process. Included in this program is a trumpet solo entitled "La Virgen De La Macarena". It's a fiery Latin tune first made famous by the great trumpet virtuoso Raphael Mendez. I am honored to have a chance to play it with this fine group of musicians.

May 1st, 2009

Major Bland and I met today to discuss the solo. It's common practice after a few rehearsals to discuss any timing elements the soloist or conductor are concerned with. I love that music can tell a story and I enjoy the challenge of trying to convey this story to the audience. Just as we are communicators within the Air Force, we are also communicators of the universal language of music!

May 8th, 2009

Today is the final day of rehearsals before we hit the road. I am anxious to play it for audiences because there is no beating live performance. This last day before the tour always includes a briefing by the operations staff on the plans for the tour. Then the loading crew, comprised mostly of airmen, will spend the afternoon loading our equipment onto a truck; this includes the percussion equipment (timpani, chimes, etc), sound gear (i.e. speakers, microphones) and stage gear (music & music stands). We're ready to hit the road.



Senior Airman Jamie Lantz performs his solo with our band at Ramona High School in Riverside, CA. (Air Force photo: 2nd Lt. Zach Anderson)



The concert band in Riverside, CA. (Photo: 2nd Lt. Zach Anderson)

May 12th, 2009

What amazing weather! Our band performs all over the west, but the San Diego area is one of my favorite places because it's absolutely beautiful! Tonight we performed in Chula Vista at Olympian High School. I was a bit nervous prior to my solo so I took a deep breath

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and focused on the audience. The crowd was enthusiastic and the band played great. Having an appreciative audience is the ultimate reward for what we do as an Air Force Band. Our job is to reach out to the public and share our talents as musical ambassadors for the Air Force.

May 13th, 2009

Today was set aside for our quintets to work with the local high school music students. Getting out into the community is always rewarding for us, and getting to work with young musicians was particularly a treat. We were able to teach them about the life of a professional musician, and what it's like to be a musician in the US Air Force. Our *Travis Brass Quintet*, went to both Point Loma High School and Clairemont High School, in San Diego. We performed for the students, and then sat in with their concert band on an Aaron Copland medley (see photo above). We also sent our woodwind quintet, the *Golden West Winds* to Bonita Vista High School in Chula Vista. They performed for the students, answered questions, conducted a master class, and also sat in with their concert band, playing the music of John Philip Sousa (see photo below). The students really enjoyed hearing a concert geared to their interests, and asking us questions. It was a memorable experience for everyone involved.



The Travis Brass Quintet performs with music students at Clairemont High School in San Diego, CA. (Photo: TSgt Ken Buchanan)

May 14th, 2009

This evening we performed in a beautiful church in Spring Valley, CA. The acoustics were absolutely amazing. Large venues with a lot of echo really help amplify the brass section and we had a lot of fun in there. One of our selections, a piece called "Liberty For All", is a brass heavy work that rang out proudly in the church. The hall certainly helped me feel confident for "La Virgen" as well because I felt surrounded by the band's sound! The audience was extremely enthusiastic, giving us multiple standing ovations throughout the concert. It was a very successful evening.



Master Sergeant Lezlee Masson rehearses the low reeds from Bonita Vista High School, in Chula Vista, CA. (Photo: TSgt Mark Craig)

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May 15th, 2009

Tonight was nice because we had some band students from Ramona High School in Riverside, CA join us to perform the Kentucky Derby March. I recall performing with the US Navy Band once in high school; it was an experience that helped me realize my dream of being a military musician. The kids sounded great and had a lot of fun, plus they each got a free CD! No military band concert is complete without "The Stars and Stripes Forever". This piece receives an immediate reaction from the crowd as they stand proudly and patriotically. It's a wonderful feeling for all involved.



*The concert band performs at the California Strawberry Festival, in Oxnard, CA.
(Photo: SSgt Scott Ruedger)*

May 16th, 2009

This morning was our last performance. We headed west to Oxnard, CA to perform at the California Strawberry Festival (see photo above). I really enjoy outdoor gigs like this because of the relaxed atmosphere. Also, once the band begins playing, you can see how the crowds begin to gather! It was a cool morning and the audience was cheerful. I was also pleased to see that while we performed "The National Anthem" hundreds of people stopped walking about and stood proudly to pay respect to this important tradition. Knowing it was my last chance to perform the solo, I made sure to really enjoy myself. We are extremely lucky to be able to use our talents as musicians to reach out to the community to show our appreciation for their support. We are even luckier to have such a great job; it's the best job in the Air Force!

THE MEANING OF MEMORIAL DAY

Technical Sergeant Mark Craig

As a military band, one of the most important American holidays we support is observed every last Monday in May: Memorial Day. Formerly known as Decoration Day, it commemorates U.S. men and women who died while in military service to their country. First enacted to honor Union soldiers of the American Civil War, it was expanded after World War I to include American casualties of any war or military action. The official holiday began during the tenure of President Andrew Johnson, on 5 May, 1868, with General Order No. 11, which included these stirring words:

...We are organized...for the purpose ...of preserving and strengthening those kind and fraternal feelings which have bound together the soldiers, sailors, and marines...What can aid more to assure this result than by cherishing tenderly the memory of our heroic dead?...Let no neglect, no ravages of time, testify to the present or to the coming generations that we have forgotten as a people the cost of a free and undivided republic.

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One way to salute our fallen veterans is through the power of music. Music is always an essential part of military ceremonies and special events, including the Memorial Day service. One of our very own American heroes, 20th century composer Charles Ives, wrote a symphonic poem "Decoration Day", "...depicting the holiday as he experienced it in his childhood, with his father's band leading the way to the town cemetery, the playing of 'Taps' on a trumpet, and a livelier march tune on the way back to the town".



President Obama lays a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery (White House Photo: Lawrence Jackson)

The USAF Band of the Golden West commemorates this day by supporting our local communities' efforts to remember our fallen patriots. This year, we took part in Memorial Day Ceremonies for both American Canyon and Fairfield. The *Travis Brass Quintet* represented the Band of the Golden West at the Memorial Day ceremony in American Canyon, CA. Along with the traditional laying of wreaths, the ceremony included the playing of the U. S. National Anthem, and a rendering of taps.

The ceremony in Fairfield, which is in direct support of our local community here at Travis Air Force Base, included a keynote speech from Travis AFB Command CMSgt Michael Williams. The ceremony was brief, yet poignant. Our own trumpeter Technical Sergeant Jon Ruff performed a beautiful rendition of "Taps" after the wreath laying, and percussionist Staff Sergeant Matt Thomas provided the appropriate drum rolls. The day's events also included traveling to a nearby cemetery to perform "Taps" at graveside memorials for local veterans, including a Medal of Honor recipient.

Sergeant Ruff summed up today's events quite nicely when he said, "The central theme for all of these events was remembrance of service and devotion. It is the charge of the veterans' organizations to recognize this and to never allow those that serve, or have served, to be forgotten."

Left: Memorial Day, as observed in Napa Valley, CA (Photo: TSgt Ken Buchanan)



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MOBILITY ROCKS OREGON

Technical Sergeant Paula Goetz

Mobility, the six-piece popular music ensemble of the Band of the Golden West, geared up recently for a civic outreach tour through Northern California and Oregon in April. The group, returned from a 2-month deployment overseas and having reinstated its normal stateside performance rhythm, looked forward to the 10-day tour covering cities along the coast and inland.

A day's travel from its home station at Travis Air Force Base brought the group to its first stop in Crescent City, CA and the Elk Valley Rancheria Community Center. The intimate setting brought out the best of the band's lighter selections, including an upright bass feature of Stanley Clarke's "Bass Folk Song" by bassist Staff Sergeant Nate Bersée. Nate's musical skills were deftly displayed as he spanned the entire range of the taller-than-thou instrument of humble mahogany-hued spruce. Our efforts were later rewarded as appreciative attendees filed past band members upon exiting, shaking hands and conveying their heartfelt thanks for the lively free concert and for our military's continued and dedicated service to the nation.

The next day's performance was in Eugene, Oregon at Shasta Middle School (see photos above and below). The band director, Mr. Joe Ingram, is the proud director of the school's regionally and nationally recognized Jazz Band, which shared the stage with *Mobility*, and the school's Jazz Choir, in a joint presentation to all sixth-graders, music students and teachers. *Mobility* members Technical Sergeants Mike Williams and Preston Keating on piano and drums, and Staff Sergeants Nate Bersée and Alex Nikiforoff on bass and guitar took turns augmenting Shasta's own musicians. *Mobility*'s own high-energy hits had the bleachers rocking!



Staff Sergeant Niko Ellison entertains the crowd at Shasta Middle School, in Eugene, OR
(Photo: TSgt Paula Goetz)



The next Oregon stop was Lakeridge High School in Lake Oswego. We entertained hundreds of enthusiastic students, and loud appreciation ensued for the efforts of guitarist Staff Sergeant Alex Nikiforoff. He amazed onlookers by leaving the stage during an unfettered solo performance, crossing into the middle of the auditorium

Left: *Mobility* performs at Shasta Middle School, in Eugene, OR
(Photo: TSgt Paula Goetz)

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without missing a beat, while soliciting some fret board help from eager hands as he passed through the aisles. Q & A rounded out the visit on topics of musicianship and Air Force life.

Oregon State University's LaSell's Stewart Center (see photo right) was the stage for the next evening's show in Corvallis. *Mobility's* musical numbers stretched from the group's opener of an up-tempo version of "My Country 'Tis of Thee", arranged by Air Force Sergeant Steve Wilson, to the Buddy Miles favorite "Them Changes" delivered with fire and rasp-screaming enthusiasm by vocalist Staff Sergeant Niko Ellison. Special thanks was extended to the cadets of Air Force ROTC Detachment 685, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel David Jeffery, who added to the pageantry with a presentation of our nation's flag and smart 4-man team rifle demonstration.



*Mobility performs at the LaSell's Stewart Center, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR
(Photo: MSgt James Boubonis)*

The next day took us to the Oregon Ag Fest at the State Fairgrounds in Salem. We pulled out a two-hour show full of hits across pop, rock, country, R&B and jazz styles. An estimated 1,000 fest-goers paused to take in a few tunes. The hands-down favorite was the scintillating hard rock hit "Spoonman" by Soundgarden, featuring our very own Senior Airman Lou Kohley. Usually quietly diligent in his duties as the band's sound engineer, Lou wowed the masses with his stage-thrashing theatrics on both vocals and solo spoons to the great glee of cheering attendees.



*Left: Staff Sergeant Nate Bersée takes a solo, while Technical Sergeant Preston Keating looks on.
(Photo: MSgt James Boubonis)*

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

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Nearing the end of our tour, we were warmly received by enthusiastic audiences at the Astoria-Warrenton Crab, Seafood and Wine Festival. These crowds continually conveyed their enjoyment throughout our performance, swaying to the beat, clapping and nodding heads. The absolute audience astounder became apparent, with the response to Musical Director Technical Sergeant Mike Williams' arrangement of "Used To Love You" by John Legend. A cacophony of whistles and appreciative calls continued even after the conclusion of Mike's blistering solo onslaught at the keyboard. This great crowd honored the band with two separate standing ovations.

Our last shows took place in Coos Bay, Oregon, at Marshfield High School Auditorium. Our evening audience was mesmerized by our medley of 70's rock hits including Boston's "More Than a Feeling", Kansas' "Carry On Wayward Son" and Led Zeppelin's "Rock and Roll". The next morning's capacity crowd of 1,100 high school students remained standing in true rock fan fashion during almost our entire 45-minute set, screaming their approval at the top of their lungs. Whew!

This was a supremely fulfilling end to our musical trek into the Pacific Northwest. Our oft-repeated endeavor to share a musical gift with the communities we serve, and demonstrate Air Force excellence as a whole was yet again realized.

ARRIVALS

As Major Bland mentioned in his article, we'd like to welcome four new members to the Band of the Golden West this quarter. The first is **Chief Master Sergeant Barbara H. Miller**. In order for you to meet our new Chief, she'll be writing next quarter's Commander's Corner article. We look forward to

her comments and thoughts on her recent assignment with The U.S. Air Forces in Europe Band located at Sembach Air Base, Germany, and on her illustrious 23-year Air Force career.



CMSgt Barbara H. Miller getting pinned on by Maj. Keith Bland and CMSgt David Halvorson (Photo: TSgt Ken Buchanan)



Also joining the Band of the Golden West this quarter from our band in Germany is **Staff Sergeant Jason Cale**. SSgt Cale grew up in southern Mississippi. He started on violin and pursued the guitar at the age of 17. He taught himself the basics, but studied formally with Miroslav Loncar and attended the University of Southern Mississippi, majoring in jazz studies. SSgt Cale joined the US Army Band in the spring of 1999 but decided to "Cross into the Blue" in 2004, when he joined the Air Force Band program, taking assignments in Virginia and Germany.

Staff Sergeant Jason Cale (Photo: TSgt Mark Craig)

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*Senior Airman Ron Glenn
(Photo: TSgt Mark Craig)*

Finally, in April 2009, Jason joined the Band of the Golden West. In his spare time he is constantly writing and recording original music with his wife, Paula (who is also an awesome vocalist). He divides his time between his music, spouse, and playing with his two dogs--a husky and a German shepherd.

We also want to give a warm California welcome to **Senior Airman Ron Glenn**. A native of Denver, CO, SrA Glenn studied saxophone with Tom Myer at the University of Colorado at Boulder and Roger Greenberg at the University of Northern Colorado where he earned his Bachelor of Music Education degree. Before joining the Air Force, SrA Glenn performed on various cruise ships, played with the Disneyworld Collegiate sax quintet, and freelanced in Bangkok,

Thailand. He joined the US Air Force in 2005 by taking an assignment with the Band of the U.S. Air Force Reserve, at Robins Air Force Base, GA. While stationed there, he deployed with the well-known Operation Season's Greetings, a popular music group tour which brings holiday music to troops stationed overseas, and deployed troops in the Middle East. SrA Glenn spends his off-duty hours with his 2-year old son and learning about his wife's Thai heritage.

And last but not least is our most recent addition, **Airman First Class Brandon May**. Originally from Harrisburg, PA, A1C May is a graduate of Temple University in Philadelphia, earning his Bachelor's Degree in Jazz Piano Performance. He continued his studies privately, often collaborating and freelancing with such notable musicians as Terell Stafford, Tom Lawton, Bill Cunliffe, Bruce Barth, Ben Schachtr, Jaleel Shaw, and Dick Oatts. A1C May joined the Air Force in March 2009, and after completing Basic Military Training at Lackland Air Force Base, TX, he joined the Band of the Golden West. He is an avid composer and enjoys writing and performing original music in his free time. He also enjoys cooking fine foods, weight lifting, dark coffee, and India Pale Ales.



*Right: Airman First Class Brandon May
(Photo: TSgt Mark Craig)*

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DEPARTURES

This quarter the Band of the Golden West said good-bye to a fine musician, **Technical Sergeant Jay Nordeen**. After 24 years of outstanding service, TSgt Nordeen has retired from the US Air Force. For the past two decades, he has served in Air Force bands in Nebraska, Germany, Alaska, and California. His extensive travels throughout Europe, the Midwest, and the west coast have given him a lifetime of experiences and memories.

TSgt Nordeen began his career with the Heartland of America Band, stationed at Offutt AFB, Nebraska. After twelve years in Nebraska, he was ready for a change. With his next assignment overseas at Sembach Air Base, Germany, TSgt Nordeen would have quite an adventure in store for him. Performing with the United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) Band is quite a treat, with regular tours all over Europe and northern Africa.

After three years in Germany, TSgt Nordeen's third assignment took him to the Air Force Band of the Pacific, located at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. While there, he enjoyed all the scenic beauty and adventure that Alaska had to offer. After nearly eight years, his final assignment brought him here to sunny California and the Band of the Golden West.

Even though stationed here for only ten months, Sergeant Nordeen made an impact on everyone, sharing his humor, kindness, superb talent and experience with all. He brought a lot to the band, and we will miss him greatly.



*Technical Sergeant Jay Nordeen
(Photo: The Desert Sun newspaper)*

Thank you for your service, TSgt Nordeen. Best of luck to you in your "post-Air-Force" life. We hope you enjoy your well-earned retirement!



*Left: Inside the piano
(Photo: TSgt Mark Craig)*

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Projected Openings:

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

VOCALIST

Approximate starting salary \$36,000, 30 days annual paid vacation, full medical and dental benefits.

For consideration or more information please contact the audition coordinator at auditions@travis.af.mil or 707.424.3735.

CODA

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