



U.S. AIR FORCE

BAY NOTES



News from the USAF Band of the Golden West

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Airman First Class Pamela Kelley performs with Rhythm n' Brass in Vacaville, CA
(photo by Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger)



Commander's Corner
Major Keith Bland

The last few months have brought a flurry of activity and a multitude of changes to the Air Force Band of the Golden West! First off, let me introduce myself—I'm Major Keith Bland, the new commander of the band. I've stepped into the VERY large shoes of Major Mike Mench who departed Travis to command the Air Force Band of Flight at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, OH. He left this organization in tremendous shape, and I feel incredibly fortunate to be given the opportunity to work with these great Air Force professionals. Chief Master Sergeant Bill Castleman departed for his new assignment as Manager of the US Air Forces in Europe Band at Sembach Air Base in Germany—I thank him for his dedicated service to this unit and wish him continued success. We also said farewell this summer to clarinetist Technical Sergeant Igor Poklad who is stationed at Sembach as well, and to percussionist Staff Sergeant Troy Griffin who is now serving with the Air Force Band of the Pacific at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska.

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We welcomed to the band our new superintendent, Senior Master Sergeant Kathy Homan, as well as bassist Technical Sergeant Jay Nordeen—it's a pleasure to welcome these gifted musicians and Air Force Noncommissioned Officers to the band.

In this edition you'll read about our recent Concert Band tour of Northern California and Oregon. We're always proud to tell the Air Force and Air Mobility Command story, and we had wonderful audiences at every venue. You'll also see how several of our members supported the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, spearheaded by Airman First Class Jamie Lantz, trumpeter extraordinaire. On the musical front, our members are committed to continual growth. To that end, we brought nationally renowned tubist Velvet Brown to Travis to provide a master class. Finally, you'll read about the combat training experiences of Mobility as they prepared to support their fellow deployed Airmen, coalition troops, and host nations. I'd ask that you continue to keep all of our service members in your thoughts.

As we head into the autumn and the leaves begin to fall, I'm reminded that while changes can bring about uncertainty, they also bring fresh opportunities and renewal. Change is a constant in today's Air Force, but I'm confident that our service will continue to meet the challenges ahead with a spirit of hope and a dedication to excellence that will make us all proud. Thanks to each of you for your continued support!

Band Supports 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony



Technical Sergeant Jim Masters performs Taps for the 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony at Travis Air Force Base (USAF Photo)



Major Bland speaks to the audience in Ashland, OR (photo by Technical Sergeant Ken Buchanan)

The Band of the Golden West's Rhythm n' Brass Quintet performed for the recent 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony held at Travis Air Force Base. Band vocalist Staff Sergeant Niko Ellison sang **America** and Technical Sergeant Jim Masters, trumpet, performed **Taps**. Colonel Mark Dillon, 60th Air Mobility Wing Commander, in his address mentioned how Travis has been an integral part in the fight against terrorism. "Team Travis has played a major role delivering fuel, people, cargo and bringing our wounded warriors home," he said. Colonel Dillon attributed the mission's success to the dedicated service of our military members with the support of devoted family and patriotic citizens.

Popular Music Ensemble Prepares for Deployment

Senior Airman Rachel Trimble



Members of Mobility participate in ACST training classes in New Jersey
(courtesy photo)

Mobility, the popular music ensemble of the US Air Force Band of the Golden West which will be touring as "Dune," has been preparing for a 60-day deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. Members will be presenting concerts "in theater" to bring a taste of home to deployed military members.

To prepare for the deployment, the band's 10-member group recently attended the two week Advanced Contingency Skills Training (ACST) at Ft. Dix, New Jersey where members of the

band gained valuable warfighting skills through a variety of core classes. Over 250 Airmen from various career fields within Air Mobility Command gathered at the USAF Expeditionary Center for this intense training. Enlisted members and officers from diverse career fields such as lawyers, photographers, doctors, maintainers, and medical technicians, joined together and learned to operate as one unit in stressful combat-simulated situations.

Classes at ACST cover a wide range of subjects which are helpful in the deployment environment, such as first aid and weapons training. Application of classroom studies further instills techniques learned. Green smoke and ground explosions were common in several exercises as instructors attempted to simulate combat zone stress. Not everyone's primary duty is "outside the wire," but it is important for all deploying airmen to have these basic skills.

Mentally and physically stronger, the band members returned with a wealth of knowledge and a true appreciation for all the armed forces members they will be entertaining during their deployment.



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

Major Bland leads Concert Band in Northern California and Oregon

Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger

This past August, the Concert Band, led by our new commander and conductor, Major Keith Bland, performed concerts in Northern California and Oregon. From the vistas of northern California's mountainous terrain near Mt. Shasta to the tranquil Oregon coastline cities of Seaside and Astoria, the beauty of America as so eloquently penned by Katharine Lee



Major Bland conducts the Concert Band with Rhythm n' Brass soloists in Seaside, Oregon (courtesy photo)

Bates in **America, the Beautiful** was on display in full force. These concerts, which demonstrated the high level of professionalism of your United States Air Force, were seen and heard by over 3,500 people.

The concerts started at the Plumas County Fair, in Quincy, CA, where the band opened with Morton Gould's rousing **American Salute**, as transcribed by Philip Lang. A return to Paradise's Performing Arts Center rewarded the full house with Henry Fillmore's arrangement of Franz von Suppe's exhilarating overture, **Morning, Noon and Night in Vienna**. Vocalist Staff Sergeant Niko Ellision rocked the audiences with his **Stevie Wonder Medley**, arranged by Master Sergeant Dean Smith, while Airman First Class Pamela Kelly wowed concertgoers with Cole Porter's **Anything Goes**, arranged by Staff Sergeant Jeremy Martin.



Technical Sergeant Coreen Levin performs **Amazing Grace** on the bagpipes (courtesy photo)

For this series of concerts the band offered a tribute to firefighters, whose bravery was especially evident in their hard work fighting Northern California wildfires earlier this year. Band arranger Staff Sergeant Jeremy Martin ascended to the podium, baton in hand, to conduct the world premiere performances of his **In Memoriam: Elegy for a Fallen Firefighter**. This heartfelt work was followed by **Amazing Grace**, which featured a narration of the Firefighter's Prayer as well as Technical Sergeant Coreen Levin performing the melody on bagpipes.

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The concerts also included David Holsinger's exciting and pulse-pounding **Liturgical Dances**, a work featuring a long opening unison melody flawlessly performed by the French horn section which led into a rhythmic tour-de-force for the band resulting in energetic applause each night.

Rhythm n' Brass, the band's newest ensemble was featured in Rick DeJonge's **Flight**, a composition commissioned by the band. Rhythm n' Brass featured brass quintet musicians: Master Sergeant Cecil Benjamin, trombone; Technical Sergeant Jim Masters and Airman First Class Jamie Lantz, trumpets; French hornist Senior Airman Ed Ochsner; and Senior Airman Jill Corbett on tuba. The virtuosic lines of the quintet interlaced with a solid accompaniment from the band created a weave of joyous sound; occasionally listeners heard DeJonge's use of short quotes of **The US Air Force Song**.

The performance at St. Helens High School, in St. Helens, OR, was attended by Mayor Randy Peterson, who issued a special proclamation for the band's concert. Concerts were also presented in Mt. Shasta, CA, and Ashland, Corvallis and McMinnville in Oregon. The final concerts of the tour were in the historic and beautiful Liberty Theater in Astoria, Oregon, followed by an evening concert in the Convention Center in Seaside.

The band closed each concert with Carmen Dragon's stirring arrangement of **America, the Beautiful**, dedicated to those service members serving abroad. The band's musical salute to veterans, the **Armed Services Medley**, presented our service songs to the many veterans in attendance and brought concertgoers to an immediate standing ovation.



Saxophonist Master Sergeant Jim Boubonis passes out band recordings to concertgoers in Quincy, CA
(photo by Technical Sergeant Ken Buchanan)

Following the final concert in Seaside, OR, the Senior Noncommissioned Officers sponsored a beach bonfire. The smell of roasted marshmallows and hot dogs cooking in the fire wafted through the cool air as band members gathered to enjoy camaraderie and reminisce about the successful tour.

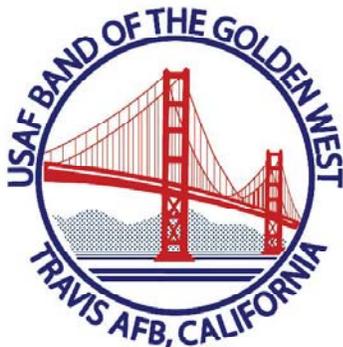
Current Openings:

The United States Air Force Band of the Golden West announces immediate openings for the following vacancies:

PIANO/KEYBOARDS, TROMBONE, BASS GUITAR

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

For consideration, send resume to: auditions@travis.af.mil



Air Force Band Welcomes Tubist Velvet Brown

Senior Airman Jill Corbett



Tuba artist Velvet Brown (left, standing) offers some comments to band members
(USAF Photo)

The band was privileged to get a few hours of virtuoso tubist Velvet Brown's time for a recent clinic, held at Travis Air Force Base.

Velvet Brown, Professor of Tuba at Penn State University, is an internationally known soloist and has released several solo recordings. While here, she heard the Rhythm n' Brass (both the quintet and rock band), and coached my performance of some solos. Her comments offered insight to bring the music to "the next level."

Her unique perspective brought some excellent ideas to all who attended.

Band Member Organizes Fund-raiser, Donates Items

Encouraged by his love of animals, Airman First Class Jamie Lantz, trumpet player with the Band of the Golden West, organized a fund-raising competition to benefit the Solano County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA).

Airman Lantz divided the band into teams based on instrument sections and kept a record of items donated. Members of the band voluntarily brought items for donations, which added points for their teams. The final day, Airman Lantz, along with Master Sergeant Jim Boubonis and Technical Sergeant Coreen Levin, took the items to the SPCA location. In all, over 200 items were donated, totaling over \$600.

In addition to the donations, band members aided in cleaning the SPCA facilities.



Airman First Class Jamie Lantz (2nd from right) with items donated to local SPCA
(photo by Technical Sergeant Jim Masters)

Arrivals



Major Keith Bland
(file photo)

Our new commander and conductor is **Major Keith H. Bland**, who brings a wealth of experience to the Band of the Golden West. Major Bland joins us following a successful assignment with the US Air Force Band in Washington, DC. Major Bland holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Kansas and a Master's degree from the University of Missouri at Kansas City. He entered the Air Force in 1996, and has been assigned to bands in Nebraska and Japan. He also served as Commandant of Cadets for the AFROTC program at his alma mater, the University of Kansas. Bands under Major Bland's command have performed for the President, Vice-President, the Secretary of State and US Ambassadors to Japan and Korea. Major Bland and his family are excited to join the Travis community and look forward to meeting audiences at band performances.

Arriving from the Air Force Band of the Pacific in Alaska is **Senior Master Sergeant Kathy Homan**. Kathy will be serving as Superintendent of the Band of the Golden West. She entered the Air Force as a saxophonist in 1986 and has served in bands in Nebraska, Germany and Alaska prior to her arrival in California. Kathy holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of South Dakota and a Master's degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She has performed with Ella Fitzgerald and Paquito D'Rivera. Away from the band, she enjoys hiking, fishing and spending time with her son.



Senior Master Sergeant Kathy Homan
(file photo)



Technical Sergeant Jay Nordeen
(courtesy photo)

Technical Sergeant Jay Nordeen, bass, joins us from the Air Force Band of the Pacific at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska. Jay joined the Air Force in 1985 following graduation from Northeast College in Norfolk, Nebraska and has also been stationed at bands in Nebraska and Germany. Jay has performed with such artists as Frank Mantooth and country music artist Toby Keith. In his spare time, Jay enjoys spending time with his son and is an avid cyclist; he raced as a semi-pro mountain biker in Germany.

Departures



Major R. Michael Mench
(file photo)

We wish a fond farewell to our commander and conductor, **Major R. Michael Mench**, who departed to assume command of the Air Force Band of Flight at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. Major Mench entered the Air Force in 1997 following a successful career as a public school band director, and has been stationed at bands in Texas and Washington, DC prior to his arrival at Travis Air Force Base in 2004. Under his command, the band performed over 1000 times for an estimated 2.1 million people. In addition, the band made three highly regarded recordings, including a CD recorded specifically for deployed troops. Major Mench also commissioned several compositions for the band, including **Flight**, by Rick DeJonge which featured the Boston Brass quintet and was premiered by the band in Las Vegas, Nevada. Major Mench also worked to bring the popular group Trout Fishing in America to Travis for a special concert dedicated to children of deployed military members. Major Mench and his family are looking forward to working in Ohio, and we wish them the best.

Chief Master Sergeant William Castleman, Band Manager, transferred to the US Air Forces in Europe Band in Germany. Chief Castleman entered the US Air Force in 1983 as a clarinetist and has served with bands in New Jersey, the Republic of the Philippines, and Illinois. Chief Castleman arrived at Travis in 2000 and served as Superintendent of Musical Resources before becoming Band Manager. He has performed for several US presidents as well as for President Reagan's interment ceremony. Chief Castleman is a native of Oakland, CA and holds degrees from the University of the Pacific and Boston University. We wish Chief the best at his new position in Germany.



Chief Master Sergeant Bill Castleman
(file photo)



Technical Sergeant Igor Poklad
(photo by Staff Sergeant Leo Smith)

Technical Sergeant Igor Poklad departed to join the US Air Forces in Europe Band in Germany. Igor has been with the Band of the Golden West since 1997, and has performed on clarinet and bass clarinet with the Concert Band, woodwind quintet and the clarinet quartet. Igor was featured on bass clarinet with West Coast Impact, the band's percussion ensemble, on their recent compact disc and has performed several times as soloist with the concert band. In addition to his musical duties, Igor has worked as the band's webpage manager, as uniform custodian and Noncommissioned Officer in Charge of the library. Igor is a native of Odessa, Ukraine and received his US citizenship in 1999.

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Percussionist **Staff Sergeant Troy Griffin** moved to the Air Force Band of the Pacific at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska. Troy, a native of Los Angeles, has been in the band since 2000, and has performed and recorded as the featured drummer with Mobility, Fuerza Musicales and the Concert Band. In addition to his musical duties, Troy served as the operations representative for Mobility, and most recently in the media section. Troy and his family are looking forward to living and working in Alaska.



Staff Sergeant Troy Griffin
(file photo)

Upcoming Appearances by the Band of the Golden West:

As always, please check our website for the most current concert information, which may change without notice. www.bandofthegoldenwest.af.mil

Events supporting *Air Force Week Los Angeles:*



Date	Time	Group	Location/Event	City
November 14	10:30 am	Ceremonial Band	Proclamation Ceremony Hollywood and Highland Plaza	Hollywood, CA
November 15	11:00 am	Rhythm n' Brass	Wings Over Longbeach	Long Beach, CA
	1:30 pm	"	Long Beach Airport	
November 16	3:00 pm	Concert Band	Warner Grand Theater	San Pedro, CA
	November 17	2:00 pm	Cinderella's Castle--Disneyland	Anaheim, CA
November 17	4:30 pm	Marching Band	Main Street Square--Disneyland	Anaheim, CA

Date	Time	Group	Location/Event	City
November 9	12:50 pm	Marching Band	Oakland Raiders Football Game Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum	Oakland, CA
December 1	4:45 pm	Rhythm n' Brass	Tree Lighting Travis Air Force Base	Fairfield, CA



Concert Band Announces Holiday Concert Series

The Concert Band will present Holiday Concerts at the following locations and times. These concerts are sure to be a treat for all ages and are the perfect way to start your holiday season.

As always, please check our website for up-to-date concert information, which is subject to change.



Date	Time	Location	City
December 6	2:00 pm	Vacaville Performing Arts Theatre	Vacaville, CA
December 6	7:30 pm	Vacaville Performing Arts Theatre	Vacaville, CA
December 7	3:00 pm	Chabot College Performing Arts Center	Hayward, CA
December 8	7:30 pm	Fairfield Center for Creative Arts	Fairfield, CA
December 9	7:00 pm	Hutchins Street Square	Lodi, CA

Coda

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