

Public affairs IMA receives Airman Medal

By Rachel Bubb
Staff writer

Maj. Jim Schaefer, an IMA in the Office of the Air Force Reserve Public Affairs at the Pentagon, received the Airman's Medal July 11 for heroism involving voluntary risk of life at the World Trade Center, Sept. 11, 2001.

The Airman's Medal is awarded to any member of the Armed Forces of the United States or of a friendly nation who, while serving in any capacity with the United States Air Force, distinguishes themselves by a heroic act, usually at the voluntary risk of their life but not involving actual combat with an enemy. It is the highest award for heroism that can be given in peacetime.

Schaefer was present when the planes first hit the World Trade Towers and immediately assisted law enforcement by helping put up barricades to direct the flow of pedestrian traffic toward safety.

"I decided myself to return to the burning towers to see if I could assist any paramedics as I had initial emergency and triage training in the Air Force medical service corps," Schaefer said.

He also assisted in establishing a triage center to treat the injured during the immediate attack. In the days that followed, he assisted the military leadership in setting up an emergency

military command post and coordinating the action of approximately 160 military volunteers.

Schaefer said the honor was humbling. "So often out of the ashes of our despair rise the seed of hope and aspiration that gives us the strength and conviction and often the courage to do what is right and good," he said.

"I felt that in some small way, wearing that decoration would inspire that same conviction in others. It's hard to put into words how you feel. Normally when you receive this honor it's surrounding good circumstances, but this was a bad time for everyone. I only did what I thought was the right thing to do. It's a very humbling honor."

Humbling, but deserved. Schaefer's supervisor is proud of his actions. "He's a very courageous person," said Lt. Col. Audrey Bahler, AF/REIP chief of public affairs.

"He could have gone straight to safety,



Courtesy photo

Maj. Gen. Ralph Clem, mobilization assistant to the chief of the Air Force Reserve, presents the Airman's Medal to Maj. Jim Schaefer for heroism.

and he didn't. He was willing to risk his life to save other people, and that's very commendable."

Schaefer was one of more than a hundred reservists who provided services during the 9/11 crisis. "I felt an obligation. The only reason I was allowed back into the area was because I showed my military ID. We weren't in uniform, but we could still use the skills we had from the military to help during that time."

Periodic health assessment completion deadline nears

IMAs with noncurrent Reserve Component Periodic Health Assessments, or RCPHAs, are nearing the deadline set by ARPC for completion.

If members fail to comply by Dec. 31, they risk denial of participation for pay and points.

The RCPHA must be accomplished annually, including a dental checkup. IMAs should receive a reminder in their birth month. A complete physical every five years is also required.

Although ARPC won't prevent IMAs from participating due to non-compliance, program managers and supervisors may deny participation for those not medically current.

The high operations tempo has had its toll on the military

medical community. "Many medical treatment facilities experienced difficulty scheduling members for their RCPHAs because a number of their medical providers were being forward deployed," said Col. Linda McHale, director of health services individual reserve programs.

To start the process, RCPHA instructions and forms are available online by entering arpc.afrc.af.mil/sgp/forms_pubs.htm. A less direct approach is by entering the ARPC Web site, going to the "Main Topics" page and clicking on the stethoscope icon.

ARPC/SG encourages IMAs to obtain the MTF's fax number so they can provide a copy of the member's last exam.

Briefs

vRED completion mandatory

Virtual Record of Emergency Data, or vRED, replaces the Form Flow version of DD Form 93, "Record of Emergency Data."

Completion of the vRED is mandatory for all Air Force members.

The vRED, which resides within the Virtual Military Personnel Flight, or vMPF, architecture will enable member's 24/7 access to their emergency data through the AFPC secure server from anywhere there is a computer terminal with internet access.

Members must access the vMPF Web site and update their vRED information immediately.

The vMPF is available at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil. Click on the vMPF logo in the center of the page.

Individuals will need their Social Security number, major command, pay date and date of birth to establish this vMPF account.

Name tag wear date established

The mandatory wear date of the new metallic name tag is Jan. 1.

Enlisted IMAs should have received a letter from ARPC with purchasing instructions. Enlisted purchase letters expire Sept. 19. After that, replacement-in-kind purchase can be made via ARPC Form 29 available online at arpc.afrc.af.mil under "uniform replacement."

Officers will purchase their own name tags, which are available online at www.aafes.com.

The new name tag for wear on the service dress uniform became available for purchase in November 2002.

IMAs can obtain more information on the new name tag and other uniform issues from the Data Update Branch at (800) 525-0102, Ext. 71388; DSN 926-6528 or e-mail arpc.dpscb@arpc.denver.af.mil.

Fitness test details released

The new Air Force fitness test will include a 1.5-mile timed run, a muscular-fitness test of push-ups and crunches and a body composition test. Testing begins Jan. 1 and is designed to measure general health.

Participants can earn up to 50 points on the aerobic portion, 30 points on the body

composition portion and 20 on the muscular fitness portion. Total points will place airmen into one of four categories — 90 or greater is excellent, 75 to 89.9 is good, 70 to 74.9 is marginal and less than 70 is poor. The test for body composition is still being finalized, but will measure total body fat.

Test scores will determine how often retesting is required. People scoring good or excellent will retest after a year, those scoring marginal will retest after six-months and those scoring poor will retest after 90 days.

More information is available online at www.af.mil/stories/story.asp?storyID=123005438. (Courtesy Air Force Commander's Call Topics for September 2003)

Reminders from Col. Hauser

When IMAs change jobs, they need closeout performance reports and decorations. If the IMA worked for 12 points or six days under a supervisor, an evaluation is required. Missing reports can delay promotions.

IMAs should receive decorations every three to four years. They should remind their supervisors and provide complete, detailed inputs so the supervisor can write evaluations and decorations.

Many IMA clearances are out of date. Secret clearances need to be updated every 10 years, top secret every five years. Updates can take one to two years. Expired clearances hurt mission readiness.



Opportunities

The public affairs office at the Air Force Flight Test Center, Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., needs an officer and an enlisted IMA.

The Air Force Flight Test Center has a rich history. For example, Gen. Chuck Yeager did his final supersonic flight there. Also, the future of the Air Force is there — dozens of documentary teams, international media, and VIPS and community visitors come from all over to see the F-22, Global Hawk fly, and to see the Air Based Laser. And they will be testing the Joint Strike Fighter. Plus they have the Test Pilot School. Information about Edwards AFB is available at www.edwards.af.mil.

The best thing about working there is the public affairs team. The office has many award winners, civilian of the year, photojournalist of the year, etc. And the two-star is wonderfully supportive of PA.

For more information, members can contact Lt. Col. Kerry Humphrey at (661) 277-3510, DSN 527-3510 or kerry.humphrey@edwards.af.mil.



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PAAs active in Operation Iraqi Freedom support

Two public affairs IMAs share their experiences during mobilizations for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Lt. Col. Vicki Stein, Chief, Plans & Programs Division, Air Force Materiel Command Public Affairs, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

I supported OIF from my home base. Lt. Col. Debra Millett (an AFMC IMA assigned to Eglin AFB, Fla.) and I had already been mobilized for operations Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle.

I was placed in charge of AFMC/PA's Plans and Programs Division in summer 2002. Early this year I started doing the prep work for our command and office so we would be ready to man the battle staff 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We made preparations that would allow us to easily interact with our field units and SAF/PA's Crisis Action Team representative.

I prepared a schedule and information sheet for public affairs personnel on how to operate down in the battle staff. I also coordinated with our media operations division to set up a battle staff orientation with local media and civic leaders so they could see the operation up close.

We were primed to go 24/7, but we did not have to because of the command's forward thinking. We relied on our staff duty officer during off hours but they had easy access to the PA battle staff augmentees led by me just in case.

In addition, I started prepping a contingency plan based on what CENTAF was working, but the war ended before either of our plans hit the coordination phase.



Koon

Lt Col Rob Koon, Air Force Public Affairs Media Operations, The Pentagon.

I've been mobilized since Nov. 1, 2001, at the Air Force Press Desk at the Pentagon and will demobilize Sept. 30.

Before, during and for a time after OIF, I was asked to augment the JCS public affairs staff. We had a great team of folks from the different services there.

As part of the team I was in the National Military Command Center to monitor the situation and gather information.

Our biggest job was to continuously gather information to update the question and answer package for Gen. Richard Myers, the chairman, and the other press briefer, Maj. Gen. Stanley McChrystal, the vice director for operations, J-3, Joint Staff.

We drafted their remarks for the Department of Defense press briefings and made sure that any videos, photos and slides to be shown were cleared for public release.

We had lots of interaction with national and international news media.

Look for more mobilization stories in future issues. If you would like to share your story, please e-mail it to arpc.pa@arpc.denver.af.mil. Put "Story for *Publicist*" in the subject line.

RE highlights FY '04 Defense appropriation bill

The Senate Appropriations Committee completed markup in July and reported out its version of the Defense Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2004.

Some provisions of the bill include:

Summary of the bill

The Committee considered a total fiscal year 2004 budget estimate of \$372,273,314,000 in new obligational authority for the military functions of the Department of Defense.

The reestimated budget is \$57,796,141,000 below fiscal year 2003 enacted levels including supplementals.

The Committee recommendation of \$369,148,293,000 pays for the ongoing programs of the



Department of Defense and to transform the military for the new century.

Personnel accounts consolidation

The committee does not support the effort to consolidate the National Guard and Reserve military personnel appropriations into the active duty account but supports consolidating budget activities within the individual National Guard and Reserve appropriations.

Targeted pay raise

Provides for a 4.1 percent average increase in base pay with the minimum pay raise for junior personnel of 2 percent and a targeted pay raise of up to 6.25 percent for mid-career

officers and senior non-commissioned officers.

Reservist TRICARE coverage

The Senate Armed Services Committee authorized making reservists and their families eligible for TRICARE health benefits on a fulltime basis, rather than only during mobilizations, but the House recommended no similar provision.

The Committee endorses the benefit but defers action.

If the program is authorized out of conference, DoD will be required to fund the benefit within existing resources or request supplemental appropriations.

For a more comprehensive summary of House and Senate marks, reservists can visit the REI Web site at www.rei.hq.af.mil/rei. (Courtesy July/August REI Bulletin)