



# BEHIND THE BADGE

## ABOUT US

Behind the Badge is a digitally published, bi-monthly magazine catering to the recruiting community. It is an official publication of the Air Force Recruiting Service Public Affairs Office.

## SUBMIT

Behind the Badge welcomes submissions from all recruiters and those working in the field. Photos, videos, story ideas, commentaries, suggestions and criticisms are all welcome, although publication is not guaranteed.

To submit, email us at:  
[afrrshqpa@us.af.mil](mailto:afrrshqpa@us.af.mil)

Submission deadline for next issue:  
January 18, 2017

## INSIDE THIS EDITION



### Changes for tattoos, more

New policy changes for tattoos, eczema, ADHD and more, effective immediately, pave the way for new accessions.



### 'I owe it all to my recruiter'

One general's story of how a recruiter taught him moral courage and changed the course of his life, forever.



### RAP with experience

A captain discusses his second RAP experience and the benefits for students, recruiters and himself.

## ALSO INSIDE

From the Editor

How to Navigate BtB

Growing the Air Force Family

Interactive Map

Photo Pages

Recruiting Through History

On This Day...

BTB Deadlines



## FROM THE EDITOR



MELISSA WALTHER

You may have noticed something looks different about this edition. At least, I hope you noticed it; if you didn't you may want to invest in an eye exam.

Welcome to the new and improved Behind the Badge! Aside from a face lift, expect to find a whole slew of new features inside this and upcoming editions.

Videos, graphics, audio, more and better stories, interactive graphics – you name it, we'll have it.

And while I hope you love the new design as much as we do, we need your help to keep it awesome and make it better.

"But what can I do to help?"

Glad you asked.

Keep sending us those photos, shoot a video, or even just capture the audio of an event and send it our way! Want to give a shout out to someone who deserves it, even if it's not recruiting-related? We can do it!

We want to know what you do that works in your office, and what doesn't so we can share it with your peers and hopefully make everyone's life a little easier.

Tell us about your amazing event or the person in your office who did something truly spectacular.

Keep in mind that this publication is for you. We want to hear from you; what you like, what you don't like, what you want to see in the future. If you don't give us feedback, we're just going to keep on keeping on, and if we're not useful, we're not doing our job.

We're good, but we're not so good we can do it all without your help. So, without further ado, enjoy your new Behind the Badge!

-Melissa

# HOW TO NAVIGATE BEHIND THE BADGE

There's more than meets the eye when it comes to our new digital editions, so don't miss out on some outstanding extras.



### SHARE STORIES

Email an article or post a link to Facebook or Twitter



### MAPS AND GRAPHICS

Click for locator maps, map keys and interactive graphics



### SEE MORE

Click to see more information, enlarge small images and read photo captions



### CONTENTS

Click to see a list of all the stories and features in this edition



### Multimedia

Click to play audio, videos, or display interactive content



### GALLERIES

Click to navigate galleries and slideshows



## GROWING THE AIR FORCE FAMILY



As the oldest of five siblings, I've exercised my "big-brother" card numerous times.

Typically, it's the usual brotherly "trash talk," sometimes it's advice and mentoring, and occasionally it's a loan from the Bank of the Big Brother.

But now, almost two years into my tour as a recruiter, I was able to give two of my little brothers something that truly changed their lives.

I'm incredibly humbled that I had the opportunity to watch both brothers swear-in to active duty and begin their Air Force careers; Shane (left) as a pararescueman, and the other, Evan (right), as an air traffic controller.

I just returned from Lackland Air Force Base where I witnessed the first brother graduate in the top 10 percent as an honor graduate, and all signs are pointing towards the second doing the same thing in just a few weeks!

Their life's trajectory has been drastically improved thanks to help and support of my supervisor, squadron operations and squadron leadership, who each gave my brothers the extra attention they needed in order to get qualified to serve and join the Air Force family.

- Staff Sgt. Scott Peterson





# 'I OWE IT ALL TO MY RECRUITER'

## LOOKING BACK ON A LONG AND SUCCESSFUL CAREER

Brig. Gen. James "Jay" Burks is the director of Manpower, Personnel and Resources, and the chief of the Medical Service Corps in the Office of the Air Force Surgeon General. He's had a professionally rewarding and personally fulfilling career with plenty of opportunities to contribute to the Air Force mission and take care of the Airmen with whom he has served with.

But that career almost didn't happen. It took the vision and persistence of one recruiter to set events in motion.

It all began in the summer of 1991. Burks had just graduated with an MBA from the University of South Carolina and was on the hunt for employment.

"When I graduated, I had a resume that was about a half-page saying I had been a student all my life," he said. "I was on the job trail with a couple of degrees and a lot of hope."

He began the search with tra-



With his wife, Valarie on one side and Master Sgt. (ret.) Derek McGowan on the other, Brig. Gen. James "Jay" Burks pinned on his first star in June 2015. McGowan was Burks recruiter and Burks said he owes his career to him.

ditional industries, but in the back of his mind he was thinking about

the military. He had friends, family and mentors – to include his Uncle

Ed Smith, who served twenty-one years and retired as an Air Force



Captain – who had told him about the benefits of service, specifically with the Air Force.

So on the way back from an interview in Columbia, South Carolina, it seemed like fate that Burks passed an Armed Forces Recruiting Center.

“It was like everything lined up and I thought, ‘since I’m here I might as well stop in and see if there were any possibilities I’d be interested in.’”

As soon as he walked in, a Marine recruiter tried to get him, but Burks remembered those influencers, and said he wanted to talk to the Air Force first.

“There was this buck sergeant and he looked at me kind of funny because here I was in my suit,” Burks said. “We started our conversation, and he said I had the background to apply for the Medical Service Corps.”

It just so happened that one of his mentors had served in the MSC, and Burks thought it might be something he wanted to try.

“That’s when Staff Sgt. Derek McGowan showed up,” Burks said. “He was the Healthcare Professions recruiter, and looked like an Air Force poster; crisp, sharp, friendly and engaging. He knew his stuff, and was very good at it.”

After a short conversation, McGowan knew he wanted Burks to apply, and Burks knew he wanted to apply for the MSC. The application process included letters of recommendation, transcripts, an essay, and an in-person interview with an O-5 or O-6 medical treatment facility administrator. McGowan told Burks that

████████████████████  
“You’re not the kind of person we want to recruit for the MSC. You’re just an MBA. The Air Force isn’t looking for someone like you; they’re looking for someone like me. I have a Masters of Healthcare Administration from a top-10 MHA program. The Air Force is looking for people like me.”

*-Brig. Gen. James “Jay” Burks  
recalling his recruitment experience*

████████████████████

the following week, an MSC officer from another office would be in town, so Burks made an appointment to return the next week when he could speak to the officer.

“I wasn’t sure how my wife, Valarie, would react, since she had very little military background in her family, Burks said. “But when I went home and discussed it with her, she said she thought it would be a good opportunity, and we both had a bit of an adventuresome streak. We also didn’t want to stay in Columbia all our lives, so it looked like not just a good career move, but an adventure.”

A week later Burks put his suit back on and headed back to the recruiters, hoping he’d find out more about not just a job, but an adventure. But as soon as he arrived, he knew something was wrong.

“I walked in, and McGowan was there, but he

wouldn’t make a whole lot of eye contact with me, and there was an uneasy feeling in the office,” Burks said.

The MSC captain hadn’t arrived yet, so there was some uncomfortable waiting, before he showed up. The whole time McGowan was avoiding eye contact – not a good sign, Burks thought.

The captain finally arrived and introduced himself before looking over Burks’ resume. The first words out of his mouth were not good.

“‘You’re not the kind of person we want to recruit for the MSC,’” Burks recalled him saying. “‘You’re just an MBA. The Air Force isn’t looking for someone like you; they’re looking for someone like me. I have a Masters of Healthcare Administration from a top-10 MHA program. The Air Force is looking for people like me.’”

Burks was shocked. McGowan had said Burks was an excellent candidate to pursue commissioning as an MSC officer.

“That rocked me back on my heels a bit,” Burks said. “At this point in my life I had been told ‘no’ by a lot of folks, and I wasn’t expecting to hear it quite like that this time.”

Burks went home, discouraged, and told his wife he didn’t think the Air Force would even let him apply. He was still on the job hunt, unsuccessful but hoping something would come up.

A few days later, something did indeed come up.

“The phone rings and on the other end is McGowan,” Burks said. “He asked if I was going to



fill out that application.”

Burks said he thought the captain made it clear that he wasn't what the Air Force needed, but McGowan wasn't willing to accept that.

“He said ‘you do your job and I'll do mine – your job is to fill out the application. My job is to deal with my captain’” Burks recalled.

And that's just what McGowan did. Burks completed the application, and McGowan convinced his captain to give Burks a chance. The captain's condition was that Burks do a full interview with him before agreeing to accept his application and allow Burks to proceed for the actual interview with the senior medical facility administrator.

“I did a full, hour-long interview with him, and at the end, the captain said ‘I'll tell you what, we'll go ahead and accept your application and set up the next step, but I'm not all that hopeful that you'll get accepted.’” Burks said.

The next step was an interview with the lieutenant colonel administrator at the Shaw Air Force Base hospital.

“I went into it really nervous because this captain had put such a negative feeling in my mind, but it was a great interview and we connected right off the bat,” Burks said.

Several months passed while his application went up for review, and Burks was beginning to get job offers, but decided to hold off and see if the Air Force would come through for him.

The call came in October, 1991.

“I was thrilled; my wife was thrilled,” Burks said. “McGowan said ‘the captain wanted to call you and congratulate you, but I said no, because

**“It's been a great career,” he said. “It's been the right fit for me and my wife, for our lives. There's so much opportunity professionally and personally in an Air Force career. I can't speak highly enough about it.”**

*-Brig. Gen. James “Jay” Burks*

I believed in you from the beginning.’ McGowan taught me my first two lessons in the Air Force: the first lesson was NCOs are the ones who get things done; and the second lesson was in moral courage – when you see something wrong, stand up for what you know is right. If McGowan didn't have the moral courage to stand up for me, I wouldn't be here today.”

After being accepted, McGowan took Burks to Shaw Air Force Base and showed him around, and at the end of the tour, presented him with an extra pair of his combat boots.

“I wore those boots until the soles split,” Burks said. “I literally walked in his shoes for the first 10 years of active duty.”

Fast forward to June 2015. Burks is selected

for promotion to brigadier general.

“I have thought a lot about McGowan over the years, and every time I've been promoted I tell the story of my recruiter.. With the help of the Internet, we reconnected and I told him I'd be honored if he could attend my promotion ceremony and pin on my star.” So with his wife on one side and his recruiter on the other, Burks was promoted.

“It's been a great career,” he said. “It's been the right fit for me and my wife, for our life together. There's so much opportunity professionally and personally in our Air Force family. I can't speak highly enough about it.”

Burks said he owes his success to the people in his life, and encourages others to take the time to thank the people who have helped make them successful, and help make a difference in someone else's life.

“When you get the opportunity, pay it forward,” he advised. “I needed other people in my life to make it a success. None of us gets to where we are on our own. My wife, bosses, mentors – but it all goes back to McGowan. At the end of his career, Master Sgt. McGowan had recruited more than 4,000 Airmen.

“What an impact he made in our Air Force and in the lives of others, myself included,” Burks said. “You always remember the people who made a difference in your life. Were it not for McGowan paving the path and standing up for me, I would not be where I am today.”



# RAP BENEFITS MORE THAN STUDENTS, RECRUITERS

Typically, people who participate in the Recruiter Assistance Program are straight out of tech school, and don't have much experience under their belt. They help out at events and talk to students about basic training and the little piece of Air Force life they've experienced so far.

But the program is open to anyone, and Capt. Jonathan Bucey was reminded of that at his Squadron Officer School graduation.

"Maj. Gen. Garrett Harencak was briefing us on the importance of growing the Air Force 'brand' and how the Recruiter Assistance Program is available to all Airmen, not just those fresh out of tech school," he said. "I work at Laughlin Air Force Base in Texas, but I grew up in Pittsburgh and that's where I graduated from high school and got my appointment to the Academy, and it reminded me that I hadn't been home for a while."

With that in mind, Bucey contacted the 311th Recruiting Squadron and decided to take a "working vacation" back to Pittsburgh as part of the RAP.

Bucey was no stranger to the program, having participated in it after commissioning from the Air Force Academy.

"On the first one, I was really only able to speak about the first four years and what the Academy was like," Bucey said. "This time, I had some perspective on service and deployment and what the Air Force was really like, and I'm sitting



Capt. Jonathan Bucey at a University of Pittsburgh ROTC drill practice. He met with freshman and sophomore cadets Nov. 17 and spoke to them about being a rated officer and opportunities in the Flight Test Engineer career field.

here smiling about my last seven years. They've been interesting."

Bucey was able to share that more seasoned perspective with students from seven schools, a

group of DEP members and a congressman's office over a period of four days.

With Congressman Tim Murphy's office, Bucey spoke on the importance of the desire to serve



and how that can outweigh academic accolades when it comes to selecting nominations to the Air Force Academy.

"The schools in this area have prepared their students well for any classes the Academy may require of them," he said. "I recommended that those who don't get a nomination, but still want to serve, should be put in contact with the University of Pittsburgh ROTC detachment."

But advice to students and congressional offices aren't all Bucey had to offer. With his second RAP experience under his belt, Bucey had some advice for anyone else thinking about taking part in the program.

"Just remember, if you're going to do RAP, you're basically entering into someone else's home," he said. "For me, that was the 311th's ADR. As many awesome ideas as you have, you need to be sure to coordinate with whatever unit is on the ground there. It's really the communication and coordination that makes it work really well."

Bucey said that communication and coordination goes beyond the initial contact with the recruiting squadron, too.

"As you're meeting these different schools and organizations, your job is to connect them

with the next step," he said. "In this case, the next step is the recruiter, and that's the one that will bring them into the Air Force Family. You're basically helping to bridge that gap, and then you're stepping away."

But recruiters weren't the only people Bucey was connecting with students.

"When I'd talk to someone and they'd say 'I want to be a doctor' or any other career, I'd tell them about some of the benefits the Air Force can offer for that career, then I'd give them the number of someone I knew in that career field, and let them talk to someone who's actually living it, day-to-day."

Although Bucey did run into some students who had an idea of what they wanted to do with their lives, he said there were many who had no idea.

"The vast majority of high school students I spoke with do not have a five-year plan," he said. "This may sound humorous, but it was a stark reminder of the age difference, and presented an interesting problem: How can you explain to high-schoolers that the Air Force has a path that could suit them if they have no idea what they want after graduation? By asking them about their in-

terests and hobbies, the conversation could then develop into the opportunities for those activities within the Air Force. If there wasn't even a shred of an idea, I simply recommended that if they find themselves with a diploma in hand but without a plan they are excited about, the Air Force could provide them with years of an adventure while they figure themselves out."

While the purpose of the Recruiter Assistance Program is to help recruiters and generate leads, Bucey said the program was helpful to him, as well.

"I stepped into my high school that I graduated from in 2006 and it was very familiar, but then I looked around and I saw how far removed I was from the student's lives," he said. "It was an interesting perspective, and I was able to remember that mentality of joining right out of high school."

For Bucey, that connection was important.

"I'm a T-6 instructor pilot at Laughlin Air Force Base," he said. "We get these brand new pilot trainee hopefuls, not too far removed from those high school kids, and it's my job to bring them through the first half of their course, and teach them the basics of flying. So getting that perspective was interesting, and I'd recommend RAP to other people who have more experience in their career, not just those graduating tech school."

*For more information on the Recruiter Assistance Program or to apply, visit [www.recruiting.af.mil](http://www.recruiting.af.mil) and click on the RAP link on the right-hand side.*

**"The vast majority of high school students I spoke with do not have a five-year plan. This may sound humorous, but it was a stark reminder of the age difference, and presented an interesting problem: How can you explain to high-schoolers that the Air Force has a path that could suit them if they have no idea what they want after graduation?"**

*-Capt. Jon Bucey*











ON THIS DAY...

**Over  
There!**

**Skilled  
Workers**

PRO — PATRIA  
LOW — FINCHER

**On the ground behind the lines  
In the Air Service**

CHAUFFEURS    WOOD WORKERS    CARPENTERS  
METAL WORKERS    MACHINISTS    TAILORS  
AUTO MECHANICS    PHOTOGRAPHERS    MOTORCYCLISTS

AND MEN FROM 40 OTHER TRADES

Skilled Workers Registered in the Draft,  
or Under 40 Years of Age Can Still Join the

**Aviation Section, Signal Corps, U. S. Army**

FOR INSTRUCTIONS WRITE AIR PERSONNEL DIVISION, RECRUITING SECTION, SIGNAL CORPS, WASHINGTON, D. C.



# BEHIND<sup>THE</sup>BADGE

## DEADLINES

Submission deadline	Publication Date
January 18	January 25
February 1	February 8
February 15	February 22
March 1	March 8
March 15	March 22
March 29	April 5
April 12	April 19
April 26	May 3
May 10	May 17
May 24	May 31
June 7	June 14
June 21	June 28
July 5	July 12
July 19	July 26
August 2	August 9
August 16	August 23
August 30	September 6
September 13	September 20
September 27	October 4
October 11	October 18
October 25	November 1
November 8	November 15
November 29	December 6
December 13	December 20

**Tune in to Facebook or Twitter  
for Career Chats!**

**Have a question about a career field?  
Ask the experts!**

**Jan. 24, 2 p.m. Central - TACP**

**Feb. 21, 2 p.m. Central - HP**

### **SHOUT OUT**

**TO: ERIN  
RANAWEERA**

**Thanks for making us  
all fat and happy with  
your wonderful baked  
goods!**

### **SHOUT OUT**

**TO: CHIEF LAMER**

**For 30 years of out-  
standing Air Force  
service!**

### **SHOUT OUT**

**TO: MARICRIS MOORE**

**For having the courage  
to follow your dreams  
and go back to school!**

### **SHOUT OUT**

**TO: SARAH TRACHTE**

**Let's see if your hus-  
band really reads this!  
You know where to  
find me.**

