

# BEHIND THE BADGE

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE RECRUITING SERVICE MARCH 8 2017



# 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:  
afrshqpa@us.af.mil**

Submission deadline for next issue:  
March 15, 2017

## INSIDE THIS EDITION

### ON THE COVER



**Tech. Sgt. James Mikus, 348th Recruiting Squadron health professions recruiter, won his professional Brazilian Jiu Jitsu debut fight against MMA fighter Daymar Ortiz at Fight to Win Pro 26, Feb. 10 in Denver.**

### ALSO INSIDE

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How to Navigate BtB

Photo Pages

Recruiting Through History

On This Day...



## FROM THE EDITOR



MELISSA WALTHER

It seems I'm getting a lot of writing inspiration from the On This Day...section and this week is no different.

My mom was an Air Force brat (before her dad gave it up to be a horse breeder), but she really didn't talk much about Grandpa's time in the Air Force. I'd hear occasionally that he helped build the DEW Line and was a lineman, but I really didn't know much.

When Grandpa died we discovered he was a bit of a hoarder. And when I say a bit, I mean his office was stacked to the ceiling with papers, and barely any room to move. Old receipts, mimeographs of blue jokes about President Kennedy, cartoons – if it was on paper, it was in there.

And in one cabinet burred beneath a pile of stud books in the farthest corner of the room, was a box of slides, some Kodachrome negatives and a mysterious roll of 8mm video.

At the time, I ran a darkroom for the Army, so I set to work developing the negatives. Right before my eyes, images of my 2-year-old mom, bundled up to the eyes at a fur festival in Alaska came to life. There was my Grandpa looking dapper in his uniform, laughing with my Grandma. There were pictures of their entire time in Alaska, and his entire Air Force career.

It took me longer to find out what was on the film, but when I finally got it back from digitizing, I realized that I was seeing a piece of history.

One of the other things my mom always mentioned was that he worked on the Titan missile project when they lived in Arizona. And on that video was the installation of the first Titan I missile at Lowry Air Force Base, Denver.

As I was getting the section together, I saw that on March 13, 1958 the Air Force Ballistic Missile Committee picked Lowry to become the first Titan I base.

It blew my mind to think the genial old man who bought me my first pony had been making history in my back yard.

-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.



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# MY JOURNEY TO BECOMING AN AIR FORCE CHIEF

Chief Master Sgt. Michael R. Hood

As a mentor, I often get questions centering on, "Are there any lessons that you learned as a junior NCO or anything you wish you had done sooner to help you be more effective as a supervisor and a leader?"

Over a nearly 27-year career, I have had a few people who positively influenced and guided me to greater heights. Because of these leaders, I am a product of, and believer in, early leadership development.

My first impactful leader was also my first supervisor, Staff Sgt. "Redd" Williams. He crossed over from Army green to Air Force blue to become an aircraft avionics expert.

In 1991, I arrived on scene at Yokota Air Base, Japan, ready to change the world. While I worked extremely hard to become one of the best, Airman Hood had a good measure of arrogance and Redd was quick to break that right off. He always did it privately and did not pull punches. It was quite unpleasant, but he never left me broken. Redd always found a way to re-motivate and inspire me to be better – never holding a grudge or keeping score of all my sins.

*Leadership Lesson: Follow the rule of, "public praise, private critique." Praise in public, constructively critique in private and never let your people leave feeling wounded, unsure what is expected or without a positive path forward. Always try to end conversations with something positive about them.*

My hard work paid off. I earned a journeyman badge and gained the respect of fellow crew chiefs, which is no easy task for a specialist. Back then, it took extensive on-the-job training to earn a 5-level badge and commanded respect for those who wore it.

Then one morning Redd informed me that I was moving to the squad-

ron headquarters to be a maintenance training scheduler. I was not happy. "Why, I thought I was doing great?" I asked. Redd replied that it was a reward for hard work and he actually did not want to see me go but it would be good for me.

**"You can survive the storms and even learn what not to do from toxic people."**

-Chief Master Sgt. Michael R. Hood

*Leadership Lesson: Do not be afraid of seizing opportunities. You may be good at what you do now, but opportunities can grow and make you even better. As leaders, we also cannot hold onto our best people. We must always seek to develop and prepare them for higher levels.*

I quickly found a few areas to improve and discovered a passion for computers while augmenting my boss, Master Sgt. Bonnie Allen, our unit training manager. Allen did not see me as an Airman and never let my rank get in the way of improving the mission. I developed tact that I previously lacked and became adept in administration, fixing the unit's local area networks and innovating mass computer system upgrades.

*Leadership Lesson: Never assume someone is incapable of a task simply based on a lower rank or position. Give them direction, the latitude to fail and then watch in amazement of what they achieve.*

As a senior Airman, I had Satan's brother for a supervisor. Everything he said was "F-ing Airmen" this or my favorite, "What the F... do you know, you're a F-ing Airman!" He did not provide feedback or direction except for a single letter of counseling spun into a 3 EPR despite solid job performance. I was defeated, miserable, and management did not care, but instead of feeling sorry for myself, I focused on the mission and tried to limit any abrasive impact. The following year, I received a "firewall 5" and he remarkeded that I had undergone great improvement but all I really did was keep my head up and remain professional.



*Leadership Lesson: You can survive the storms and even learn what not to do from toxic people.*

Fast forward, I was married and a brand new staff sergeant stationed at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas. I had little supervision, and inherited a complete disaster of a section. I decided I would find ways to fix the mess and quickly turned my flailing shop around. The base at that time sucked, the mission and hours were ridiculously long and the weather was hot. I had a blast! I discovered that while the job and location were less than desirable, the people were awesome. We made miracles happen every day and even broke a few flying records while deployed. Of note, our first sergeant, Master Sgt. Mike Tomey, was exceptional. What I remember best about Tomey is he was approachable, authentic and generally fun to be around. You could rarely find him in his office, as he was always making the rounds to talk and get the ground truth from our people. He was extremely pro-active and helped front-line supervisors head off potential issues before they grew into commander issues. This was also my first experience as an additional duty shirt.

*Leadership Lesson: Work hard, learn every aspect of your job and get your hands dirty from time to time to win trust and respect. Then develop a proactive operating stance on issues and people before they get out of hand.*

Now the bad. As a young NCO, I was married to a wonderful woman. She was out of my league, graduated from a prestigious university, refined, and had a distinguished family. When we relocated to Texas, she could not find employment because others assumed her lack of mastery of the English language somehow equated to I.Q. The isolation and stress on her without friends or family and my new job grew and I handled it horribly. I started taking work frustrations home and began taking my wife for granted.

*Leadership Lesson: Once you say something hurtful, you can never unsay it. If you plan to stay in a meaningful relationship, never curse, yell or demean the person you once said you love or, "till death do you part." If you have to, go outside for a run or workout, but keep your mouth shut and do not think alcohol will help. This does not mean being passive or weak, but*

*more of understanding others may have a harder time and as military professionals, we should handle stress more gracefully. If you supervise others, the same rules apply. Keep it light and professional and never let your ego or position result in being mean. Most importantly, do not be afraid of seeking counseling and getting help. Asking for help is a position of strength – not weakness.*

As a technical sergeant-select, I returned to Japan, in charge of an aircraft refurb specialist section. We earned a reputation of getting things done and about a year later, the installation commander asked me to lead his new Air Force Repair Enhancement Program. This was an awesome opportunity winning my new team MAJCOM recognition and a year later a maintenance group flight chief position for myself.

*Leadership Lesson: Again, take opportunities as they come and do not be afraid of the great unknown - many before you succeeded and so can you. Hard work and technical mastery in a job you may not be comfortable in or even enjoy can really pay off.*

As a master sergeant select, I promoted myself out of a base and my marriage, which also coincided with a string of other hard-hitting life events. I hit rock bottom, dropped out of college and began self-medicating with alcohol. Honestly, I am not sure how I survived it. Eventually, I began to do a lot of soul searching and self-reflection and life eventually got better.

*Leadership Lesson: Sometimes life will hit you hard and then kick you a few times when you are down. It is not always fair – it is just life. How you handle these events is what matters and they can make you stronger in the end. Make it a habit to self-reflect. Self-reflection will reveal areas for growth and paths to becoming a better leader and a person.*

I did well as a new senior NCO, but had a few hiccups leading other senior NCOs. I regret losing the confidence of a great one because of emotions and a few careless words.

*Leadership Lesson: Never throw others under the bus and never critique unless it is constructive and adds value. Counseling may be necessary business, but never make it personal; and never be a jerk about it. If you slip, be quick to apologize and do it from the heart. To help you in this area,*



## CAREER CHAT

The third Thursday of every month at 2 p.m. Central, we host a career chat on Facebook, where Airmen discuss their career field, what makes it great and how the Air Force has changed their life for the better.

This is a great opportunity for potential recruits to get a chance to ask any questions they have and get answers from someone who's doing the job every day.

We want to know what career fields you'd like to see featured.

Simply email your choices ranked 1-3 directly to [afrshqpa@us.af.mil](mailto:afrshqpa@us.af.mil), or YOUR INPUT MATTERS!

Civil Engineering	Biomedical Engineer
Maintainer	J.A.G.
Traditional Pilot	Weaponry and Materiel
RPA	Natural Science
Health Professions	Intelligence
Security Forces	Engineering and applied science
SpecOps	Band
Finance	Linguist
Personnellist	Network Operations
Air Traffic Controller	Coms
Other	

## JOURNEY TO CHIEF

*study retired Maj. Gen. Mike McMahan's "Six Stages of Leadership" to understand command and leadership dynamics – how we as leaders change and how we view others and our world both bad and good.*

This brings me to my most impactful leader, but amazingly, it was not until I was into my first year as a senior master sergeant and squadron superintendent. Chief Master Sgt. Jose Barraza taught me how to be a better leader. As our new group superintendent, Barraza was deliberate and would often come to me to discuss my unit's performance. Sometimes he would close my office door, but I was always better for it. During a few unpleasant conversations, he would remind me that, "Mike, this is for you, not at you." Ultimately, Barraza placed me on the leader's path and enabled me to become a chief.

*Leadership Lesson: Leaders grow other leaders and it must be active and intentional. Very few haphazardly find their way to the top and too many are leaving our service disillusioned and bitter. Find ways to grow others and let them know that it is, "for them, not at them."*

My mentors instilled a desire to help others. English author, Albert Pine, famously said, "What we do for ourselves dies with us. What we do for others and the world remains and is immortal." Always remember that serving our country is the highest honor and the finest achievement anyone can attain is to have others say thank you for guiding their success. To help you begin this process, start building a "leadership circle" – a group of trusted peers and mentors that are invested and care about your professional growth and success. All levels should have a leadership circle, just as our Commander-in-Chief has an executive cabinet to help lead our country. I use my circle to bounce ideas, decisions and how to lead Airmen best. Another great place to find mentors is on social media, as many provide leadership perspectives, lessons and answers such as the Facebook, Ask a Chief...Virtual CMSgt Panel.

Lead on Warriors!  
Chief Hood











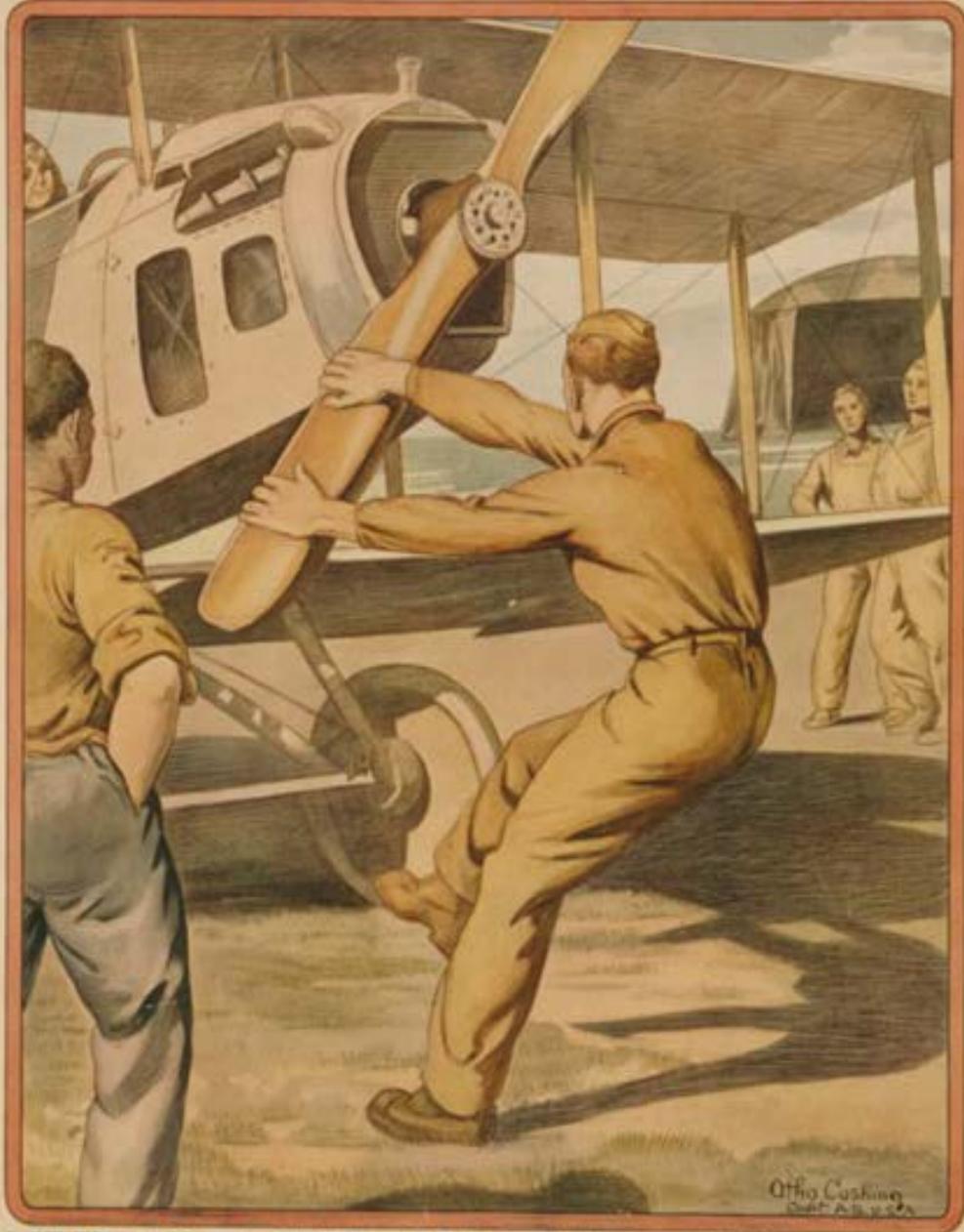








# FOR ACTION



# ENLIST IN THE AIR SERVICE

ON THIS DAY...



# BEHIND<sup>THE</sup>BADGE DEADLINES

SUBMISSION DEADLINE PUBLICATION DATE

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 for Career Chats!**  
(click here for link)

**Have a question about a career field?**  
**Ask the experts**  
**It's great for potential applicants!**

**April 18, 2 p.m. Central - SF/MWD**  
**May 16, 2 p.m. Central - Comm**

## SAFETY CORNER

Spring break is rapidly approaching, so it's time to start thinking about your safety. Safety can be applied in every situation. Mishaps happen when least expected; during a vacation, while doing chores at home or while driving across town on official business or leisure.

AFRS/SE encourages everyone to be aware of hazards related to leisure and recreational activities and take proper safety precautions.

Don't be selfish!

When you do something stupid or irresponsible it ultimately affects others around you.

Remember the three D's, (Dumb, Dangerous or Different) and always think your actions through, because the choice you make could change your life forever.

And remember, you don't really want to be a Youtube star, do you?

Fail Army  
Work Fails

