



Vol. 34, No. 2

# BAM

115th Fighter Wing, Truax Field, Madison, WI



**Let's Get This Show On The Road!**

# Commander's Commentary

## The Only Constant Is Change



**Col Joseph J. Brandemuehl**  
115 FW Commander

There is one certainty in military life, and that is that no matter what, things are going to change. The nature of our business is that we are always preparing for something, missions are always evolving, and people are always moving on.

As most of you know by now, there have been many changes in the leadership of the Wisconsin National Guard. Starting at the top, our entire senior state leadership has undergone a major change in the last few months. Since General Dunbar stepped in as Adjutant General late last summer, we now have seen two new Deputy Adjutants General (DAG) selected – Brig Gen Mark Anderson as DAG-Army and Col John McCoy as DAG-Air – both of whom will officially take office March 1.

Of course, as these gentlemen move up, it creates opportunity for others to step into

new leadership positions. We are always fortunate that we have exceptional people ready to step up. As Col McCoy planned to vacate his position as Director of Staff - Air, he hand-selected our very own Col Gary Ebben to replace him. And with that selection, we lost

*“I’d like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Col Ebben for his invaluable and tireless work. He has been the foundation of the command leadership.”*

an extremely valuable Vice Commander. To replace Col Ebben, I spoke with the group commanders, and chose Col Mike Hinman, current MSG Commander, to assume the Vice Commander position. And the changes will continue as we seek to select the next MSG Commander.

At this point, I’d like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Col Ebben for his invaluable and tireless work as the Vice Commander for the past nearly eight years. He has been the foundation of the command leadership, having served under the past three Wing Commanders. His continuity made the transition between General Sloan, Col Foster, and me exceptionally smooth and seamless. It is not a stretch to say that Col Ebben’s fingerprints are all over the successes we’ve enjoyed over the last decade. He is the individual who has received little or no recognition for his significant impact on this organization. He has been responsible for implementing and managing the vision of the 115th Fighter Wing, that of being the premier Fighter Wing in the Total Force.

One of the reasons that he was able to have such a significant impact on this organization was his breadth of experience. His experiences across this unit prepared him to take on the challenge of the Vice Commander, and now the State Director of Staff - Air. With a background in flying the A-10 and RC-26, and his dedicated leadership in Intelligence, Operations, and Maintenance, Col Ebben developed a set of skills, both technical and managerial, that made him uniquely qualified for the challenges of Wing leadership. I’d like to use Col Ebben as an example to all our members who aspire to senior leadership positions,

whether officer or enlisted. Broaden your horizons, look around the barriers in front of you, take on new challenges and responsibilities, in fact dare to be bold.

Again, my congratulations and thanks to Col Ebben and Col Hinman. I am both confident and excited about their futures, and the future of the 115th Fighter Wing.

They are two individuals who live by our core values and set the expectation for all of us to live by those same values....Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in all They Do.

**Editor's Note:** A more detailed look at the careers of Col McCoy, Col Ebben and Col Hinman will appear in the next BAM.



**On the cover: LtCol Tom Kahle and TSgt Mark Skorczewski prep jets for the AEF departure. Note tail flashes from Madison, Des Moines and Great Falls.**

## The BAM

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# Combat Zone Tax Implications

By TSgt Mary Mattke  
115 FW/JA

If you serve in a combat zone as an enlisted person or as a warrant officer (including commissioned warrant officers) for any part of a month, all your military pay received for military service that month is excluded from gross income. For commissioned officers, the monthly exclusion is capped at the highest enlisted pay, plus any hostile fire or imminent danger pay received.

The combat zone includes the airspace over it. So if you are a member of the U.S. Armed Forces stationed outside any combat zone and fly missions over a combat zone as part of the military operations in that combat zone, you are deemed to be serving in that combat zone.

Military pay received by enlisted personnel who are hospitalized as a result of injuries sustained while serving in a combat zone is excluded from gross income for the period of hospitalization, subject to the two-year limitation provided below. Commissioned officers have a similar exclusion, limited to the maximum enlisted pay amount per month. These exclusions from gross

income for hospitalized enlisted personnel and commissioned officers end two years after the date of termination of the combat zone.

Annual leave payments to enlisted members of the U.S. Armed Forces upon discharge from service are excluded from gross income to the extent the annual leave was accrued during any month in any part of which the member served in a combat zone. The annual leave payment is not excludable to the extent it exceeds the maximum enlisted pay amount for the month of service to which it relates, less the amount of military pay already excluded for that month.

A reenlistment bonus is excluded from gross income although received in a month that you were outside the combat zone, if you complete the necessary action for entitlement to the reenlistment bonus in a month during which you served in the combat zone.

U.S. Armed Forces personnel serving outside the combat zone are not entitled to the military pay exclusion unless they are serving in direct support of military operations in the combat zone for which they receive hostile fire/imminent danger pay.

Your service branch must certify your entitlement on the Form W-2 it provides you. If you believe you are entitled to the exclusion, but it is not reflected on your Form W-2, ask your service branch to issue a corrected Form W-2.

There are currently three combat zones (including the airspace above each) designated by an Executive Order from the President as areas in which the U.S. Armed Forces are engaging or have engaged in combat:

- Arabian Peninsula Areas, beginning Jan. 17, 1991 -- the Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Gulf of Oman, the part of the Arabian Sea north of 10° North latitude and west of 68° East longitude, the Gulf of Aden, and the countries of Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.
- Kosovo area, beginning Mar. 24, 1999 -- Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), Albania, the Adriatic Sea and the Ionian Sea north of the 39th Parallel.
- Afghanistan, beginning Sept. 19, 2001.

# Outstanding Airmen Of 2007

By Major Brian R. Green  
115 MSF, Deputy Commander



**Master Sergeant Steve R. Veers** was selected as First Sergeant of the Year for FY 2007. MSgt Veers is assigned to the 115 AMXS. MSgt Veers was First Sergeant for Operation Jump

Start, working with all branches of service on personnel and readiness and was recognized formally by members of the Border Patrol and Task Force leadership for a job well done. MSgt Veers also set a great example for others by scoring 100 on his fitness test and instituted a First Sergeant Fitness Challenge to promote fitness throughout the Squadron.

He also volunteers in many ways, such as assisting with coordination and implementation of the State Junior Enlisted Orientation program and with the Family Day February 2008

activities, ensuring a wonderful experience for members' families. MSgt Veers is an active member of his church and supports local charities by donating items from his own business.



**Master Sergeant Elizabeth M. DiSalvo** was selected as the Senior NCO of the Year for FY 2007. MSgt DiSalvo is assigned to the Dental Services Section in the 115th Medical

Group. MSgt DiSalvo created over 1,200 new dental record jackets in support of the Health Services Inspection. She coordinated with the Wing Profile Manager to ensure 100 percent accuracy of dental profiles which resulted in a 95 percent Dental Readiness Classification for the 115th Fighter Wing, which is one of the highest in the country. MSgt DiSalvo streamlined the dental radio-

graphic process with additional training that resulted in decreasing radiation exposure to the patient by 85 percent and eliminating radiographic retakes by 100 percent.

MSgt DiSalvo has completed an Associate Degree in Dental Hygiene. She is an active volunteer for several organizations and is currently pursuing a degree in International Health to further enhance participation and planning for humanitarian missions for the 115th Medical Group.



**Technical Sergeant Thomas J. Swearingen** was selected as the NCO of the Year for FY 2007. TSgt Swearingen is assigned to the 115th Services Flight. He is the NCOIC of Culinary Training and was the lead instructor at the 115th Services Flight Bivouac which

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## First Sergeant's Corner



**MSgt Steve Veers**  
115 AMXS

Are you sharp enough to be deemed "Diamond Sharp"? The 115 FW First Sergeants want to introduce a new recognition initiative called the Diamond Sharp Award. All tiers of the enlisted force will be eligible. We will be looking for highly productive professionals who exceed standards in a spectrum of areas from wear of the uniform to their military bearing. A "Diamond Sharp" award winner will be

self-motivated and fit to fight. They will epitomize all elements of the Air Force Core Values (Integrity, Service Before Self, and Excellence in all We Do).

There will be one Diamond Sharp Award handed out per month for the entire Wing. The opportunity to select a Diamond Sharp Award winner will be rotated between the First Sergeants throughout the year.

I am pleased to announce the January recipient of the First Sergeants' Diamond Sharp Award. The award goes to SSgt Adam Roehl of the 115th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. SSgt Roehl is a traditional guardsman working as an F-16 Crew Chief. Away from the guard, SSgt Roehl is a full-time student and works part time at Menards. He is attending college at the University of Wisconsin-Washington County. He intends to eventually transfer to UW Madison in pursuit of an engineering degree. Congratulations, SSgt Roehl - you are an asset to the organization. Keep up your good work!

## Airmen, from page 3

resulted in all members of the flight completing their SORTS reportable required training. TSgt Swearingen also established formal processes that identify, track and disseminate updates to the Air Force Recipe Card System.

TSgt Swearingen is attending Northeast Technical College and is currently enrolled in Course 9. He volunteered to be the NCOIC for food service during the 115th Fighter Wing Family Day, which provided over 900 meals to unit members and their families. He also volunteered to manage the food service operations for the Wisconsin National Guard Youth Camp which provided over 1,200 meals a day to the children of the Wisconsin National Guard Family.

TSgt Swearingen is an active member of his local VFW Post and his church.



**Senior Airman Christopher K. Kessler** was selected as the Airman of the year for FY 2007. He serves as an Armament Systems Journeyman for the 115th Aircraft Maintenance

Squadron. Airman Kessler graduated at the top of his class at the Aircraft Armament Systems Technical School. He made immediate contributions on his recent deployment to Balad AB. He coordinated a Foreign Object Damage Walk after noticing loose gravel on an active taxiway. SrA Kessler volunteered his spare time by working at the hospital, assisting medical crews in bringing wounded servicemen off of helicopters and into the emergency room for critical care, and cleaning up the surgical ward.

Airman Kessler recently completed his 5 skill level CDC with a score of 91 percent. He received his baccalaureate degree from UW Oshkosh.

SrA Kessler is currently enrolled in the Pre-Dental Program at UW Milwaukee and concurrently completing a major in Spanish.



## Chaplain's Commentary The Power and Strength of Love



**Chaplain (Lt)**  
**John O'Brien**  
115 FW Chaplain

For some people, love conveys weakness or vulnerability. They view needing the love of others as a sign of weakness, or they fear that their love for others might be rejected instead of being reciprocated. Some people confuse love with infatuation or obsession. These people find themselves on emotional thrill rides or fixated on other persons. And for some, they simply blur the line between selfishness and altruism. These people think that love is mainly about meeting their own needs, and they ignore the needs of others.

The words of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians are selected by many couples for their wedding. These words stand in stark contrast to some of the notions of love mentioned above. Here we read that love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. And whereas faith, hope, and love abide; the greatest of these is love.

But why is love the greatest? What makes love so great? In love we find power. In love we find strength. God's love for us is the only love that can ultimately overcome the destructive forces that plague and haunt us. Echoing Paul's words to the Romans, there is nothing that can separate us from God's love. But what about hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through our God who loves us.

I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor powers, nor rulers, nor things past, nor things present, nor things to come, nor things near, nor things far, nor anything else real or imagined, can ever separate us from the love of God. In God's love may we find power. In God's love may we find strength.

# Meet CMSgt Darin Trautner

## Security Forces Manager - 115 SFS



**Q:** Give a brief summary of your military career.

**A:** I enlisted in the Air National Guard in 1990 with the 115th Security Forces Squadron. In September of 1994, I was hired as an AGR in Security Forces. I've held the Operations Superintendent position since 1998. On January 1, 2008 I was promoted to rank of Chief Master Sergeant and now hold the title of Security Forces Manager. I currently have 17 years of satisfactory service.

**Q:** What awards have you been selected for?

**A:** Meritorious Service Medal  
Air Force Commendation Medal

Army Commendation Medal  
Superior Performer, August 2003 ORI  
Superior Performer, May 1996 UCI

**Q:** What are some of your most important career achievements?

**A:** In January 1998, I was part of the 115 SFS's first force protection bare-base operation mission in El Salvador. We put our new air base defense training to work to support the safety of Air Force civil engineers who established and constructed schools and hospitals for the locals. The 115 SFS responded to the events of Sept 11, 2001 by supporting homeland defense mission and deploying in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Guard Bureau selected the 115 SFS Squadron as the unit of the year in 2000.

**Q:** What is your education level?

**A:** Bachelor of Science in Sociology with a Certificate in Criminal Justice from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**Q:** What are your personal interests and hobbies?

**A:** Raising 2 boys (6 and 9 years old). I also enjoy fishing, Wisconsin collegiate and professional sports, table tennis, and outdoor activities.

**Q:** What path did you take to get the highest enlisted grade and what would recommend to aspiring Chiefs?

**A:** Without the support of my peers and the mentoring from my leadership, I would not be where I am today. I was fortunate to start my management career as a TSgt. My recommendations would be to make sure you get your PME/CDC completed. Take advantage of educational opportunities. Read the regulations, look at the big picture, learn from past experience and work on communication skills.

**Q:** What are your personal goals and goals for the Wing?

**A:** Continue to provide sound advice to senior leadership. Mentor and prepare our Airmen for the future. Complete my CCAF degree. Maximize my investment in the Thrift Savings Plan. Provide an atmosphere for Airmen to succeed and retain those troops for the future. Continue our proactive vs. reactive attitude.

## Among the Ranks

If you had two tickets to the Super Bowl, other than a significant other, who would you take to the game?



**SrA Sarah Valiquette, 115 CF**

If Brett Farve retired, I would want to bring him. He has an insight on the game that nobody else has.



**TSgt Rich Latus, 115 MXS**

My dad. He has taken me to many sporting events over the years and this would be a great way to pay him back.



**TSgt Shane Holden, 115 FW**

I would take either Vince Vaughn or Will Ferrell. I would bring Vaughn because he would be a good wingman or Ferrell because who does not love Ron Burgundy?



**TSgt Saul Easley  
115 FW**

President George W. Bush because I would like to just hang out with the guy and get a glimpse of the man behind the presidency.

**2nd Lt. Angela Williams  
115 MDG**

I would give them to my dad and grandmother. My grandmother is a huge football fan. She is 80 years old and drinks a beer and watches football every Sunday.



## Promotions



Darin Trautner



Scott Edmonston



Stephen Gardner



Jason Kasten  
Matthew Marose  
Allen Nielsen  
Zachary Talarek



Gregory Dewing  
Benjamin Follmer  
Benjamin Kintop  
Michael Koob  
Alan Marek  
Sara Schroeder  
Thomas Wastart



Alicia Schneider



### February UTA Meals

#### Saturday

Chicken Cordon Bleu  
Chicken Stuffed Broccoli & Cheese  
Rice Pilaf, Corn on the Cob  
Veggie Soup, Chili, Potato Bar  
Lemon Bars

#### Sunday

Pizza  
Spiral Potatoes  
Veggie Soup, Chili, Potato Bar  
Rice Krispies

## Briefs

### Mission First, Family Always

Thanks to Families! We appreciate that families support the mission when they support deploying members. If family members have questions and concerns, they can contact the Family Readiness Office at 1-800-438-3489 ext 4654 or email FRO@wimadi.ang.af.mil. The Family Program staff and volunteers are here for you!

### Operation: Military Kids

Join the Family Readiness Office on Saturday, February 9, 2008 from 10 a.m. until noon on the drill floor at the Department of Military Affairs, 2400 Wright Street, Madison. This mid-deployment event is a fun way for school aged children to connect with other military children who are experiencing the challenges of a loved one's deployment. Operation: Military Kids strives to acknowledge the strengths and sacrifices of military children as everyday home front heroes. Open to any child age 6 -18 years old. Please call or email the Family Program office to register.

### Video Teleconferencing

Missing you already! The Family Readiness Office will host video teleconferencing for families of deployed members every Sunday morning during the deployment. The first session is scheduled for January 27, 2008. Call or email the Family Program office to set-up a time to talk to and see your loved one.

### Marriage Enrichment Seminar

This truly outstanding program helps couples grow together. Hotel, meals and travel are provided at no cost to participants. For more information, go to [www.wingfam.org/marriage/marriage.asp](http://www.wingfam.org/marriage/marriage.asp) or contact Carolyn Morgan at 1-800-292-9464. Register early!

The dates and locations of the seminars are:

- April 18-19, Landmark Resort Egg Harbor, WI
- May 9-10, Best Western LaCrosse, WI
- August 22-23rd, Heidel House Green Lake, WI

### 115 MSG Seeks Commander

The Mission Support Group is seeking applicants for the position of commander. The current commander, Col. Micheal Hinman will become the 115 FW vice-commander as of March 1.

Minimum qualifications of applicants include holding the rank of Lt. Col. and prior command experience.

Individuals interested should submit a cover letter and resume to: 115 MSF/DPM, 3110 Mitchell Street, Madison, WI 53704-2591 by February 22. Please contact Chief Holen or your unit commander for an official copy of the job announcement.

### Polar Bear Plunge

Several members of the Wing will be taking a very cold bath on February 16 in Lake Monona to help raise money for Special Olympics. The Wing's team for the Madison Polar Plunge, Freezin' for a Reason, is accepting donations for this year's event.

The team website ([http://www.specialolympicswisconsin.org/pp08/team.asp?id\\_t=317](http://www.specialolympicswisconsin.org/pp08/team.asp?id_t=317)) can be used for those willing to pledge donations. Anyone with questions should contact TSgt Zachary Brewer at 608-245-4411 or [zachary.brewer@wimadi.ang.af.mil](mailto:zachary.brewer@wimadi.ang.af.mil) for more information.

### Local Family Adopted

Members from the Financial Management Office adopted a local family this holiday season. With a goal of brightening Christmas for a family in need, SSgt Trisha Nelson worked with the local Salvation Army and received a family's name and their "Christmas Wish List". The members of the office pitched in \$650.00 to buy Christmas gifts and a holiday meal. Nelson and TSgt Laurie Kelsey spent five hours shopping for the entire family. Although they admitted it was a little difficult shopping for people they didn't know, they still enjoyed themselves. The presents and food were delivered on December 14 in plenty of time to have the kids guessing what all the colorfully wrapped presents were!

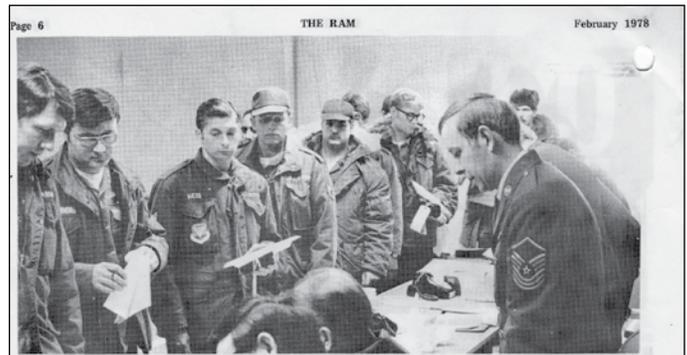


### February UTA Pay Date February 13



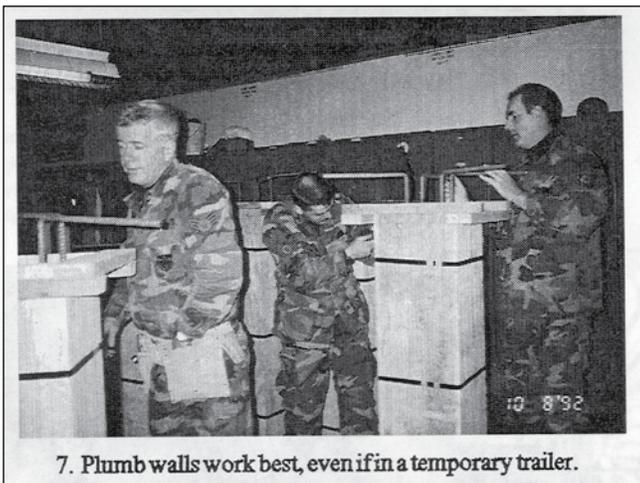
# Legacy of Excellence

**Right: Thirty Years Ago** - Deployment processing lines are nothing new. As long as military people have moved around, there have been lines, as seen here during an exercise in early 1978. (February 1978 RAM)



**Left: Twenty-Five Years Ago** - Every member of the 128 TFW padded through Hangar 400 in their stocking feet during the UTA to perform their annual weigh-in. According to the original story, MSgt Bill Cork is smiling after seeing that his month-long diet of "grapefruit and chicken beaks" paid off. (February 1983 RAM)

**Right: Twenty Years Ago** - Then-vice president George H.W. Bush and wife Barbara passed through Madison. Just under a year later, he would be inaugurated President. (February 1988 RAM)



7. Plumb walls work best, even if in a temporary trailer.

**Above: Fifteen Years Ago** - 115 CES members deployed to Alaska for training. They performed work such as laying foundations, grading a new biathlon range and installing gas lines. (February 1993 RAM)



**Above: Ten Years Ago** - Renowned aviation photographer Joe Oliva took this time-lapse photo of our F-16s as they took off for the Middle East. Mr. Oliva attempted a similar shot during the launch for the current deployment. (January 1998 BAM)



The drill floor at Joint Forces Headquarters was the scene of the goodbyes as the 115th Fighter Wing deployed in mid-January. Family and friends enjoyed a few more minutes together before boarding the jet bound for the Middle East.