



## *Achieving a goal: Perseverance pays off for former Airman*

By Tech. Sgt. Christin Michaud  
65th ABW Public Affairs

A Team Lajes civilian and former Airman will soon enter the ranks of the Air Force officer corps.

Amber Schindele, 65th Mission Support Group secretary, was selected for commissioning with the Medical Service Corps.

"The decision to get commissioned crossed my mind a few times while I was enlisted, but I did not fully go after it until I separated from the Air Force in 2004," said Amber. "I took a few classes while I was enlisted, but after I separated and joined the Air National Guard, I realized how much I missed the Air Force lifestyle. That is when I made the decision to work toward my degree at an extreme pace so I could apply for commissioning." The idea of becoming an officer seemed almost impossible, she explained, often wondering if it was possible to meet her goal.

"At the time of my separation from the Air Force, I was a single mother and not sure which career field would fit my aspirations. Since I was a prior medical technician I researched and found the Medical Service Corps would be a great fit for me."

"I chose the Medical Service Corps because I have a medical background and really enjoyed working in the healthcare field while enlisted," she explained. "The Medical Service Corps is a very diverse field that encompasses the needs of Armed Service members and their families to ensure medical care is a top priority. People are the priority — that is one of the reasons I was drawn to the MSC field."

Amber started working toward her degree in July 2004 and finished in December 2005. However, she didn't stop there.

"Prior to contacting a recruiter, I had to obtain a bachelor's degree, but to be more competitive in the program a master's degree was desired," Amber explained.

She was determined to finish. "The process for me was harder to get started, than to complete," said Amber. "Once I was on the right path, I was very determined to finish."

To begin the process, she had to find a recruiter, which proved difficult from Lajes. "I was able to locate a recruiter in the New Jersey area that would handle my package and guide me through the process," she said. There were other obstacles as well from a remote assignment.

Part of the package included taking the GRE, which is not offered here. "This was a challenge, but I decided to fly home to complete the exam," she said. Gathering the paperwork for the package also took a few months. "Another challenge with being at a geographically separated location was the ability to complete paperwork and mail it or receive it in a timely manner."

Amber completed her Master's degree in May and submitted her application for the MCS board which meets each October. "October seemed to creep up quickly, especially since I had been working the process for more than three years; from completing my degrees to actually being able to submit a competitive package," Amber said.

The most challenging part of working to complete her degrees and applying for MSC was staying focused. "There was



*Amber Schindele, who separated from the Air Force in 2004, completed a bachelor's and master's degree so she could apply for a commission in the Air Force as part of the Medical Service Corps. She begins Commissioned Officer Training Jan. 15. (Composite photo by Tech. Sgt. Jeremiah Erickson)*

so much going on around me — maintaining a full time job, raising a family, and working through a pregnancy," Amber explained.

Amber's husband and children were instrumental in supporting her and helping her accomplish her dream. "I know they sacrificed as much as I did," she said.

She also received excellent support from the Lajes Community and offered thanks to Col. Mark Davis, 65th MSG commander, Col. Amir Edward, 65th Medical Group commander, and Lt. Col. Stephen Lambert, 729th Air Mobility Squadron, for mentoring her through the process.

She is also thankful to the MSC's at Lajes who provided her insight on what to expect as a future MSC officer.

"The highlight of being selected for the MSC program was actually reaching my goal and knowing that something I once found almost impossible was actually possible," she said.

Her hard work and perseverance paid off. She begins Commissioned Officer Training Jan. 15 and will PCS to Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico with her husband Staff Sgt. Michael Buongiorno.



# Think outside of the box

By Angie Erickson  
Volunteer Contributor

As we near this holiday season we are reminded of the time-honored tradition to tell our friends and loved ones how much they mean to us through the exchanging of gifts. For some of us that means buying the latest and greatest toys, electronics, household appliances, hardware and fashions.

Last year I made some interesting observations watching fellow consumers during their holiday shopping. There were those who put a great deal of thought and emotion into choosing the perfect gift while others made a mad dash at the last minute to fill their carts with the picked over items that would do just fine for those on their list. There was hustle and bustle and the business news told of consumer's moods by the dollars spent! While I like to think of myself as an optimistic person, I reached an unfortunate conclusion about the last quarter of every year for the majority of our society: People stress themselves out and spend a lot of money purchasing gifts that they aren't even sure people want or need.

While it's neat to get stuff, ask yourself this: How much stuff do we really need? When I took a personal inventory of my family's belongings I realized that we had generated more stuff than I care to admit to and frankly what our household baggage would allow. That is why this holiday season I have challenged myself to continue to think outside the box, that is the gift box, and be generous in unique ways that will not only positively impact my family, but my community as well.

I started in January, at my daughter's fifth birthday party when I asked guests to bring canned food items instead of gifts. Since our daughter is our only child and one of only three grandchildren on my side of the family, and the only one on my

husband's side of the family, she has enough toys to last a lifetime! Therefore we asked friends to bring food that we could donate to the local food bank.

In February my husband and I donated to one of our favorite charities as a Valentine's Day gift to one another. When our birthdays arrived, we booked trips through Outdoor Recreation. We not only experienced a new culture, but enriched our marriage and created lasting memories. However, it doesn't have to take a holiday or special occasion for one to be generous; I intentionally sought out ways to volunteer throughout the year so that I could give the gifts of time and service.

As we near the end of this year, I encourage you too to think of creative ways of gift giving. You might ask your child's teacher if he/she needs anything special for the classroom.

Perhaps you might pull a pink and a blue angel off the Angel Tree, just inside the BX stores, before Dec. 14, so that an underprivileged girl and boy will have a toy, shoes and/or clothing for this holiday season. It would be really neat to let your child pick out the gifts, it was for us.

Hopefully you will participate in the Combined Federal Campaign, by Dec. 15. And when you do, let your family choose the organization, then keep your sign-up slip out in sight to remind each other that you are making a difference for someone. And don't forget to check in with your neighbors, or contact the Chapel and the A&FRC to fill their holiday needs.

Whether it's making a "gift" donation to a charity in lieu of a wrapped present, or volunteering your service and time, consider this: Think outside of the "gift" box and think of your own creative ways to be in the spirit of giving when it comes time to make your New Year's resolutions!

## First Sergeant Notes

With the holiday season is upon us, it is a good time to review the 0-0-1-3 program. The objective of the program is zero DUI's and zero alcohol related incidents. If you've had any alcoholic beverages, don't take the chance, don't drive. Have a plan to get home safely and stick to your plan. Be a Wingman, lookout for your fellow Airman. Drink responsibly, limit your alcohol consumption, and use the "one drink per hour "and" three drinks per night" concept as your guide. Enjoy the holiday festivities and do it responsibly.



—Master Sgt. Maria Kraft  
729th Air Mobility Squadron

535-4240  
[actionline@lajes.af.mil](mailto:actionline@lajes.af.mil)

*The Commander's Line is your link to me for suggestions, kudos and as a way to work problems or issues within the 65th Air Base Wing for which you can't find another solution.*



**Col. JL Briggs**

*Your chain of command should always be your first option for praise or problems — but when that's not the answer, call or e-mail the Commander's Line at 535-4240 or [actionline@lajes.af.mil](mailto:actionline@lajes.af.mil).*

**Col. JL Briggs**  
Commander, 65th Air Base Wing



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## Editorial Staff

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## Good to Know



**Watch** for suspicious behavior  
**Report** what you see  
**Protect** by observation and action

Be aware. Be alert. Report suspicious activity to 535-3222.

### Holiday Space-A Flights

The 729th Air Mobility Squadron has secured additional holiday Space-A opportunities for people from Lajes trying to get to the states for the holidays. Flights are available Dec. 7 to Norfolk, Va.; Dec. 9 to McGuire, N.J.; Dec. 14 to Norfolk, Dec. 16 to BWI and McGuire, Dec. 18 there will be two KC-10s to McGuire; Dec. 21 to Norfolk and Dec. 23 to BWI and McGuire. There are return flights scheduled from Norfolk on Dec. 26, Jan. 1 and Jan 8. On Dec. 29 and Jan. 5, there are flights to Lajes from BWI. Additional return flights on KC-10s are scheduled from McGuire to Lajes on Jan. 5. For more information, call the passenger terminal at 535-3227.

### Flu shots available

Flu shots are now available for all eligible. Flu shots are highly recommended to those in high risk categories such as: Children 6 months to 5 years of age; 50 years of age or older; 6 months to 18 years of age on long-term aspirin treatment; women who are or will be pregnant during the flu season; anyone with long-term health problems (heart problems, asthma, diabetes); with a weakened immune system (HIV, Cancer, on long term steroid treatment); and with muscle or nerve disorders.

It is also advisable for those with or who care for small children or those in contact with elderly. The vaccination is mandatory for all active duty members by Jan. 1.

Immunizations hours are 9 to 11:30 a.m. and 1 to 4:30 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

## Lajes mourns the loss of two employees

Last weekend, two local national employees from the 65th Civil Engineer Squadron passed away.

Sr. Ernesto Melo Santos, from the electric shop worked on base for 35 years.

Sr. Joao Manuel Avila, a power plant operator worked on base for 24 years.

The men and women of the 65th Air Base Wing offer their condolences to the families of Sr. Santos and Sr. Avila.

### Eat your fruit and vegetables



The Defense Commissary Agency lived up to their motto "Quality first and people always" as Jim Marino, DECA Commissary Officer, hosted a Lajes School field trip. Children were treated to the grand tour that took them behind the scenes to reveal the remarkable stocking and storing process, and at the conclusion were treated to a delicious apple! (Photo by Angie Erickson)

## Lajes Salutes

□ Way to go to Team Lajes' promotees for December: **To Airman First Class: Gwen Nelson**, 65th Civil Engineer Squadron; and **Simon Gravelle**, 65th Logistics Readiness Squadron; **To Senior Airman: James Hewell**; 65th Medical Operations Squadron; **Kenneth De Garcia**, 65th Mission Support Squadron; **Steven Slocum**, 65th Security Forces Squadron; and **Craig Turgeon**, 65th SFS. **To Staff Sergeant: Carrie Plowman**, 65th Communications Squadron; **Ronald Dominguez**, 65th LRS; **Antonio Montano**, 65th LRS; and **Joseph Gurien**, 65th Operations Support Squadron. **To Technical Sergeant: Bruce Davis** 65th Contracting Squadron; **To Master Sergeant: Frances Jackson**, 65th LRS. **To Senior Master Sergeant: Antonio Rita**, 65th Air Base Wing. **To Captain: Bradley Domingo**, 729th Air Mobility Squadron; and **Tobie Wethington**, 65th Medical Support Squadron.

□ Congratulations to the **65th Civil Engineer Squadron** for winning the ATLAS Award. The award recognizes organizations who achieve a top quality sponsorship program.

□ Kudos to the **65th Civil Engineer Squadron flag football team**, for winning the final game of the flag football season by defeating OSS 7-0 Nov. 17. CE finished the season with a record of 16-2, claiming preseason, regular season, and post season championship honors.

□ Congratulations to **Staff Sgt. Bernadett Kelley**, 65th Operations Support Squadron, who scored a 90.5 and **Senior Airman James Donaldson**, 65th OSS who scored a 91.7. They each earned an excellent on the PT test.

□ Way to go Marco Rosa, 65th Civil Engineer Squadron, who scored a 98 percent on his CDC end of course test.

□ Congratulations to Lajes graduates who recently attended the Kising NCO Academy at Kapaun Air Station, Germany: **Tech. Sgt. Ryan Edwards**, 65th Operations Support Squadron; and **Tech. Sgt. David Peay**, 65th Communications Squadron.



## Movie Schedule

**Today, 7 p.m.** – Why Did I Get Married (PG-13); **10 p.m.** – Michael Clayton (R)

**Saturday, 7 p.m.** – Why Did I Get Married; **10 p.m.** – Rendition (R)

**Sunday, 2 p.m.** – Why Did I Get Married; **7 p.m.** – Michael Clayton

**Thursday, 7 p.m.** – Rendition

## In The Community

**Angra Christmas Parade:** There will be a Christmas parade at 3:30 p.m. Dec. 8 in Angra's main street. The parade will feature motorcycle riders, musical groups, horse riders, etc. People dressed as Santa Claus are also encouraged to participate in the parade.

## Around Lajes

**Commissioning Briefing:** The Education Office will be holding its monthly commissioning briefing at 9 a.m. Tuesday in the auditorium of Bldg. T-146. All active duty enlisted members are welcome to attend without appointment. For more information, call 535-3355.

**Spousal Tuition Assistance Deadline:** Requests for Spousal Tuition Assistance for Term III, must be submitted to the education office by close of business Dec. 14. Students must submit their requests by the deadline even when they are unsure of what class they will be taking. For details, call 535-5291.

**Sleepy Time Story Hour:** Mommies, daddies and children of all ages are invited for Sleepy Time Story Hour at the library at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 20. There will be special guest reader for this event. Come dressed in jammies. For more information, call 535-3688.

**Lessons and Carols:** The Ecumenical Christmas Service is scheduled for 5 p.m. Dec. 16. Following the service, stay to enjoy a meal together. Turkey and ham will be provided by the chapel. Please bring a favorite side dish and/or dessert.

**Top of the Rock changes:** Dinner service at the TORC has changed. Mongolian BBQ will still be from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. each Tuesday. Wednesday through Saturday dinner service will still be available, but will be from the new, expanded Bits and Bites menu through the coffee shop. Additionally, the Lunch buffet price has increased to \$8.95. For details, call 535-6156.

**Volunteer of the Quarter submissions:** Fourth quarter (Oct-Dec) volunteer nominations are due Dec. 20. There are two volunteer categories: active duty and civilian (spouses and local nationals included). Submit a DD Form 1206 to

## Somewhere over the rainbow ...



Anyone looking for a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow may have to take a swim to find this one. One of the most fascinating things about Lajes Field is that there always seems to be plenty of rainbows. Take time to remember that although the rainy season is upon us, it takes both sunshine and rain to make a rainbow. (Photo by Col. JL Briggs)

elizabeth.bland@lajes.af.mil. For details, call 535-4138.

**Holiday Stress Management:** The AFRC and the Military and Family Life Consultant are offering a presentation on stress management during the holidays 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Dec. 14 or 9 to 11 a.m. Dec. 17. Topics include the signs and symptoms of stress and impact on the family. Call 535-4138 to register.

65th CONS is also competitively soliciting quotes for the Microfit Monitor non-personal service. Closing date is 4 p.m. Dec. 14. For details, call 535-3159.

**Commissary Baggers:** The Commissary is currently hiring adult and teenage baggers. Applicants must be at least 14 years old and have a current DoD ID card. Baggers are needed for both the morning and evening shifts.

## Jobs/Volunteer

**Protestant and Catholic Parish Coordinator/Microfit Monitor:** The 65th Contracting Squadron is competitively soliciting quotes for the Protestant Parish Coordinator non-personal service and the Catholic Parish Coordinator non-personal service. Closing date is 4 p.m. Monday. For details, call 535-3104. The

## Holiday closures

**Commissary/AAFES:** The commissary and AAFES facilities will be closed Saturday for a local national holiday. AAFES will reopen Sunday.

## Lajes American School

**Winter Concert/Art Exhibition:** 8 p.m. Thursday at Ramo Grande Theatre (Praia Auditorium). Entrance is free and open to Portuguese and American communities. Please come support our high school bands, Jazz Band, elementary chorus, and enjoy the Art Exhibit of our students as well.

## Armchair Quarterback

Congratulations to week 13 winner **Jose Cifuentes** who took top honors this week.

**Kevin Jordan** wasn't so lucky and unfortunately earned the coveted You Don't Know Jack award. Tough luck!



What's in store for next week?

E-mail picks to [news@lajes.af.mil](mailto:news@lajes.af.mil) before kickoff Sunday. In the case of a tie, a winner will be decided by who picks the closest combined score of the Monday Night game.

## Classified Ads

E-mail classified ads to [news@lajes.af.mil](mailto:news@lajes.af.mil) by 5 p.m. the Thursday prior to the week you need it published. Notify the Crossroads when items have been sold. Lajes personnel may also post ads at [Lajesads.com](http://Lajesads.com). This site is not affiliated with the Crossroads.

For Rent: 4 Bedroom 3 1/2 Bath home for rent in Aqualva. Fenced back yard with fruit trees, large garage, spacious living room/dining room/kitchen. Has alarm system. Beautifully remodeled. Must see to appreciate. Available Dec. 15. Call 965-199-078.