

# CAREER FOCUS

## The Road Less Traveled

BY MASTER SGT.  
DAVID HALVORSON

TEAM KIRTLAND career assistance advisor

Sometimes following the crowd can be a good thing. For instance, when you hear the high-pitched scream of a smoke alarm you follow the crowd to the exit, and in doing so you escape a life-threatening situation.

When we consider our career path, often times the well-traveled road is the obvious choice to follow in hopes of achieving success. But what happens to your career when you cannot follow the path your peers are taking? For many, it can be downright frustrating when everyone else is trying to get the same jobs, get the 'good' temporary duties, and land the same 'choice' assignments that can lead to success.

Too often people get so frustrated that they become discouraged from trying to get ahead at all. Unfortunately, this attitude can lead to boredom and complacency and can be disastrous to a career.

So what's the alternative? Cross train, you say? That's often easier said than done, especially if your career field is critically manned (and who's isn't?) thereby preventing you from moving to another Air Force specialty.

Don't despair, there are still opportunities to be explored. I can give you a few suggestions that may lead you down the road to a broader career, personal satisfaction and perhaps even that next grade.

First, you can try to stay in the specialty you have mastered, by seeking out a special duty assignment to instruct. Most technical schools are looking for experienced and motivated five- and seven-level instructors.

These special duty assignments are usually controlled tours, meaning that you will hold a particular job for a specific period of time (usually three years) without worrying about deployments, exercises and some of the other job stressors that can wear on you. As well, instructor duty offers stability and educational opportunities for both the member and their family. And as if that weren't enough, these assignments also add tremendous depth to your demonstrated knowledge of your career field, making you a more val-

ued asset back in the "real Air Force." After the tour is complete, you are then allowed to transfer back out into the field.

Sometimes instructor duty is not an option, but there are many other special duty assignments out there. If there are no instructor openings for your career field, there are always openings in Professional Military Education.

PME instructors receive formalized training (to prepare you as an instructor), have a three-year controlled tour length, receive an additional clothing allowance to upgrade and maintain uniforms and can choose from some great assignment locations to boot.

Shaping the leadership of tomorrow's Air Force offers tremendous personal reward, and is referred to by many in the field as "...the best job I've ever had!" In addition, off duty education is strongly encouraged, and you keep banker's hours for the most part without fear of being deployed. Without a doubt, PME instructor duty can raise those who accept the challenge to a very prestigious level, and can strengthen a resume like nothing else.

Speaking of challenges, how about stepping up to the ultimate challenge? Do you want to be your own boss? Do you like to work hard and see the results of that work immediately? Have you thought of what it would be like to choose your duty location, even when there's not an Air Force base for a hundred miles?

Why not try recruiting! The Air Force is increasing the size of its recruiter force even as you read this, and while this duty is not for everyone, for the highly motivated person this job can write a ticket to career success. You'll receive specialized training (rated number five in the nation), a monthly Special Duty Assignment Pay of \$450 and you gain a very lucrative (transferable) skill set, which will enhance your marketability both in and out of the Air Force.

And then there's the Military Training Instructor. Today's Air Force is a reflection of the hard work of the many who came before us - few of us will ever forget the faces of the men and women who taught us the basics - and the success (or failure!) of



Master Sgt. David Halvorson

tomorrow's Air Force rests firmly on the efforts of those who will step up to the challenges of the MTI.

This rewarding special duty can bring a tremendous sense of personal satisfaction to those who want to have a hand in molding tomorrow's Air Force. MTIs receive up to \$275 per month in Special Duty Assignment Pay, \$194 in additional clothing allowance to upgrade uniforms, free dry cleaning, a stabilized four-year tour with the option to extend, 20 credit hours to the Community College of the Air Force and assignment priority upon completion of the tour. Of course, one of the biggest perks of the job is the trainees - the six-week transformation from civilian to Airman is nothing short of amazing, inspiring a great deal of pride and satisfaction.

There are many additional career opportunities to consider and information is available through the Military Personnel Flight Personnel Employment Element, 846-5715, or visit the Air Force Personnel Center Web site, [www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/enlskills/re-training](http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/enlskills/re-training).

There is no "one path" to success in the Air Force, so if you're interested in talking to someone about what paths might be right for you, talk to your supervisor, your first sergeant or a trusted mentor—or come visit me in the Consolidated Support Building, at 1451 "F" St SE, Suite 110-B. Each of us needs to be proactive in shaping our career path, and you may find what you're looking for by taking the road less traveled.

Have a question about your career? Call your Team Kirtland Career Assistance Advisor at 846-6636.



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## COMMAND CHIEF'S CHOICE

Master Sgt. Adam Rawding

Sergeant Rawding is the NCOIC, Security Forces Logistics, 377th Security Forces Squadron.

He provides oversight of the unit mobility program, ensuring all readiness concerns are addressed for up to 73 personnel deployed at a time in support of Unit Type Codes and Air Expeditionary Force taskings.

He also directs vehicle control personnel in maintenance and upkeep of a 44-vehicle fleet, is responsible for \$1.5 million worth of individual equipment, more than \$7 million in unit equipment and execution of a \$1.1+ million unit budget as Resource Advisor.

**What do you like best about this assignment?** Opportunities and challenges deploying personnel and Resource Advisor experi-

ence.

**What is the most memorable event in your Air Force career?** STEP Promotion to technical sergeant.

**What will you take away from this assignment?** A new respect for troops deploying into combat areas.

**What is your main goal in life?** Get three daughters through college then retirement.



# FORUM

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## Housing construction realities dictate move-in sequence

I was very disturbed by what I saw in today's Forum column about the new housing move-in schedule.

Last year when briefings were held at the town hall meetings, it was stressed by the Kirtland AFB leadership and the housing contractor that the order of availability would begin with senior officers (who are required to live on base), then Airmen (the ones that need and deserve it most) and then other categories following.

Looking at the schedule in today's paper, I see the leadership is taking care of several other categories (which include all the officers) before the Airmen who are now number five on the list. There is something fundamentally wrong with this.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to address your extremely important concerns.

The construction sequence for Kirtland AFB's new homes being built by our partner, Kirtland Family Housing, LLC, is based on the demolition and utility installation requirements of the project. Like you, we have been interested in providing new homes to Airmen and all eligible residents as quickly as possible.

We are happy to note that the plan proposed by KFH completes the homes more than two years ahead of the schedule mandated in the government contract solicitation.

New homes for Airmen (Village 7) are fifth in the sequence of villages that will be available. That said, the first enlisted homes will be available in Village 6 at about the same time as the field grade officer homes in Village 2 are ready for occupancy. Conditions arising during construction have had some impact on the completion of homes throughout the project, not to mention the sequence of when the first homes in each village will



**COL. HENRY L. ANDREWS, JR.**  
377th Air Base Wing commander

be available.

The information we provided during previous town hall meetings was the best information available to us at the time. However, "facts on the ground" have changed some during the course of construction. Please rest assured, though, that the realities of construction, not the rank of the personnel identified to occupy the homes, drove these changes.

The housing project team is making every effort to keep the project on schedule and provide homes to all eligible residents.

## Thanks for great Youth Center team

**This is just a little way of saying thank you. This is the first year I have taken my daughter to the Youth Center, and let's just say she never wants to come home. She has made so many friends and the teachers are awesome.**

**The facility has so much to offer and for the price I could never beat that with an outside facility. The center takes her on educational field trips and provides anything you can think of.**

**The freedom to choose is making her more independent and very outgoing and more willing to ask questions.**

**I just wanted to say thank you to all the employees at the center and let them know how pleased I am that we have a place to take our children and feel safe.**

Thank you for taking the time to recognize our Youth Center staff. The staff of the Kirtland AFB Youth Center does provide outstanding programs and high quality care for our youth! Your kind words are very much appreciated.

## Star barriers needed to protect people, building

Each time I go to the base hospital I cringe when I see those steel anti-vehicle barriers intruding into the walkway between the hospital and parking lot.

I can just imagine someone stumbling and falling onto one of those pointed metal posts. They're like spears.

**Is it possible to get some type of safety cushion on the parts that jut into the walkway? That shouldn't affect the barrier's ability to stop vehicles.**

We're very glad to hear from you. As you know, the events of 9/11 caused military organizations all over the world to examine how to better protect everyone – military members, government civilians, family members – from the threats we face in this new reality.

The star barriers we placed in front of the 377th Medical Group facility are a part of our anti-terrorism and force protection program and are necessary to protect our buildings and those who are part of, or seek treatment from our medical team.

These star barriers are a short-term measure to improve force protection while we design other means to ensure you and others are as safe as possible.

In the future, we will likely replace the star barriers with posts (also known as bollards) similar to what you see at our gates as a way to improve upon the

star barrier concept. This will create a safer and more functional environment for staff and patients, while maintaining the security required.

Another great example of how force protection can be made functional, effective and attractive is our project in front of the 377th Air Base Wing headquarters building. We invite you to stop by and see an ingenious force protection effort in construction and know that we seek resources all the time to make similar improvements for all of TEAM KIRTLAND.

## Air conditioning fixed at east side Shoppette

**When? Just when, will the air conditioning ever be repaired at the east side Shoppette?**

It seems like every single time I shop there, it feels like you're walking into a sauna!

Another thing I noticed is that the chocolate candy bars in the register aisles feel rather soft. I can imagine that the cooler walk-in is probably the only comfortable area of the Shoppette.

**Just having a cooling fan by the registers is not good enough! This is a serious problem that needs to be addressed now.**

As you, and others no doubt, noticed, we have had several problems with the air conditioning at the east side Shoppette. Fortunately, some extensive repairs, including changing blower belts, cleaning condenser coils, replacing switches that pass current to the condensers, replacing a power supply, repairing crushed ducting and insulating refrigerant piping, have made the situation much better. We apologize for any inconvenience.

## Forum

We want your suggestions and comments concerning Kirtland AFB.

However, may we also suggest giving base agencies or the chain of command the chance to resolve your concern before calling Forum.

If you decide the Forum is the right answer, we don't print callers' names.