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Semper Fi ... supplied

U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Doug Glasgow (background wearing flightsuit), a CH-53E Super Stallion pilot assigned to Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 461, Marine Corps Air Station New River, N.C., helps National Disaster Medical System aid workers offload some of the nearly 10,000 pounds of emergency medical supplies at the School for the Deaf in Baton Rouge, La., Monday. The Marine unit is temporarily assigned here to support federal relief efforts throughout the storm-impacted Gulf Coast region.

(U.S. Air Force photo by 1st Lt. Albert Bosco)

Keesler accelerates drive toward resuming training mission

By Susan Griggs
81st Training Wing Public Affairs

Keesler has specialized instruction and equipment that can't be replicated anywhere else in the Air Force, which is the driving force behind an accelerated resumption of the base's primary mission – training.

Brig. Gen. William Lord, 81st Training Wing commander, said Keesler has cycled through an amazing number of phases in just over two weeks on its way to transitioning back to its original training mission.

Hurricane Katrina steered Keesler through "our survival phase, personal recovery efforts, humanitarian assistance and accepting the follow-on relief forces, such as the American Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agency and other government agencies," General Lord pointed out.

"One of the reasons we've accelerated our return to training is that it's the right thing to do -- some of our training facilities received little if any damage at all," the general explained. "The second is that we're the only place in the Air Force that teaches many of these specialties, and a tremendous investment in infrastructure has already been made here."

General Lord cited the air traffic control

schoolhouse as just one example of Keesler's unique training offering.

"We have \$10 million air traffic control simulators not available anywhere else in the service," he pointed out. "We were careful to shelter all of that equipment from the storm because of its value. We have to reconstitute that class -- if we don't, the Air Force won't get any new air traffic controllers for many months.

"Another example is electronic principles – the very high-value test equipment suites already installed in some of our teaching facilities would cost millions of dollars to replicate," he continued. "There are some schools we're going to stand up at Sheppard (Air Force Base, Texas) and some of our instructors will go there to teach courses on temporary duty until we can stand them up again here."

Medical training has been an integral part of Keesler's mission, but major damage to Keesler Medical Center has diverted graduate medical education and Phase II enlisted technician training to other locations.

"They need patients to work on, and we have no patients now," the general said. "We thought the building itself would be out of commission at least six months – the good news is that we may be able to restore outpatient services as early as 30 to 45 days."

The general also discussed several stages for Keesler personnel who are returning to work. The first stage is for military people who are in the local area whose houses weren't damaged and civilians to come back to work. The second stage is for people who sheltered

on base whose houses are habitable to return to their homes.

"In fact, we had 200 who left shelters Monday to return to their on-base quarters, so that freed up some space in the dormitories where we were housing them," he reported.

The third stage is to recall military personnel to the local area from their "safe havens" to assess whether or not their houses are livable.

"If they are, they can move in with their dependents and come back to work," General Lord remarked. "If they're not, we have a couple of options. We can try to find them an empty on-base home while we're temporarily sheltering them on base while they process claims. They may be able to make a permanent change of station, or leave their dependents in safe havens and send them TDY to places where their skills are needed if we don't need them here.

"We're doing a similar thing with our civilian work force – bringing the civilians back so they can assess their damage," he continued. "We've made sure that we don't break any of the civilian personnel rules while also maximizing the time of excused absence when people come off administrative leave to go and take care of their family matters."

The general concluded, "We have to continue to stand up training, continue humanitarian efforts, rebuild the base, try to figure out where all these relief workers are going to live here – the common thread is that Keesler is a training base, and we're bringing back the mission much more quickly than anyone had ever anticipated."

KEESLER BASICS:

General Information

Alcohol policy – Alcohol possession and consumption is allowed in base lodging, military family housing and during designated hours at the base club. Alcohol possession and consumption is not allowed in base dormitories.

CE civilian recall – All civilian members of the 81st Civil Engineer Squadron at Keesler AFB are asked to return to work on Sept. 17. Personnel presently at safe haven locations are also asked to return. All 81st CES employees are deemed mission essential at this point to aid in the recovery of the base.

Services civilian recall – All civil service and all nonappropriated fund civilian members of the 81st Services Division at Keesler AFB are asked to return to work on Sept. 14. Personnel presently at safe haven locations are also asked to return. All 81st Services civilian employees are deemed mission essential at this point to support recovery of the base. If unable to report, call the Human Resources Office at 228-377-8118.

Long distance service: Commercial long distance telephone service has been restored to Keesler AFB, according to 81st Communications Squadron officials. Base members are advised that line availability may be sporadic during key times.

Uniforms – Uniform issue is open 7 a.m. to midnight at the Taylor Logistics Building (Bldg. 4002). Uniforms will be issued only to those who lost their uniforms in the hurricane or damaged them during recovery work.

Postal services - Due to building damage from the storm, the Mail Bag, building 3913, is now closed. If you had a PSC box, specifically TDY personnel, dorm residents, and students, your mail is now being delivered to the postal facility located in the Levitow Support Center (Triangle Area).

Permanent party residents of Harrison Court, Bayridge, Pine Haven, and Oak Park can retrieve their mail in Bldg. 901 (Fisher Street) at the Official Mail Center on base. Also, mail can be retrieved from the West Biloxi Post Office. For the residents of East Falcon, West Falcon, and Thrower Park, mail delivery has returned to normal. Those residents can expect their mail to be delivered directly to their homes as it had been before the storm. If your residence is located in one of the flooded areas you may do a change of address electronically once you know what your new address will be. You can do this at:

www.changeofaddressform.com.

AAFES – Mini Mall retail store, barber shop and Subway hours: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. The Service Station remains open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Unattended fueling is available 24 hours with a major credit card.

Dining Facilities: – Both facilities are open.
Breakfast: 5:30 to 8 a.m.
Lunch: 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Dinner: 5 to 8:30 p.m.

Services – These services are now open:
Library – 3 to 10 p.m. daily; **Community Center** – 3 to 10 p.m. daily; **Car Wash** – 24 hours daily; **Muse Manor Mini Mart** – 7 a.m. to midnight daily; **Warrior Lounge** – Friday and Saturday 5 to 10 p.m.

Family support – The Family Support Center Annex in Chapel 1 has a variety of items for distribution. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Storage – If you need temporary storage due to the hurricane, contact your group POC. Also, Avery Manor is open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. for key sign out. POC is MSgt Ransom, DSN 597-3297 or 860-3014.

Personnel Information

MPF – The military personnel flight is open upstairs in the Levitow Building from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. A walk-in center is available from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Those with assignments, retirements or separations call DSN 597-3595 for an appointment.

Claims Information

Claims briefings – Briefings resume today at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. at the Levitow Bldg.

Legal assistance – Attorneys are available to assist with personal civil legal matters Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon and 1-5 p.m. Call 377-5404 to schedule an appointment.

Finance Information

Finance – Financial services are available at the Levitow Bldg. from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Customer service hours are 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. To reach a representative for customer service/travel pay related issues call DSN 597-7479. For budget issues, call DSN 597-2770. Contact a finance representative at DSN 597-7256 for additional information.

Health Care Information

Active duty military: Care is available at the EMEDS tent hospital located just east of the Sablich Center on Fisher Street. Routine or non-urgent sick call hours are 8-11 a.m. and 3 to 6 p.m. daily. 24-hour emergency care is available. Limited dental care is available at the Dental Clinic from 7:30 to 9

a.m. and 1 to 2 p.m. For more information, call 377-3003.

Retirees, Dependents of Retirees, and Dependents of Active Duty Living Off-Base:

Care is not available at Keesler AFB. Seek care through other Department of Defense medical treatment facilities, TRICARE network providers, or other civilian providers. TRICARE has waived referral requirements for Keesler's TRICARE Prime enrollees. Necessary care can be obtained from any network provider with no preauthorization required.

For more information, contact TRICARE by phone at (800) 444-5445, or visit TRICARE's Katrina Web site at:

www.tricare.osd.mil/Katrina/index.cfm

Dependents of Active Duty Living On-Base:

Limited care is available at the EMEDS tent hospital located just east of the Sablich Center on Fisher Street. Other care is available from TRICARE network providers.

SARC – Keesler's Sexual Assault Response Coordinator is available 24 hours a day.

If you are the victim of an assault, contact DSN 597-7278 or the Keesler Command Post at DSN 377-4330 for immediate assistance.

Take care of yourself – In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, you may feel you are on an emotional rollercoaster. You may have moments when you are doing well, then suddenly feel overwhelmed by feelings of anxiety, fear, hopelessness or anger. You may also feel guilty if you lost very little while your friends, co-workers and neighbors lost everything.

Although these reactions are normal, it's important to take care of yourself. Make sure you're getting enough rest, eat regularly and make sure you stay hydrated. It's also helpful if you talk about what has happened and how you're feeling. Surround yourself with supportive friends and family. Utilize the many support services available on base. Be a good wingman, and check to see how others are doing. Avoid alcohol and drug use. Don't isolate yourself or push yourself to the breaking point. If you need someone to talk to, chaplains and Life Skills Support Center personnel are available to help. Contact the Family Support Center, 597-7525 or EMEDS, 597-0500 for assistance.

Chapel Services

Please note all services will be conducted in the Fishbowl.

Sunday: Protestant worship, 9 a.m.
Catholic Mass, 10:30 a.m.

Latter Day Saints, 4:30 p.m.

Protestant worship, 6 p.m.

Wednesday: Protestant mid-week prayer and Bible study, 6:30 p.m.

Friday: Jewish Shabbat service, 6 p.m.