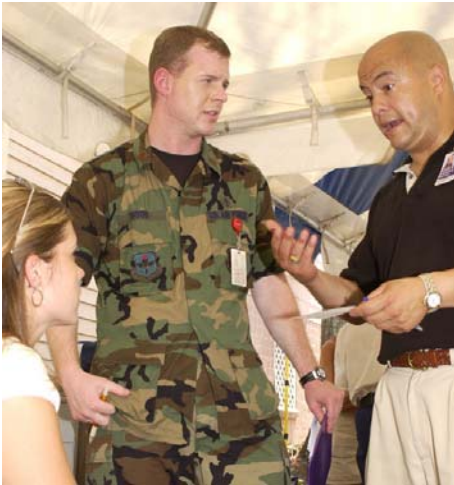




KATRINA Daily News

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Photo feature: A day in the life of post-hurricane Keesler



Dr. (Maj.) Bradley Hood, 81st Medical Operations Squadron, works with a visiting physician to answer a patient's questions during a humanitarian medical mission to a local community hospital Friday. (Photo by Kemberly Groue)



Keesler non-prior service student volunteers deliver food and water to a church in one of Biloxi's hardest-hit parts of town. The Airmen were given the option to evacuate along with their fellow students, but chose to remain at Keesler to help with recovery efforts and humanitarian aid. As of Friday, Keesler has provided more than 58,000 Meals-Ready to Eat and more than 31,000 bottles of water to hurricane victims. (Photo by MSgt. Dan Oberly)



Keesler Airmen fan out to collect Hurricane Katrina debris here Thursday. After 823rd RED HORSE Squadron teams cut and removed the large portions of fallen trees, base detail members are working hard to improve the base's appearance. (Photo by MSgt. Dan Oberly)

Mail service to return to Keesler

By Staff Sgt. Michael Eaton
403rd Wing Public Affairs

Neither rain, sleet, snow, nor hail can stop the post office from delivering on time. But a hurricane is a little different from those other weather conditions.

Hurricane Katrina damaged or destroyed mail facilities and resources on and off base and made it nearly impossible for customers at Keesler to receive and send mail.

A team headed by Senior Master Sgt. Salvador Orozpe, superintendent of electronic communication and postal operations for Air Education and Training Command, was brought in to aid Team Keesler and oversee getting the mail service up and running again.

Others on the team include Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Skaggs from Tyndall AFB, Fla., and Senior Amn. Paul Hardaway from Luke AFB, Ariz.

Sergeant Orozpe said they have all been working very hard to get equipment and systems working to help restore this vital communications link.

"We understand the mail is important and we want to make sure we have everything in working order as soon as possible," said Sergeant Orozpe.

"Tomorrow morning we should receive our first shipment from the West Biloxi Post Office since the storm hit," said Sergeant Orozpe.

Mail will soon come from West Biloxi and will be picked up by communications specialists. It will then be separated between official and personal mail.

Sergeant Orozpe, a 25-year veteran, said he expects to have personal mail almost back to normal by Monday. Reconstituting the mail service has been an arduous task for the postal team.

One of the two personal mail centers on base was inundated with water and sustained severe wind damage during the storm rendering it inoperable. The Gulfport U.S. Postal Service facility is quarantined because of possible contamination.

"Some of our mail has been just sitting in that plant," said Sergeant Orozpe. "We are working with the plant manager in Gulfport to have our mail released and he is waiting on a hygiene specialist to okay release of the mail."

"We also have mail sitting in Memphis and Jackson general facilities," he said. That mail couldn't be delivered because of the catastrophic damage to coastal mail service facilities.

"We have been working to get the mail in Jackson and Memphis here," said Sergeant Orozpe.

Because of the damage to Keesler's personal mail facility, Sergeant Orozpe said they were using the base's second personal mail facility to handle all personal mail.

Official mail will be handled a little differently. Before the storm, mail was picked up and delivered at the different individual units throughout the base. Because many of the units are moving into different facilities, mail will be picked up from one central location in Bldg. 901, Information Management, on Fisher Street.

Students who were evacuated will have their mail forwarded to their new duty stations.

KEESLER BASICS:

General Information

AAFES – The 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 only after 6 p.m.

Food – Both dining facilities are open.

Breakfast: 5:30 to 8 a.m.

Lunch: 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Dinner: 5 to 9 p.m.

Keesler 24-hour bus schedule:
(minutes past the hour)

332nd Training Squadron: 0000/0030

Shoppette/Subway parking: 0000/0032

Welch Theater: 0004/0034

Levitow Bldg.: 0007/0037

CE/Supply bus stop: 0010/0040

Dorm/Tent City bus stop: 0011/0041

5000 block/main gate stop: 0013/0043

Shaw House: 0014/0044

Muse Manor: 0015/0045

Hospital/Tyer House: 0017/0047

Tent City/Comm Sq./Soccer Field:
0018/0048

TALCE/Bldg. 222: 0020/0050

Base Ops: 0022/0052

FEMA contacts – The Federal Emergency Management Agency's main information line is 240-372-6345.

Claims Information

Claims Briefings – Legal representatives provide claims briefings for all personnel at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. daily. Call DSN 597-5404 for more information.

Advance Claim Payment – If you plan to file a claim with the military, you may be eligible to receive advance payment. Maximum amounts are determined case-by-case. Visit the claims office for more information.

USAA – USAA is located at the Levitow Bldg. Their hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Contact a representative at (800) 531-8222 before visiting.

GEICO – Representatives are available to answer questions at the Levitow Bldg.. Call claims into the GEICO regional office at (800) 841-3000.

Finance Information

Finance – Limited 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

Emergency Room/Urgent care clinic – Medical care is available at the EMEDS tent hospital located directly across from Tyer House and beside the Sablich Center. Routine or non-urgent sick call hours are 8-11 a.m. and 3-6 p.m. daily. 24-hour emergency care is available. Those not in the local area can contact the nearest military medical facility or call (800) 444-5445.

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.

Dental Clinic – The Dental Clinic is open for acute needs from 7:30-9 a.m. and 1-2 p.m. The temporary telephone number is DSN 597-3003.

Chapel Worship Schedule

The following schedule has been revised. *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.