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Det 6 Force Development Briefs

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Orders Process

27 Oct 17– Reserve Assignments

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tion

8 Dec 17– Retirement Preparation

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Briefing —Every 3rd Thurs of each
month (Short Course)

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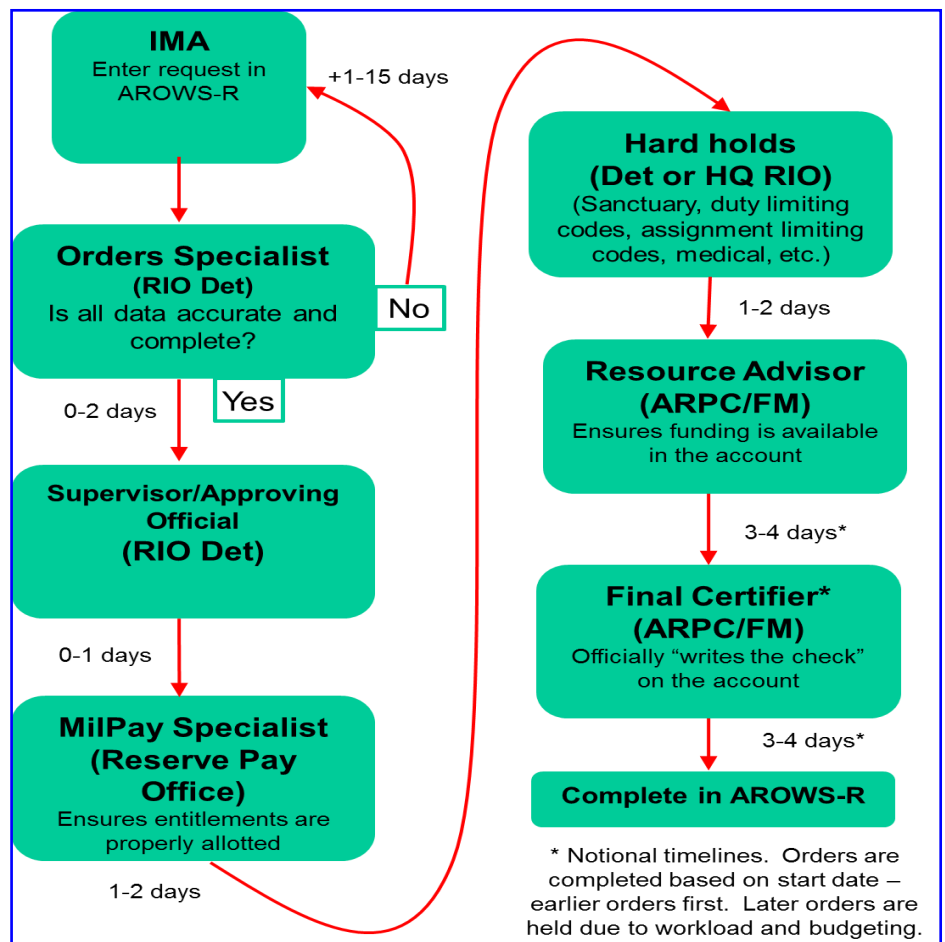
RIO Detachment 6— The Pelican Brief

From the Commander:

Orders: A Modern Day Rube Goldberg Machine

Rube Goldberg (1883—1970) was a Pulitzer Prize winning cartoonist who, given his degree in engineering, drew cartoons of zany inventions that became known as “Rube Goldberg Machines.” These are “deliberately complex contraptions where a series of devices that perform simple tasks are lined together to produce a domino effect in which activating one device triggers the next device in the sequence.” Famous Rube Goldberg machines include the child’s game “Mousetrap” and the 2003 Honda Accord commercial called “The Cog” (watch it on YouTube). An infamous one is the IMA orders process. So this month I want to simply explain how the orders process works, which is not an endorsement of its inefficiency. Hopefully you’ll come away with an understanding of why we ask for orders requests **10-15 business days** prior to the start of duty, and why requests submitted inside that timeline are difficult for the system to deal with.

The first step in the process begins with you when you enter your orders request in AROWS-R. Your request may require additional information such as a sanctuary waiver, rental car justification, special tour checklist, M4S numbers, etc. About 30% of the time that initial request is missing information, requiring us to go back to the IMA for complete documentation. Usually IMAs are very responsive, though sometimes they’re not. But either way it affects the timeline.



Orders continued:

With complete and accurate information, the orders specialist (OS) can begin generating the order. With nearly 4000 orders transactions a year, we have only 2 primary OSs — SSgt Sabrina Morris who works ACC orders, and SMSgt Roy Henley who writes the orders for everyone else (their workloads are roughly equal). Both are “on loan” to Det 6 from their respective Reserve units. When there isn’t a backlog of orders, the OS can move the order in 1-2 days. During times when one of them is out performing duty with their unit, it’s easy for a backlog of a couple hundred orders to develop. In times of Continuing Resolution fiascos (like we had in May, and like you should expect again in FY18), orders requests don’t stop coming in just because there’s no budget or funding. Once there’s a backlog, the timeline for the OS to move the order goes way up. Then they end up working most of the orders by start date, earliest first. That means those of you who did your due diligence and submitted orders way ahead of time will see them languish in the queue until the start date gets closer.

After the OS does their thing, the order gets a supervisor/approving official approval (depending on the type of order) within Det 6. This step is just an affectation of AROWS-R, since it was built exclusively for the Traditional Reserve community. We don’t have the ability to skip any steps within AROWS-R, but this one generally goes very quickly.

At this point the order has left the control of Det 6. The next step is with the RIO Reserve Pay Office at Buckley AFB to ensure any entitlements are properly allotted, such as BAH for orders over 30 days. Each order can be there for 1-2 days. Next the order may get stopped for what are called “hard holds.” If someone is over 18 years of total active service (i.e. in sanctuary) or has a deployment availability code, or assignment limited code, etc., the order will stop here for another approval. The approval could be at the Det 6 leadership level (CMSgt Norton or myself), or it could require the RIO/CC approval. Normally that takes 1-2 days to clear. Admittedly, I’ve been TDY and have lost track of the notification to go into AROWS-R and click a couple buttons. That one oversight on my part cost the process a week and the Colonel whose order it was, was most displeased. So human error happens.

After any required hard-holds are cleared, the orders process then enters the money rounds. The critical one is the Resource Advisor (RA), which is at the Air Reserve Personnel Center (ARPC) Financial Management (FM) level. Here the RA ensures that Reserve Personnel Appropriation (RPA) funding is available in the proper accounts for Annual Training (AT), active duty for operational support (ADOS), active duty for training (ADT), and school tours. If it’s a Military Personnel Appropriation (MPA) tour, which is active duty money, there’s nothing for the RA to certify. However, that order is still in their queue. And because the RA has a finite capacity, and there’s such a volume of orders, the RA is working orders based on start date (earliest first). So unfortunately, I’m not sure we’ll ever get to my utopia of a first-in/first-out system for processing orders. Then once the RA has certified that the funding for the order is available, it’s the Certifier/Final Certifier who clicks the button to finalize the order and apportion money to it.

For a variety of reasons, ARPC/FM has been short staffed for the past year or so, which is why we see relatively long timelines at the RA and Final Certifier levels. I’ve researched the data on Det 6 orders and 3-4 days at each of those is a good average. Factored into those timelines is the inherent unreliability of the Defense Enterprise Accounting and Management System (DEAMS) which is the “check-writing” system that allocates funding against each order. DEAMS and AROWS are notoriously fickle when they interact, and I see frequent messages from ARPC/FM stating that DEAMS is down or the two systems aren’t talking, and therefore, orders can’t be certified. It happens at least a couple times a month, exacerbating an already lengthy and overly complex process. But once the Certifier/Final Certifier clicks the button, voila! Notionally, 10-15 days after you submitted your accurate and complete request, your order is published and you will receive an email notification from AROWS-R. Time to crack open a cold one.

So what’s the point of me telling you all of this? I suspect most of you are out there thinking this orders process is just a black hole and you wonder why it takes until July for your August AT order that you input in April to get published, or why you can’t just easily submit your TDY request on a Wednesday for the following Monday like in DTS. Well, I just wanted you to know what the inside of the black hole looks like. It’s neither efficient nor responsive, which is why we ask you to submit your orders as far ahead of time as you can. When you do that, it decreases the probability of scrambling at the last minute for orders, or late orders altogether. It doesn’t eliminate it, however; there’s still ample opportunity for things to get pear-shaped in the process. But if those low-probability events occur to you, at least you’ll have a better understanding of how it can happen. From our end at Det 6, we work hard to minimize mistakes, but we’re human as well.

Thanks for all you do as Citizen Airmen.

Col Clif Stargardt

Commander, HQ RIO Detachment 6

IR Spotlight

Lt Col Mickey “Spector” Boyko, is currently a USAF EPLO assigned to New Mexico (86M AFSC). She has been serving in the Military for 23 years. Her hometown is Phoenix, AZ. She is married to her “better half”, she has faith-filled kid in college; and her personal interests are: Faith; Family; Operation Christmas Child (Samaritan’s Purse); Young Eagles Flights (Experimental Aircraft Association); Daedalians Scholarship, Kirtland AFB; Air Race Classic (Women’s Air Racing).

A little background on EPLOs from Lt Col Mickey “Spector” Boyko- Face it; staff work isn’t dazzling. But duties of Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officers (EPLOs), create inspiring opportunities to meet people across America who do wonderful & self-sacrificing things. What a blessing to be able to meet so many invisible heroes & be a conduit for them to work with DoD’s extensive capabilities during emergencies. Straight from AFNORTH National Security Emergency Preparedness Directorate (AFNORTH/NSEP): AF EPLOs are Senior USAF Reservists assigned to AFNORTH/NSEP who:

- Support & Advise Defense Coordinating Officers (DCO), Federal, State, Territorial, Local & Tribal Authorities/agencies on AF capabilities
- Interface with the “above’s” civil emergency management (EM) structures
- Are knowledgeable of National, Regional, State, Territorial, & Installation EM plans
- Support service installations as needed during response - BSI/ISB
- Facilitate BSI/ISB & are installation advocates to FEMA & the DCO
- Assess potential gaps in capability
- Coordinate & exercise with FEMA, State, territorial, tribal, & military installations for Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) scenarios
- Validate Requests for Assistance (RFA) are appropriate for the AF & appropriately edit
- Provides annual DSCA training to service installation commanders
- Provide lessons learned on DSCA operations & exercises
- Know Plans, People, & Capabilities!

With the Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center (AFOTEC) developing their new TFI team, Lt Col B. chose to serve on MPA as AFOTEC’s temporary Senior IMA, to help senior leadership employ reserve forces airmen in support & testing of the Air Force’s next warfighting tools. **RIO Det 6 has been an amazing enabler of this effort.** AFOTEC has learned how to employ talented ANG & AFR personnel on exciting missions via innovative use of telework, TDY & collaborative tools to fill critically short skill sets, such as in cyber & space.



PROMOTIONS

1 JUL 2017 ENLISTED PROMOTIONS:

TSGT ALSTON, DANIEL– CENTCOM
SSGT BALDWIN, TYLER– 23CES
TSGT DAVIS, CARLA—1SOFSS
TSGT LEWIS, COURTNEY– 27SOFs
TSGT MARTINEZ, ARIEL– SOCOM
TSGT SCRUBB, IILENE– SOCOM

1 AUG 2017 ENLISTED PROMOTIONS:

SSGT HUDSON, LIANE– CENTCOM
TSGT HUDSON, JEREMY– 11SOS
TSGT LONG, ALLISON– 1OSS
MSGT MCGHEE, JULIETTE– 27IS
SMSGT ROBINSON, AMY– ACC

CY17 2017 USAFR Lt Col Promotions:

ALVAREZ, CEDILLA D.--755OSS
BARNES, SHERRI E.– AFSOC
BROWN, RANDY SCOTT– AFSOC
CANALE, TODD M.– CAP USAF
CHURCH, BRINKLEY H.– CAP USAF
EISENHUT, DANIEL M.– SOCOM
ELLIS, ALEXANDRA CATHERINE.- ACC
FREDERICKSLENHART, MARTIE.– AFSOC
GALLAGHER, VANESSA LEIGH.– SOCOM
HAMEL, ALISON M.– 694ISR
JAMES, ERIC D.- ACC
KOGER, JAMES W.– AFSOC
KUHN, THOMAS M., JR.– 1AF
LAFRANCE, JUSTIN D.– CAP USAF
LAMBOY, CRISTOBAL– CAP USAF
LOGAN, CHRISTI M.– ACC
LOVETT, JENNIFER L.– ACC
MCPHERSON, SCOTT W.-
OGDEN, AARON S.- ACC

OLIVER, AMY A.- ACC
OLSEN, JOSEPH G.– 335CE
PIMENTEL, SHAILA - CENTCOM
REED, SARA A.– ACC
RIGONI, MICHAEL J.-
SAWYER, SHAWN E.—ACC
SCHERBA, HEATHER L.– ACC
SHOEMO, BRION N.– SOCOM
SOBOLEWSKI, TERESA A.– 335CE
STACY, CHRISTOPHER C.– CAP USAF
TASKER, LAURA L.– CENTCOM
UZZEL, GARY L.– ACC
VINCENT, VANESSA R.– SOCOM
WACHTER, SUZANNE S.- ACC
WALDEN, KENNY J.-ACC
WAXMAN, ALEXANDER L.– SOCOM
WHITE, SUE E.—ACC
YUQUE, LEONARDO J.– SOUTHCOM
ZIMMERMAN, ETHAN E.– ACC

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HQ RIO Quick Links

- [HQ RIO Website](#)
- [Detachment Directory](#)
- [The Guide for IRs](#)
- [Travel Companion for IRs](#)
- [Wingman Toolkit](#)
- [MyPers](#)
- [AROWS-R](#)
- [Defense Travel System](#)