



JSAFP

Achieving the Highest Standards of Practice

Society of Air Force Pharmacy Jerry W. Ross Annual Awards

The award program was named in honor of Jerry W. Ross. He was a 30-year veteran of the United States Air Force. Ross grew up in Tennessee and received his Bachelor of Science degree in pharmacy in 1967 from the University of Tennessee. He implemented one of the early unit dose programs in the Air Force and was well known for his drug abuse prevention activities in both the civilian and military communities. His Air Force career spanned the ranks of Airman Basic to Colonel, from pharmacy technician to Medical Group Commander, and was the first Pharmacist as the Chief of the Biomedical Sciences Corps. Many of the programs and opportunities available to technicians and pharmacists today are a direct result of the contributions of Colonel Ross.

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2024 AWARD WINNERS

This year, we received a tremendous amount of award submissions displaying superior performance across the Air Force. The society thanks all leaders for recognizing your teams and individuals for the tireless work dedicated to the mission. We look forward to celebrating all the winners at Mid-Year in May!

The SAFP Maxine Beatty Field Grade Pharmacy Officer of the Year

Maj Michael Braud

Keesler AFB

The SAFP Fred Coleman Company Grade Pharmacy Officer of the Year

Capt Emir Sahinovic

Lackland AFB

The SAFP Ed Zastawny Clinical Pharmacist of the Year

Ms. Teresa Soulati

Wright-Patterson AFB

“Leadership Pinnacle” Senior Pharmacy Technician of the Year

MSgt Lacey Harris

Fort Sam Houston-METC

“Leadership Excellence” Intermediate Pharmacy Technician of the Year

TSgt Eric Williams

Keesler AFB

Michael Gambuti Junior Pharmacy Technician of the Year Award

A1C Baibriel Cabanlit

Peterson SFB

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2024 AWARD WINNERS

The SAFP Civilian Pharmacy Technician of the Year

Mr. Michael Ferency

Fairchild AFB

The SAFP Leadership and Innovation Award

TSgt James Lobban

Travis AFB

The SAFP Educator of the Year

TSgt Kiara Augustin

Luke AFB

The SAFP Small Team of the Year

Andersen AFB

The SAFP Medium Team of the Year

Dover AFB

The SAFP Large Team of the Year

Nellis AFB

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2024 Mid-Year Conference



“Don’t Gamble with Your Readiness”

\$149 for SAFP members, \$199 for non-members

15 hours of Continuing Education!

Ice Breaker Social 5 May 2024

UOD is Business Casual & Business Professional for speakers

See <https://af-pharmacists.org/2024-safp-mid-year-meeting/> for dress code details and schedule of events!

Keynote speaker – Extreme Ownership for Business and Life

You DO NOT want to miss the SAFP Awards dinner. It’s going to be epic!



My Experience and Lessons Learned as The Inspector General

Quan N. Tram, Lt Col, USAF, BSC

For many people, the Inspector General (IG) is often viewed as an intimidating place, a place where people are either in trouble or are out to get people in trouble. The purpose of this article is to dispel that notion and maybe even convince some of you to pursue the IG as a rewarding career broadening opportunity like it did for me. For me, the IG is an amazing experience that taught me the essential skills I will take with me into my next assignment and throughout the rest of my career.

According to the *IG Act of 1978*, the mission of the IG is to prevent & detect fraud, waste and abuse in government programs, and to improve the economy, efficiency, effectiveness of the unit operations. To perform this role, the *IG Act* gives the IG significant authority, such as the right of access to all pertinent documents, the authority to conduct investigations and the right to have direct access to the wing commander. In this article, I will explain the educational requirements to work at the IG, my experiences and lessons I learned during my time as the IG, and why it is such a great experience. I will also go over some of the benefits to the job and why it makes sense for someone to seek out the IG as a career broadening experience.

A job at the IG office was not on my mind until my previous squadron commander suggested and encouraged me to apply for an IG job at Dyess AFB. Prior to applying for the position, I tactfully and deliberately sought out the advice and approval from the leadership in my chain of command and from the pharmacy leadership respectively. Fortunately, I received an overwhelming support from the medical group commander, the pharmacy associate corps chief (who grants the release from the pharmacy career field); and the Air Force Personnel Center Assignment Team (for tracking purposes since the IG job is a two-year Permanent Change of Assignment tour); most importantly, I was interviewed and subsequently hired by the IG for the IG Director of Inspections position. This was a crucial process since a rebuff from anyone mentioned above would have terminated the application to the IG. Furthermore, the fact that I knew nothing of the IG world before I took the job is why I am so excited to speak about such a great career broadening experience.

Once you're hired at the IG, it is required for you to complete the Inspector General Training Course, a one week course located at Kirtland AFB, NM. The course provides a well-rounded foundation and understanding of the *Air Force Inspection System (AFIS)* in accordance with *AFI 90-201*. The course's main objectives are to teach you how to evaluate exercises and how to conduct inspections based on the priorities and intentions of your wing commander. This is where you will learn new things and build relationships with your new "IG network channels." Your new IG friends can be a wealth of knowledge and can help you to not "re-invent the wheel" on exercises or inspections if they have conducted them before. IGTC not only teaches you to be competent as an IG member, but also how to be a better non-commissioned officer or officer in general.

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After IGTC, you begin the real IG work. When I arrived at my Director of Inspections position, wing and unit readiness inspections (Unit Effectiveness Inspection, Vertical, Horizontal, By Laws, Special Interest Items, among others) were the top commander's priority. An inspector's job is to inspect a unit's processes and procedures and give actionable feedback to help the unit improve their efficiency and effectiveness. In my experience, the IG has evolved immensely from some of the "black hat" IG days of the past many of you have probably heard about. To dispel any potential misconceptions, the IG does not throw units or teams under the bus. As fact finders, we collect the data, analyze the deficiencies and deliver it to respective unit leadership in a transparent and unbiased manner. Our job is to provide facts (based on AFIs, DODIs, OIs, and other federal/state regulations), assist commands with questions, address their concerns with their respective deficiencies, and document their corrective action plans in *Inspector General Evaluation Management System* (IGEMS).

In performing our mission, I believe it is critically important not only to uncover problems, misconduct, or inefficiencies, but also to propose effective solutions. Ultimately, our goal should not be focused on whether or not our work makes the base look good or bad, but we help improve its operations. For the most part, squadron, group and wing commanders were all appreciative with our inspection methodology and were eager to fix the identified deficiencies.

As the IG, I also must be trained and qualified to take on complaints or otherwise known as "Q" cases. Complaint is one of the three core foundations (Exercise, Inspection, and Complaints) of the IG office. The one-week *Air Force Complaint Resolution Course* is held at National Conference Center, Leesburg VA. The course provides IG member with a basic education and job knowledge with compliant resolution in accordance with *AFI 90-301*. The core fundamental of the IG Complaint Resolution process is analysis and investigate in potential allegations such as restriction (preventing someone from making protective communication with the IG or a Congressman), reprisal (retaliation action against a member that made protected communication with the IG), and Fraud, Waste, Abuse (FWA) violations. At the completion of the course, all attendees must take an oath to reaffirm their commitment to *uphold the standards for Inspector General and discharge their duties without any prejudice or partiality*. Notably, the *IG Act* describes the IG as an "independent and objective" office within a unit. This is critical requirement for an effective IG. An IG must be perceived to be both independent and objective. IG is required to walk a difficult line: to keep the unit leadership informed of their work and the problems they find, but to operate independently and never to allow their work to be directed or compromised by the leadership in any way.



Inspector General Training Course is located in the same building as the AF Inspection Agency and AF Safety Center in Kirtland AFB, NM



Lt Col Tram at Prince Sultan Air Base (PSAB), Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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Although I largely focused on exercise and inspections at my home station, I primarily worked with customers to resolve their issues and complaints during my deployment at Prince Sultan Air Base, Saudi Arabia. Some of the cases I reviewed made me question why leaders made the decision they made or treated people a certain way. During my deployment, we investigated some serious allegations such as sexual misconduct, bullying, abuse of authority, and leaders creating toxic work environment. With a few exceptions, the majority of the cases could have been prevented if the supervisors set clear expectations, held people accountable, did the right thing, and took care of their people. It may sound like cliché but little misdeeds will fester and spread like wildfire if there is no accountability or good order of discipline within a unit. In carrying out our responsibilities as the IG, I also must realize that the job is not designed to make us popular. I am sure that the IG is not the most popular section on the installation. However, I hope that our work is respected, and that we are viewed as being tough but fair. By the nature of the role, the IG cannot please everyone, nor should we try. We regularly are accused of being either too harsh or too soft, being out to "get" someone or out to "cover up" a problem. Sometimes we are described in each of these ways by different sides in the same matter. Our role, however, is to be independent, to objectively identify any problems and provide effective recommendations to correct deficiencies, and not to not worry about our popularity.



At PSAB, IG is a member of multiple helping agencies on base and is pivotal to the success of Team Phoenix

I also found that my previous experience as a flight and deputy squadron commander were helpful in this assignment, particularly in assisting the staff with working a complex case. There were multiple times a staff member would ask me "As a leader, what would you do in this situation?" or "Does this sound right to you?" Using my background as a former commander coupled with the knowledge gained from IG courses and AF regulations, I would have candid, and sometimes tough, and heated conversations with commanders to get to the right answer.

The second eye opener of this assignment was how much of an asset the IG can be for commanders, if they're willing to use the IG more. The IG can assist a commander in interpreting a regulation or, in certain cases, can search out the regulation for them and provide guidance for how to handle difficult situations. The IG staff typically has more resources and time than a command team to dig into regulations and find the answers to help our Airman. Commanders must do their due diligence, but the IG is there to support commanders as well as their Airman.

Amidst all of this work with inspections and cases, this assignment was still a much needed reprieve from other positions I've held. The working hours were predictable and it was less chaotic atmosphere compared to the busy daily MTF tempo. The stable atmosphere at the IG also allowed me a chance to accomplish the Air War College Professional Military Education. In my shop, the personnel I worked with were all professionals with zero drama. We trust and hold each other accountable. I worked with great NCOs, officers, and civilians who all wanted to see the wing excel at exercises & inspections, and customer complaints addressed timely and appropriately. They all embraced and welcomed me with open arms and truly made me a part of their family.

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The last benefit of this position is that it allowed me to see the higher echelons of Air Force command at work. I had only worked at the squadron level prior to this position. I gained new skills and insights in working with various squadron/group/wing/MAJCOM commanders, different DoD branches, and up to a 4-star combatant command level. This position was a primer on how to forge relationships, operate at the strategic level, and to understand what is needed and how to get information to where it needs to go effectively. The skills I learned in my time as an IG will serve me a lifetime and has certainly made me a well-rounded officer. I will definitely utilize the knowledge and skillsets that I learned to improve my current and future unit.


Applying for the IG assignment was one of the best decisions in my Air Force career, and I hope anyone interested will get the same opportunity that was afforded to me. I strongly suggest the IG assignment to any officer or NCO looking to gain significant knowledge and experience in a field that they may never have thought of before. Just like anything in life, continue to keep an open mind and take full advantage of an opportunity if one is presented to you.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article from Lt Col Tram and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the IG, USAF or DoD. Lt Col Tram is the Inspector General at the 378th Air Expeditionary Wing, Prince Sultan Air Base, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He is a BSC officer (43P, Pharmacist), assigned at Dyess AFB, TX.



Joint Field Training Exercise [JFTX]: A Milestone in Inter-Service Collaboration

Carmina R. Villegas, TSgt, USAF



In 2022, as the Air Force Field Training Exercise (FTX) Team Lead at the Medical Education and Training Campus (METC) Pharmacy Technician Course, I was entrusted with a historic mission: to merge the Army and Air Force FTX's, ushering in a new era of efficiency and collaboration. This initiative, now known as the Joint Field Training Exercise (JFTX), aimed to maximize resources and enhance overall efficiency by consolidating two separate events into one cohesive endeavor.

The METC Pharmacy Technician course, accredited by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists and the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education, serves as a cornerstone in the training of Army, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard students. This course equips students with the skills necessary to excel in both traditional and non-traditional pharmacy practice settings. Army students have conducted an FTX as an end-of-course training event for decades to certify their pharmacy knowledge in a replicated deployment environment. The Air Force students recently conducted their very first FTX in 2021 under the guidance of TSgt Robert A. Thomas.

With the invaluable support of my colleagues from the Army, Navy, and Air Force, we created a JFTX that would not only train and assess soldiers, airmen, and coast guardsmen on Warrior Task and Battle Drills but also focus on their occupational-specific tasks. Air Force tests the knowledge of the Airmen on 34 Career Field Education and Training Plan (CFETP) tasks. Overall, we crafted a training regimen that aimed to sustain proficiency and readiness across all branches of the military.

The inaugural METC Pharmacy Technician Course JFTX was held in July 2022, which brought together thirty-one Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard students for a four-day field training exercise at JBSA-Camp Bullis, Texas. Coast Guard students participated alongside their counterparts, aligning under the Air Force for training purposes.



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During the JFTX, students were immersed in a simulated overseas military base environment, operating out of a Combat Support Hospital (CSH) on Forward Operating Base Warrior. Here, they set up simulated inpatient and outpatient pharmacy areas, mirroring real-world scenarios to create a realistic work environment. Engaging in a wide array of pharmacy operations, including filling outpatient and inpatient prescriptions, trauma care, and emergency medication distribution, students honed their skills in a dynamic and challenging setting. They conduct a supply drop mission in which students utilize land navigation skills to locate a drop of medical supplies and complete several tasks that required them to move as different size elements in an austere environment.

Integral to the success of the JFTX were the Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) Combat Lifesaver (CLS) training sessions conducted by our Navy Corpsman METC Instructors. These sessions equipped students with essential medical skills and underscored the importance of teamwork and collaboration in high-stakes situations.



Throughout the 96-hour training period, students participated in several mass casualty exercises designed to test their discipline, pharmaceutical knowledge, and ability to work cohesively as a team during trauma responses. These exercises not only provided valuable hands-on experience but also offered students a glimpse into the expectations and demands they may encounter in a deployed environment.

By providing students with the opportunity to experience a joint operational environment, the JFTX not only enhanced their technical skills but also fostered a deeper understanding of service-specific differences and the importance of effective communication and teamwork.

As we reflect on the success of the inaugural JFTX, we are reminded of the potentials that exists when we work together towards a common goal. Since then, we have conducted 9 successful JFTX, where we continuously strive to improve our training. Moving forward, we remain committed to pushing the boundaries of collaboration, innovation, and excellence, ensuring that our students are equipped with the skills and mindset necessary to excel in their respective roles, today and in the future.

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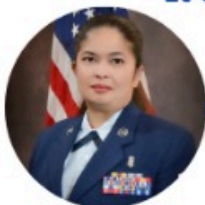
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Society of Air Force Pharmacy



1 Continuing Education: Live and virtual meetings provide CE hours you need to maintain your pharmacy licensure.

2 Meetings and Events: Annual meetings and events are a great environment for networking.

3 Volunteer Opportunities: SAFP offers numerous ways for members to get involved in projects, committees, or events in the pharmacy community.

4 Journal Articles: Members will have access to our journal and see how pharmacy impacts the mission worldwide.

5 Reimbursement Program: SAFP is now offering certificate program reimbursement for members!

Free First Year Membership for DoD-Affiliated Pharmacy Technicians and Pharmacists



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