

# Meet Tracie, AIA's 1997 Joan Orr Spouse of the Year

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**T**racie Gurney, the Air Intelligence Agency's 1997 Joan Orr Spouse of the Year Award winner, has been as much a member of the Air Force as her husband, Master Sgt. William Gurney, superintendent of Detachment 3, 18th Intelligence Squadron, Misawa Air Base, Japan.

She may not wear the uniform or be on call 24 hours a day, but she supports him in everything he does and gives 120 percent of herself to helping others.

"I donate my time because I feel a responsibility to be involved, to take part and do my share. As a young married couple just entering the military and arriving at our first duty assignment, Bill and I were fortunate to have great sponsors willing to share their experiences with us, and it left a lasting impression. It was their positive outlook back then that motivates me to share my experiences with others new to the military lifestyle today," said Tracie.

"Having lived the military lifestyle for nearly 14 years, 10 of which have been in overseas assignments, I also feel a responsibility to share these experiences and help others cope with the stresses involved with the military lifestyle," said Tracie.

"I never thought that I would be cut out for the military lifestyle, always moving and starting over. The military has offered our family the

opportunity to see and experience so many cultures, visiting places I probably would not have done otherwise," said Tracie.

Tracie volunteers over 30 hours a month including six hours every Sunday.

"I haven't worked at Misawa so I have tried to find other avenues to keep myself busy. Volunteering in the activities I'm involved with allows me to do the things I enjoy while at the same time help support my family. Volunteering at the Misawa Artisans' Thrift Shop Country Cottage has given me an outlet to hone my crafting skills, while at the same time allowed me the opportunity to gain valuable work experience as the bookkeeper," said Tracie.

She tracks monthly revenue for consigners and disburses monthly checks to them while ensuring bills are paid and accounting is accurate for the MATS.

Tracie serves as one of four primary focal points of Deep Space III, a private organization made up of Detachment 3, 18th Intelligence Squadron, 3rd Space Surveillance Squadron and GTE, who together make up the multi-command Deep Space Tracking System Site 3.

The Gurneys have a three-year-old daughter, Kayleigh, who requires a lot of Tracie's time. They participate in the "Mommy and Me" swim group which meets twice a week to



help infants and toddlers familiarize themselves with water.

"I am a better parent due to the friendships and education I have received as a Family Support Center playgroup leader. Finally, my involvement with Deep Space III not only allows me to support Bill in his role as superintendent, but also shows other military families the positive impact teamwork can have on the morale of the unit," said Tracie.

She has assisted with numerous fund-raising events including planning and organizing the Children's Christmas parties, organizing and volunteering for various monthly bazaars and local festivals, coordinating meals for unit family members when hospitalization or childbirth occurs and planning baby showers for unit members to help ensure that all their needs are met during those very trying times.

"In the near term, continuing to educate myself as a parent is a high priority. Kayleigh just turned three

years old and I feel it is important to keep involved and up-to-date with the stages she is going through. Education is one of your greatest assets when it comes to parenting. In the long term, I plan to continue with higher education and work toward a baccalaureate degree," said Tracie, who currently has an associate's degree from the University of Maryland in Business Administration.

Tracie also directs a group known as the "Strolling Moms" on Misawa.

"Strolling Moms began with the Family Support Center's First Time Parents Program, giving new moms the opportunity to share parenting experiences and get some exercise at the same time. As the fall weather approached we moved our strolling to the local Shimoda Mall," said Tracie.

"The mall management was so intrigued by the American moms and babies strolling regularly that they hired a mama-san to help with the babies. The group was featured on the local Japanese evening news and an article was written for the local paper to encourage Japanese moms to join us. It was a wonderful cultural exchange," said Tracie.

She also started and guides the activities of a 13-family preschool playgroup through the Family Support Center which meets two hours weekly. She arranged for the playgroup to take a field trip to the Japanese fire station, enhancing cultural relations between the base community and providing an interesting lesson for the base's youngsters.

When the holiday season came around, Tracie had arranged for a collection box for families to donate used toys for the less privileged and over 200 toys and games were disseminated to a local Japanese orphanage. She, along with other volunteers, had made all the table centerpieces for the organization's holiday Christmas party, which were given away at the end of dinner.

Newcomers to the unit are met at the airport by their sponsors who are

well prepared with hand-made gift bags, courtesy of Tracie, which are used to provide \$10 worth of groceries for the newly arriving family. Each new member entering the unit has expressed gratitude for the thoughtfulness and rated the intro program as outstanding or excellent.

And if that isn't enough, Tracie is also a member of the Misawa Quilt Guild, a forum for community members who appreciate the art of quilting. She was selected by base leadership to design and piece together a quilt square to represent Misawa as one of the active Air Force installations around the world. It is one of 85 quilt squares that make up the Air Force 50th Anniversary commemorative quilt.

Tracie is not new at community service. She has received many civilian awards including the 1991 Civilian of the Year, RAF Edzell, Scotland; Army and Air Force Exchange Proficiency Award, RAF Chicksands; and Department of the Navy Achievement

Award, RAF Edzell, Scotland.

"Winning this award has meant a lot to me and has certainly been a humbling experience. There are many spouses who give a lot of themselves to the community and are equally, if not more, deserving of this type of recognition. I feel very grateful and honored that my organization took the time and effort to recognize my accomplishments," said Tracie.

"Tracie is an extraordinary person with very special talents. Knowing her character and the caring and generous nature of her personality, it doesn't surprise me anymore the level to which she gets herself involved. She's a natural leader and well liked wherever we go. She's also very determined to see her vision through, seemingly never satisfied with the level of effort she gives. At times she's tough to keep up with, but Kayleigh and I wouldn't want it any other way. We are extremely fortunate to have her as a spouse and mom," said Master Sgt. Gurney. **1**

## 301st airman reenlisted by his mother

*by Master Sgt. Craig Baker  
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A conventional systems technician assigned to the 301st Intelligence Squadron, Misawa Air Base, Japan was recently reenlisted by his mother via video teleconference.

Senior Airman Jason Williams' non-commissioned officer in charge voiced came up with the idea. Williams decided to pursue the possibility, and touched base with Fort Gordon, Ga. The process took about a week to coordinate with the main area of concern being to arrange time on the system.

"I joined the Air Force to gain experience in the electronic career field, and to finish my degree in computer science. I highly enjoy being in the Air Force. I am proud to put on my uniform in the morning," said Williams.

Williams' mother, Lt. Col. Paulette Williams, a member of the Army stationed at Fort Gordon's medical facility, was thrilled at the prospect of participating in the ceremony and especially proud her son wanted to include her in his first reenlistment.

Lt. Col. Julia Heavirland, 301st commander, and Maj. Reginald Adams, chief of logistics were among his coworkers to share the occasion. **1**