Drugs end careers of two Yokota airmen

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YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan (AFPN) — Two airmen from Yokota recently were convicted of several drug-related offenses.

Airman Lewis W. Dodson Jr., of the 374th Medical Support Squadron here, and Airman 1st Class Foster L. Rose, of the 374th Communications Squadron, both earned jail time for those offenses during the past few weeks.

Dodson was sentenced March 28 by a military judge in a general court-martial to nine months confinement, a bad conduct discharge, reduction to E-1 and forfeiture of all pay and allowances. Dodson pled guilty to, and was found guilty of bringing hallucinogenic mushrooms, which contained psilocin, a controlled substance, onto base and using them, and conspiring to possess, possessing, distributing ecstasy.

Although Dodson pled not guilty to using ecstasy, the military judge found that he was responsible for the use of ecstasy because he aided and encouraged other airmen to use the drug. Dodson's charged involvement with mushrooms and ecstasy covered the time period from January through July of 2000, and took place in the dorms on base, in Fussa City, and in downtown Tokyo with other Yokota airmen. Dodson had faced a maximum punishment of 45-years confinement, a dishonorable discharge, reduction to E-1 and total forfeitures of all pay and allowances.

According to Capt. David Young, assistant prosecutor in the case, Dodson argued that he used illegal drugs because he was having difficulty adjusting to life in the military and at Yokota.

"Members have many alternatives such as getting involved in sports, military, civic, or religious activities, or taking college courses," Young said. "Counseling is also available through a diverse range of services from supervisors, to mental health professionals, to chaplains."

A federal felony criminal conviction will now follow Dodson for the rest of his life. This may limit his ability to vote or hold a professional license in some states.

"This young man took the easy way out," said Young. "He focused on his own selfish needs and not those of the Air Force."

Rose faced a general court-martial April 6. He pled guilty to all charges and specifications. Rose was convicted by a panel of officers of attempting to use marijuana, diverse use of hallucinogenic mushrooms, use of ecstasy, solicitation of another airman to use hallucinogenic mushrooms and false swearing.

The underlying events occurred in the spring and summer of 2000, when Rose used the drugs with other airmen. Some of the uses occurred in the Yokota dormitories and others in downtown Tokyo.

Rose was sentenced to six months confinement, reduction to E-1 and total forfeitures of all pay and allowances for six months. He had faced a maximum punishment of 20-years confinement, a dishonorable discharge, reduction to E-1 and total forfeitures of all pay and allowances.

"Rose now also has a federal felony criminal conviction on his records for the rest of his life and all because, for a period of a couple of months, he put his own selfish interests above the interests of the Air Force," said Capt. Paul Cronin, the assistant prosecutor in the case. Cronin went on to say that it was clear from the testimony in court that his supervisors felt Rose had plenty of support and was in a position to have had a productive career before needlessly throwing it all away.

AAFES rolls out social security elimination program

DALLAS - In today's financial climate, where the issue of personal privacy is of the utmost importance, the issue of Social Security numbers on checks is fast becoming a major concern among shoppers everywhere.

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service shares in this concern with its customers and is now changing its procedure for check acceptance at all AAFES direct operated facilities worldwide - a procedure that will eliminate the use of Social Security Numbers on checks.

In February of this year, AAFES announced it was setting up a three-phase process to eliminate the need for Social Security Numbers on checks. The first phase was a pilot "proof-of-concept" test conducted in November 2000 at five AAFES facilities.

Phase two was an acceptance test of the readers that were selected and a validation of the new procedure. For the acceptance test, 20 facilities in the San Antonio area had the readers installed.

The third phase is the worldwide rollout of the readers and the accompanying new procedure.

The Social Security number, which is used by both AAFES and DOD to identify military personnel, is an important element in the authorization of checks, as well as verification to identify customers who are authorized to use exchange facilities.

Beginning this month, AAFES plans to roll out its check acceptance program. The program, which will use Magnetic Ink Character Recognition readers to eliminate the need for Social Security numbers to be written on checks, will be installed in a roll out process. The new procedure will be introduced first in East Coast exchanges and then move westward, followed by Europe and Pacific exchanges.

The implementation of the readers in the Eastern Region exchanges began the first week of April and is scheduled to finish statewide by early June. The worldwide rollout of the new procedure should be completed when the European and Pacific readers are installed in July and August of this year.

The new procedure requires cashiers to enter the Social Security number of the person presenting the check, which may be the sponsor or a family member. This is accomplished by taking the Social Security number from the presenter's identification card and key entering it into the register or other authorization device as part of the transaction. The Social Security Number is not required on the check.

The check is scanned using the MICR reader technology, which reads the routing number, account number and check number. Other basic data, such as the presenter's name, address and military unit must still be printed or written on the check.

It is important for customers to note that this policy will be implemented at their exchange as the MICR equipment is installed in every AAFES facility there. Until the readers are installed at all facilities on the installation, the stores will continue to record Social Security numbers on checks.

"It is AAFES' policy to take every practical step to ensure the privacy of the service members, retirees and the family members we serve," said Tim Bailey, Chief of AAFES' Management Information Systems Fiscal Support Branch. "AAFES has made this commitment as a part of our mission to better serve our customers throughout the world."

U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Adrian Cadiz

Going home

Air Force Senior Airman Curtis Towne, a crewmember of the Navy EP-3 salutes the awaiting crowd as he departs from an Air Force C-17 Globemaster III. Crewmembers from the United States Navy EP-3 aircraft involved in the April 1 accident with a Chinese F-8 aircraft arrived at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, April 12, on their second stop en-route to Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Washington. The crew made a stop in Hawaii to complete their mission, debrief military officials and receive medical evaluations.