

# Big News on Small Things

Happenings in the Aquatic Microbial Ecology Research Group

Issue # 3



**INTO THE  
WILD BLUE  
YONDER!**



**Logistics:** A fairly ambiguous word with a less than clarifying definition. The United States military defines logistics as “the aspects of military operations that deal with the design and development, acquisition, storage, movement, distribution, maintenance, evacuation and disposition of material; movement, evacuation, and hospitalization of personnel; acquisition of construction, maintenance, operation and disposition of facilities and acquisition of furnishing of services.”

Webster’s dictionary attempts to be more concise, defining logistics as “the procurement, maintenance, distribution and replacement of personnel and material.” That’s better, but can you use it in a sentence?

As simply as it can be put, logistics is having the right thing in the right place at the right time, and that has been Randon Davis’s specialty in The Wilhelm Lab for the last year. As Laboratory Technician, Randon ensured that all required equipment and materials were ordered, received and distributed efficiently, as well as guaranteeing the lab was maintained with high standards of organization and sanitation. Randon also performed multiple lab experiments as a research assistant to Dr. LeClerc and Dr. Wilhelm.

Randon’s last day in The Wilhelm Lab was June 19, 2008. She will be reporting for duty as an Air Force Logistics Officer at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C. on September 5. Her friends here at the University of Tennessee have wished her the best as she heads off into the wild blue yonder, but they know that her work ethic will be next to impossible to replace.

“Randon was so good at her job! She had the perfect amount of OCD that kept the lab in perfect condition,” joked Janet Rowe, Randon’s friend and fellow researcher in The Wilhelm Lab. “I could always tell if Randon had been at a station before me because every-

thing was exactly where it was suppose to be. I’m going to miss her.”

Randon started working with Dr. Wilhelm after he became her advisor as an undergraduate in microbiology four years ago. At the end of the spring semester in 2007, Randon



**Randon Davis**

was three credits shy of graduating, so Dr. Wilhelm offered her an independent study course in the lab. When she finished at the end of the summer, the Air Force gave her an extra year to beef up her resume for medical school. Dr. Wilhelm again offered her an opportunity, this time as a lab

technician. Randon feels that the experience she gained working in The Wilhelm Lab is invaluable.

“My long term goal is to be a physician,” Randon said, “I plan on working as a logistics officer for two years to get my feet wet in the military, and I’ll be studying for the MCAT (Medical College Admission Test) for the first year. I hope to take that and then apply for med school. I’ve gotten a whole lot of experience on a molecular level here. I think that combined with experience in the air force; actually serving as an officer, will set me up pretty well for med school.”

Randon initially accepted an Air Force scholarship for her bachelor’s with the knowledge that they would offer her a scholarship for medical school. Under the Air Force Leave of Absence Program, Randon will be able to postpone her military obligations while she attends medical school and return to the Air Force when she is finished, this time in the medical field.

To her eventual predecessor, Randon says that initiative can be the difference between a very rewarding learning experience and just collecting a paycheck. “There could be a lot of sitting around if you allow it,” she cautions. “I took on a lot of projects that I found needing attention. Cleaned ‘em up, got everything organized, even if I was in the middle of another project.

“And don’t be afraid to ask questions!” she says. “Everyone in the lab is very helpful and very willing to impart whatever knowledge they have.” To her friends in the lab, she wishes everyone the best and is grateful for their help: “I’ve learned something from everyone in this lab. It’s a really strong collaborative group and that makes for a really good lab.”

For now, Dr. LeCleur will take over the logistics of Randon’s duties; ordering equipment and materials, and the rest of the lab will pull together to keep things running at the level they have come to expect from her commitment to excellence. As for me, Randon, thank you for your patience with all my silly questions and making sure I didn’t break anything. Good Luck!



**As a logistics officer in the Air Force, Randon will be working to make sure our troops have the equipment they need when they need it, no matter where in the world that may be. These airmen with the 20th Logistics Readiness Squadron load a C-5 Galaxy for an upcoming deployment to Southeast Asia.**

*-Joel Smithson-*



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All Military related photos courtesy of Shaw Air Force Base

