

# THE BEACON

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE 124TH FIGHTER WING

Spring 2024



COMBAT EXCELLENCE - ALWAYS ON MISSION

## FROM THE 124TH FIGHTER WING SENIOR ENLISTED LEADER CHIEF MASTER SGT. LEHI HARTWELL

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Welcome to your Spring 2024 Beacon. It is hard for me to believe that I have been the wing command chief for over 18 months, and it has been an eye-opening experience. I couldn't be prouder to represent our Airmen. Despite the many challenges we have faced, you have stayed focused on accomplishing the mission and have proven to be resilient and resourceful.



We are seeing the last few Reserve Component Period (RCP) personnel head out the door to their deployed locations around the world. The Mission Generation Force Element is preparing for their upcoming deployment while navigating new Ready Airman Training requirements. As an organization, we have had some changes levied on the fighter wing, such as Full-Time Force Leveling and the Enlisted Grade Review. Your leadership teams are actively engaging with all stakeholders to minimize the impact on you and your teams.

We will continue to see additional changes as the Air Force and Air National Guard implement the Great Power Competition taskings required for the future fight. I ask that each of you look at innovative ways to enact the changes that are needed to support these initiatives. Our Airmen and first-line supervisors are the ones best positioned to enact these initiatives and the unintended consequences that some may have. Please reach out to your supervisors, chiefs and commanders with your solutions to problems that arise; we need your input and boots-on-the-ground knowledge to be successful moving forward.

In the Idaho Air National Guard, it is our goal to retain Airmen for a career in the Air National Guard. There are many reasons and life situations that influence the decision to either reenlist or elect not to reenlist in the Guard, but I believe that if we foster open dialogue between Airmen and supervisors, most obstacles to retention can be overcome. If you are a supervisor, I ask that you become actively involved in your Unit's Career Motivation Program and engage with your Airmen and address their individual situations.

As part of the initiative to attract and retain our best Airmen, the Air National Guard has recently released multiple incentive programs. A new enlistee can get up to \$50K, prior service can get up to \$75K, and re-enlistees can receive up to \$90K. Certain career fields that were not on the National Bonus listing are covered under our local bonus and re-enlistment bonus program. Another great program starting 1 July was recently approved by the Idaho Legislature. The Guard Recruiting and Sustainment Program (GRASP) will pay any active Guardsman \$1,000 for each individual that enlists in the Idaho Air National Guard. Please reach out to our Recruiting and Retention team for details on these programs or to volunteer for recruiting events.

Lastly, as we enter the summer season here in Idaho, I want to encourage everyone to spend time with your family and friends. I truly believe that creating and fostering a healthy balance between your service in the Guard, your civilian job, and your family is critical to being successful in all aspects of your life. If you find that you are struggling to find proper balance to the aspects of your life, be it physical, mental, spiritual, or financial, the Idaho National Guard has numerous resources to assist you and your family. Within Building 151, we have our two Directors of Psychological Health, Brian Lewis and Ted Burgess, as well as our Family Support Programs Director, Heather Echols. Additionally, there are resources available to all Airmen at Building 270 and the J9 Directorate, including financial counseling, job placement, Chaplain support, a retirement coordinator, and soon a registered dietician.

*Go Guard, ATTACK! -Lehi Hartwell*



# COMMANDER'S PRIORITIES

## 124FW TRAINING EFFORT FOR 2024: RELEVANT NOW AND READY FOR TOMORROW; WITH THE TOOLS WE HAVE TODAY.

We will train in earnest, pushing our comfort levels as we develop and execute agile combat employment concepts in order to produce Airmen who will be ready and relevant to support our federal mission and our enduring state responsibilities.

We will develop our Airmen to be the leaders we need today and into the future by keeping them relevant in their AFSC skills and training them to be agile in execution. We will continue to look for opportunities to push decision making to the lowest level that makes sense while providing training and command intent to best equip our Airmen with the necessary information to make those operational decisions. Our families are the reason many of us serve, and we will look to offer them opportunities to grow and be involved and aware of our mission. We will continue to maintain a strong relationship with our civilian employers, civic leaders, and our community partners.

The best way we protect our future is by being ready and relevant today with the missions we currently have. Our training plan should provide the necessary training and development of our Airmen that will allow for mission success during the next available window or state activation. If we continue to put our best operational foot forward today and train our Airmen to be agile, resilient leaders, we are preparing for tomorrow. We will strive to sustain and modernize our installation so that we have relevant facilities today and for years to come. We will look for opportunities to integrate with our joint partners, whether that be our community, state, other states, active duty, other services, or other nations.

# ATTACK!



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# 124TH FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

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## WING COMMANDER

Col. Chad Kornberg

## CHIEF OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Maj. Rebecca Solosabal

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

Maj. Bonnie Blakely

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS SUPERINTENDENT

Senior Master Sgt. Joshua Allmaras

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

Tech. Sgt. Mercedee Wilds

Staff Sgt. Joseph Morgan

Senior Airman Jady Eisenbrandt

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## WHERE TO FIND US



124THFIGHTERWING.ANG.AF.MIL



FACEBOOK.COM/124FW



INSTAGRAM.COM/124FIGHTERWING



FLICKR.COM/124FW



TWITTER.COM/124FIGHTERWING



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## TACTICS BEFORE MEDICINE: **TCCC**



Tactical Air Control Party Airmen with the 124th Fighter Wing's Air Support Operations Squadron practice Tactical Combat Casualty Care at the Orchard Combat Training Center in southern Idaho, February 6, 2024. TCCC allows military personnel to deliver lifesaving medical care designed to stabilize injuries in preparation for transit.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Joseph Morgan





Idaho Air National Guard

# Airman & Family READINESS PROGRAM

The Airmen & Family Readiness Program (AFRP) serves as a one-stop information and referral center for single, married, active-duty, Guard, Reserves, civilians who work on base, and retired members as well as their families. One of its major functions is to ensure personnel and their families are connected with the appropriate service on and off site.



## SERVICES & ACTIVITIES PROVIDED

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| ✓ Deployment Preparation & Reintegration     | ✓ Volunteer Opportunities           |
| ✓ Personal and Family Readiness              | ✓ Career Development                |
| ✓ Child & Youth Services                     | ✓ Transition to Civilian Life       |
| ✓ Air Force Aid Society                      | ✓ Casualty Assistance               |
| ✓ Financial Readiness & Emergency Assistance | ✓ Exceptional Family Member Support |

**FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT MRS. HEATHER ECHOLS**  
Airman and Family Readiness Program Manager



Phone: 208-422-5470  
Cell: 208-513-3430





Photo by Staff Sgt. Joe Morgan

# FLYERS FUELING THE FIGHT:

## IDANG PILOTS REFUEL A-10S DURING TRAINING EXERCISE

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Story by Maj. Bonnie Blakely

A-10 Thunderbolt II pilots from the 190th Fighter Squadron, part of the 124th Fighter Wing, Idaho Air National Guard, participated in a training exercise Feb. 1-2.

The pilots landed at Jocelyn Field, Magic Valley Regional Airport in Twin Falls, turned their own jets, and continued training exercises.

Landing at an airport that military pilots don't use every day allows them to practice agile combat employment (ACE), which is a proactive and reactive operational scheme of maneuver to increase survivability while generating combat power.

"When thinking within this ACE concept, we may land in a place austere enough that there isn't support by crew chiefs, especially A-10 trained crew chiefs," said Col. Ryan Richardson, 124th FW deputy commander, "so pilots need to be familiar with how to service their own aircraft on the turns."

The training exercise was designed to enhance agility and resilience, preparing for issues that may occur in a combat mission or high-threat environments, said Col. J.R. Williams, 124th Operations Group Commander.



"Specifically, the 124th Fighter Wing is testing command and control capabilities and concepts of operation while generating air power from different locations, all at a moment's notice," Williams said.

Although prior coordination with other military units, local airport authorities, and community partners took place, this simulated training mirrors what military aircrews might be faced with in a deployed environment.

"This is a 190th Fighter Squadron focused exercise," said Richardson, "but we're getting lots of support from other agencies."

The IDANG pilots also practiced combat search and rescue with support from the Idaho Army National Guard's UH-60 Black Hawks out of Gowen Field. Additionally, Navy EA-18G Growlers from Electronic Attack Squadron 135 in Washington integrated into some of the tactical training in the airspace. The A-10s were supported inside of the airspace by the 266th Range Squadron, geographically separated unit of the IDANG located at Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho. They provided threat emitters to provide a realistic, contested training scenario.

"The flying training itself is similar to the training that we do daily, but the integration and the simulated war-time scenario of the exercise makes it more complex," Richardson said.

A C-130 Hercules from the 152nd Airlift Wing, Nevada Air National Guard, also supported the exercise by transporting military members from Gowen Field to Twin Falls. Crew chiefs arrived at the regional airport and served as instructors for the pilots and as safety observers to make sure everything was done correctly.

"We're proud and excited to be able to operate out of Twin Falls, and we're grateful for the support of the airport," said Richardson. "This is fantastic training that's going to make us more capable in both our federal and our state mission. We are extremely fortunate to be able to get this kind of training in our backyard."



Courtesy photos by Mr. Mark Page





Photo by Micah Garbarino, 388th Fighter Wing

# PANTHER SHADOW

## TRAINING FOR A NEAR-PEER FIGHT

Story by Senior Master Sgt. Joshua Allmaras

In skies and on the ground in Southern Idaho, military aircraft and personnel trained to fight a near-peer enemy March 25-29, 2024, during exercise Panther Shadow.

The exercise included the Idaho Air National Guard's 266th Range Squadron, the 388th Fighter Wing and 729th Air Control Squadron, both from Hill Air Force Base.

"During this inspector general led exercise, the F-35s from Hill Air Force Base train to go down range," said Mr. Kevin D. Coats, an air battle manager with the 266 RANS. "This Agile Combat Employment exercise allows the Airmen to train to employ agile basing and combat."

The role of the RANS is to provide strategic aircraft control of aircraft training in the military airspace that encompasses Idaho, Nevada, and Oregon.

"We get the aircraft handed off from the civilian air traffic control, and we check them into our airspace," said Coats. "This includes giving them pertinent traffic, weather and other flight conditions. We also are watching to deconflict the airspace with potential civilian aircraft."

Controlling 10,000 square miles of airspace is just an everyday task for the RANS Cowboy Control team.

"Cowboy control is part of a military radar unit," said 1st Lt. Chris Christman, an air



weapons officer with the 266 RANS. “We control airspace, and during this exercise, we get to learn from other units on how they work. This allows us to see our jobs from a new perspective.”

This military radar unit is the 266 RANS, an Idaho Air National Guard geographically separated unit, stationed at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho.

This unit, including Cowboy Control, has a direct impact on combat preparedness.

“The training we do here directly impacts the mission in a real world training environment,” said Christman. “The training aircrew get here could mean the difference between life and death in an actual combat environment.”

Christman and Coats both said that the facilities and range space is one of the big reasons units from all over the world want to train in Idaho. It provides them, to include fifth-generation fighters, access to world-class training and open airspace, allowing them to train for the future fight with a near-peer enemy.

“We are practicing distributed operations,” said Maj. Corrin, a pilot from Hill AFB. “Aircraft are taking off from multiple locations and meeting in the air to fight.”

Corrin went on to say, “This range is important, and the reason we come up here is because of the airspace and facilities. It allows us to train how we would fight.”



Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Josh Allmaras



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mercedes Wilds



Photo by Senior Airman Cheyenne Lewis-Roberts, 325th Fighter Wing





# ADVANCED READY TRAINING

Story by Maj. Bonnie Blakely

Courtesy photos

Thirty-three Airmen from the 124th Fighter Wing, Idaho Air National Guard, participated in an Advanced Ready Training exercise March 4-8 at Gowen Field.

This ART featured hands-on classroom instruction and field-practical events, culminating with a field training exercise, enhancing their skills as Mission Ready Airmen.

ART is designed to develop MRA by creating an expeditionary and agile mindset. It trains Airmen beyond their primary job specialties, allowing them to defend themselves and accomplish additional tasks in support of agile operations in challenging combat environments.

“We need to train as we fight,” said Chief Master Sgt. Sean Williams, 124FW Agile Combat Employment Program Lead. “The deployed environment should not be

the first time these teams are exposed to these new demands.”

This all falls under the umbrella of the Air Force’s bigger goal of Agile Combat Employment, a proactive and reactive operational scheme of maneuver executed with threat timelines to increase survivability while generating combat power.

“The ACE concept will put our Airmen in situations that they may not have experienced yet in their military careers,” Williams said. “The real value of the training was the change in mindset to combine all of these combat skills at a higher proficiency level for a full spectrum of execution.”

Three teams participated in the training, comprising members from multiple squadrons and various Air Force Specialty Codes. Each team has Airmen from the



124th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Maintenance Squadron, Logistics Readiness Squadron, Security Forces Squadron, and Communications Flight. The various specialties within each team enable combat support to aviation force elements and the required skills to operate independently in austere conditions, Williams said.

The primary objective was to complete 12 of the 20 required blocks of instruction in order to become certified as a Mission Generation Force Element Team. An additional goal of the training was for the teams of mixed AFSCs to start operating as a cohesive unit.

Soldiers from the Idaho Army National Guard's 204th Regional Training Institute, located on Gowen Field, were chosen to instruct the Airmen based on their extensive experiences in combat tasks and being professional instructors. The 204th RTI is the National Guard's premier school for ground maneuver warfare, maintenance education and leadership development.

"With the RTI experts on base, it was a great resource and advantage to utilize them," said Master Sgt. Keven Swenson, an A-10 crew chief with the 124th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. "I feel our unit has a leg up on other units with this training we received."

Training included basic communications, weapons sustainment, explosive hazards, countermeasures for improvised explosive devices, self-protection fundamentals, mission planning, and troop leading procedures.

"The expertise on vehicle operations, small team tactics, as well as information on working in an austere environment was eye

opening and brought into perspective what the ACE concept is about," Swenson said.

Some of the tasks, like weapons familiarization, were designed to be refresher training and enhance current skill sets.

"Other tasks were new concepts that will give the teams the ability to execute missions independently, when they may not have all the combat support that we are accustomed to at large air bases," Williams said.

The Airmen also learned about mounted vehicle operations, tactical combat casualty care, defensive fighting positions, tactical movement fundamentals, and entry control points.

"This training was a huge success," Williams said. "All of our goals were achieved, and the teams are on schedule to be certified. This training prepared them to be a premier force element that our Wing can offer to the Air Force."





# INDUSTRY DAY

Story and photo by Senior Master Sgt. Joshua Allmaras

The Idaho Air National Guard contracting office held an industry day at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho, March 26, 2024.

The event was designed to provide the ability of military organizations and potential contractors to network.

“An industry day is an opportunity for us to have contractors on our base,” said Maj. Jeffery DeHaven, the officer in charge of the IDANG contracting team. “The intent of the day is to get contractors and units interacting with each other.”

This interaction is designed to be low stress to facilitate communication.

“The event has at least two benefits,” said DeHaven. “It allows contractors to show their products and allows military personnel to see products that might benefit their organization.”

These products might allow Airmen to do their jobs better, and the contractors get to display them without having to cold-call bases to demonstrate or showcase their services, DeHaven said.

One of the participants included a local small business owner.

“I always wanted to own my own business that

offered people the ability to put their witty sayings on products,” said Cherly Bustamante, the owner of Woody Treasures. “I’ve found that humor allows people to get through hard times. I want to keep the humor alive with the services we offer.”

The industry day not only showcased small business partners but also what is called the Apex Accelerator.

“Apex is a business development agency,” said DeHaven. “It is designed to expand the Department of Defense’s industrial base. This organization even played a key role in getting Gowen Thunder contracts quickly taken care of.”

This day is more about the end users of products and not contracting.

“We, contracting, don’t actually use this stuff,” said DeHaven. “This day is an opportunity for our end users to mingle and learn more about products and services that might benefit them.”

This was the first industry day hosted by contracting, but it won’t be the last, DeHaven said. It’s an event they hope to expand and continue to provide Airmen with the IDANG a way to learn more about products that will have a direct impact on the mission.



# SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION & RESPONSE



**All airman and dependents  
ages 18+ are eligible  
to make a report of sexual  
assault through the 124th FW  
Sexual Assault Prevention  
and Response office.**

**For more information, please contact  
a member of the SAPR team.**

## AVAILABLE SERVICES

- Access to restricted and unrestricted reporting
- Connection to non-clinical support services
- Support in notifying law enforcement, if desired
- Access to victim advocate support services
- Connection to medical and mental health resources as needed

**DOD SAFE HELPLINE 24/7**

**1.877.995.5247**

**ONLINE.SAFEHELPLINE.ORG**



**AMANDA NOWAK**

SARC / SAPRM

📞 208-954-3369

✉ amanda.stone.2@us.af.mil



**MAJ. BONNIE BLAKELY**

ALT SARC / 124FW PUBLIC AFFAIRS

📞 208-422-5357

✉ bonnie.blakely@us.af.mil



**SSGT. JOSEE MCKERNAN**

VICTIM ADVOCATE / RECRUITING

📞 208-422-5393

✉ josephine.mckernan@us.af.mil





# NOT YOUR AVERAGE POLAR PLUNGE: ASOS COLD WEATHER TRAINING

Photos by Staff Sgt. Joseph Morgan & Tech. Sgt. Mercedes Wilds

Tactical Air Control Party Airmen with the 124th Fighter Wing's Air Support Operations Squadron practice cold weather safety procedures on Cascade Lake in Donnelly, Idaho, February 7, 2024. Through cold water submersion and cold weather buddy care, ASOS members are able to push themselves and their equipment to the limits.







# BENNETT PROMOTES

The 124th Medical Group Commander, Lt. Col. Lora Bennett, promoted to the rank of Colonel during her promotion ceremony on Gowen Field, April 6, 2024.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Joseph Morgan



Col. Bennett, in addition to her service to the Idaho Air National Guard, runs a private practice serving families in Meridian, Idaho.



# CHIEF RETIREMENTS

Over the April 2024 drill weekend, we said farewell to two of our wing's chiefs. Chief Master Sgt. Mark Page retired after 38 years of service, spending most of his time in Ammo and deploying 10 times. Chief Master Sgt. Justin Hughes retired after 20 years of service and was most recently serving as the 124th Maintenance Group Senior Enlisted Leader.



Photos by Senior Master Sgt. Joshua Allmaras



# TOTAL FORCE:

Army, Air, Navy train together in mass casualty combat exercise

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Becky Vanshur



A deep breath in, deep breath out. An Airman from the Idaho Air National Guard holds his weapon steady in front of him, pressing it against his shoulder, finger on the trigger, his body low to the ground. He takes a small, strategic step into the plume of smoke swirling around him. Surrounded by a blanket of red smoke makes it hard to see his battle buddy but he knows his counterpart, a Soldier from the Idaho Army National Guard's Medical Detachment, is close behind him.

The red smoke is used to conceal the medical team's movements as they defend their medical structures and personnel who are being ambushed while conducting Tactical Combat Casualty Care on the battlefield. The two Guardsmen were among approximately 200 Idaho National Guard Soldiers, Airmen and their active duty and Navy Reserve counterparts who joined forces for a mass casualty combat exercise, Feb. 1-4, near Gowen Field.

"The main focus of this joint services training was to all come together, learn each other's jobs and create multi-capable Soldiers, Airmen and Sailors on top of learning how to respond in mass casualty scenarios," said Senior Master Sgt. Davis Nguyen, the 124th Medical Group function area manager. "Equally important, was the ability to perform medical care while under mental and physical stress."



The Idaho Air National Guard's Critical Care Air Transport Team, the ground surgical team and other medical personnel from the 124th Medical Group conducted the exercise with the Idaho Army National Guard's Charlie Company, 145th Brigade Support Battalion Medical Detachment and medevac Soldiers from the 1st of the 168th Aviation Regiment; the Navy Operational Support Center; and active duty Airmen with the 366th Medical Group from Mountain Home Air Force Base.

During the exercise, Soldiers, Airmen and Sailors learned each other's roles on the battlefield and in the sky. The Idaho Army National Guard's State Aviation Group incorporated UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and pilots who responded to 9-Line medevac requests, transporting critical care patients with CCATT officers and medevac Soldiers who stabilized them onboard while flying through simulated combat zones until they reached a higher echelon of care.

"All of our pilots need to practice this piece of the exercise and learn how to fly with patients in the back," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Theron Cameron, instructor pilot and medical evacuation officer from the 168th Aviation Regiment. "We need to learn the CCATT's language to know if they are in the middle of performing a procedure as it cues us to fly as smoothly as possible through the combat areas, while communicating back that we may need to aggressively maneuver around danger."

Airmen from the 124th Fighter Wing's Security Forces provided combat lessons on defense and protection, 360-degree security, care under fire and tactical movements with red smoke concealment.

Colin Yates, an Idaho Peace Officers Standards and Training instructor specializing in wounds and trauma for tactical medicine, created realistic wounds on 124th Fighter Wing's Student Flight role players acting as casualties for a more real-world training experience of TCCC on the battlefield.

Sailors from the NOSC provided the medical logistics support for the simulated deployment location, while learning from both Army and Air medics on tactical field care, casualty evacuation and Roles 1-4 medical care facilities.

"It's anticipated in future conflicts, there will be a lot



more integration with forces. We need to interact with each other and speak each other's languages," said Maj. Mark Urban, CCATT physician. "This exercise was developed with that in mind, being able to integrate is really key to that Total Force concept."



# AIRMEN TAKE THE OATH OF ENLISTMENT DURING PROFESSIONAL BULL RIDERS EVENT

Photos by Master Sgt. Becky Vanshur



Seven recruits joining the Idaho Air National Guard and seven recruits joining the United States Air Force had a memorable first day as Airmen when they took the Oath of Enlistment in front of a large crowd at the Professional Bull Riders – Unleash the Beast event at the Ford Idaho Center in Nampa, Idaho, on March 29, 2024. Commander of the Idaho Air National Guard, Brig. Gen. Tim Donnellan, swore in the new recruits.





# DIRECTORS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS & CRISIS LINES

- Idaho National Guard Crisis Lifeline (Call):  
208-272-TALK (8255)
- Joint Operations Center (Complete Directory of IDNG Resources):  
208-272-5755
- Free and Confidential Counseling Services: Case Manager:  
208-918-0346
- Chaplain Corps: 208-272-4311  
Army: 208-272-6468  
Air: 208-608-4825

## 124FW DPH CONTACTS

**TED BURGESS, CIV, LCSW**

*Licensed Clinical Social Worker*

Call or Text:

Cell: (208)972-1116

### BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Assists soldiers and families in developing knowledge and skills to improve physical, behavioral and emotional health through wellness promotion and preventative measures. Provides brief solution-focused interventions utilizing evidence based educational materials. Offers support and monitoring of desired behavioral health change plans.

### ANG DPH PROGRAM

All ANG DPHs are familiar with the active components of a Mental Health Provider's role. DPHs are "Trilingual" - they speak the language of AD/ANG/CIV. They are fully integrated adjuncts to the Guard Medical Unit (GMU) Team and are subject to routine peer review and care of oversight. Information shared during Visits/Consults is kept confidential with a few exceptions. Ask your DPH for details.

### ADDITIONAL FUNCTIONS

- Suicide Prevention Program Manager
- Disaster Mental Health
- Deployment Mental Health Support
- Master Resiliency Training Facilitator
- Yellow Ribbon Program Support
- CAB/CAT member
- Community Capacity Building & Outreach

**BRIAN E. LEWIS, CIV, LCSW**

*Licensed Clinical Social Worker*

DSN: 422-5313, COMM: (208)422-5313

Cell: (986)888-9360