



The Development of Combat Power and Efficiency

Vol. 28, No. 12 - Friday, June 11, 2004 -- Brooks City-Base, Texas

Through the Many Facets of Aerospace Medicine

Brooks community given 'ASIST' in suicide intervention

By Rudy Purificato
311th Human System Wing

In certain sports, assists help teams win games where no life is in jeopardy. A different kind of an 'ASIST' is being played out throughout Air Force Materiel Command that serves as an innovative survival strategy for Air Force team members involved in suicide intervention.

The Applied Survival Interactive Skills Team, ASIST for short, showcased a specialized set of skills in two all-day training sessions on suicide awareness and intervention this week that was sponsored by, and held at, the Brooks Chapel.

"This special course was developed by Living Works, a private company in Calgary, Canada. General (Greg) Martin (AFMC commander) has funded this training for all AFMC bases," said Lt. Col. Rodger Ericson, 311th Human Systems Wing chaplain. He said it is specifically designed for mid-level supervisors and first shirts who are more likely to talk to co-workers about suicide.

Chaplain Ericson, who received training as an ASIST facilitator in 2001, said the course offered

at Brooks is an updated version called ASIST-X. It was taught by Brooks Chaplain (Capt.) Nelson Arroyo; Dr. Jeffrey Kantor, 311th HSW chief scientist; and Master Sgt. Robert Risler from the 68th Information Operations Squadron. The Brooks facilitators received their ASIST training at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, Chaplain Ericson said.

"The training is designed to help people become more comfortable with talking about suicide and to give them an understanding of things to look for," Chaplain Ericson said, referring to telltale signs displayed by people contemplating suicide. Some of these signs, the chaplain explained, include changes in mood and demeanor, an atypical pattern of giving away personal possessions and buying items that could be used to induce death. The course also examines a variety of motives that, historically, have led people to kill themselves.

The training focuses on a key intervention action: that it's okay to ask co-workers, friends or loved ones the question, "Are you going to commit suicide?" By boldly asking potential suicide victims that question, Chaplain Ericson noted, helps begin the



Photo by Senior Airman Samantha Shieh

With an eye to the future, Chaplain Nelson Arroyo shares an insight on suicide intervention skill. 20 people attended the two day course at the base chapel.

process of helping the person seek professional help. He said ASIST training is not a substitute for professional counseling, but is a tool to help people share their feelings openly.

"This is not a (suicide) briefing. It's an interactive course where participants share personal stories," said Chaplain Ericson. Each session involved a maximum of 30 people who had to register in advance for the training.

The Brooks Chapel tentatively plans to sponsor the next series of ASIST classes Oct. 14-15. Contact the Brooks Chapel or Brooks ASIST members to register.

AFCEE journalist publishes first book on Hispanics in Vietnam

By Rudy Purificato
311th Human Systems Wing

When Gil Dominguez was facing his own mortality in the jungles of Vietnam, he was thinking more of survival than becoming another wartime Ernest Hemingway.

Now he is experiencing a different kind of survival in the world of publishing as a first-time author of the book "They Answered the Call: Latinos in the Vietnam War." Published in March by the Maryland-based company Publish America, the book can not be categorized an overnight success, for it was 20 years in the making.

"I didn't think much about (writing) a book when I was in Vietnam," said Mr. Dominguez, who is Chief of Internal Information and editor of CenterViews magazine for the Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence. While on guard duty at a Mekong Delta base for the Army's 86th Engineer Battalion, he was more interested in not becoming target practice for Viet Cong snipers. "We took

enemy mortar and rocket fire, but I was never wounded. I did get hurt, but it was a non-combat injury," he said.

His experiences in Vietnam from 1969-1970, however, provided insight when his idea eventually evolved into writing one of the first books on the war that exclusively features Hispanic-American veterans.

The genesis for Mr. Dominguez's literary effort is attributable to a cultural change in America. "Vietnam vets didn't want to talk about the war

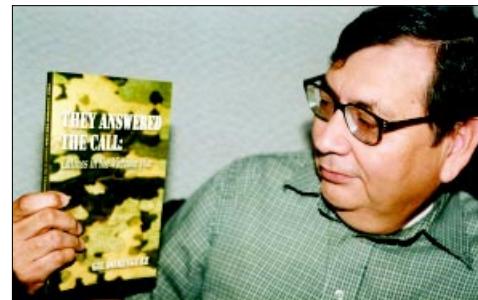


Photo by Rudy Purificato

Gil Dominguez, an Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence public affairs specialist, holds his first published book titled 'They Answered The Call: Latinos in the Vietnam War.'

in the late 1960s and early 1970s. (However), things changed in the 1980s when a lot of vets showed pride in having served in Vietnam," the author said. Neighborhood friends and acquaintances started sharing their Vietnam experiences with Mr. Dominguez. Yet he was not compelled to write about them because of the time's prevailing anti-Vietnam War sentiments.

Harboring a desire to tell their story, Mr. Dominguez, nevertheless, put the idea on hold while he further developed a reputation as a free lance writer and journalist. The native San Antonian did not know it at the time, but a feature article published in the "San Antonio Light" opened the door for his first book. His story on South Texas outlaw Gregorio Cortez, whom his maternal grandfather had known, led the Light features editor to later okay Mr. Dominguez's idea to write a retrospective on Latino Vietnam veterans from San Antonio.

"There was no commitment from the Light to buy it," he said, admitting that he thought the story would be of

interest locally. "I had never written anything about the war. I was surprised that a story of this type had never been done before, considering all the vets that live in the San Antonio area. There had been stories about individual vets, but not about (Hispanic) veterans as a group," he said.

Besides lack of coverage on Hispanic Vietnam vets in newspapers and magazines, the void also existed within the publishing industry. "There were a number of books about Vietnam that came out around the mid-to-late eighties, but none dealt with the Latino experience in Vietnam. "The Three Wars of Roy Benavides," a book about the Mexican-American Medal of Honor recipient, was published locally, but that was about the experiences of one man, although an extraordinary one," said Mr. Dominguez, adding, "Nobody was writing books about the not-so-famous (Hispanic) men who also had fought in the war."

see Dominguez, page 21

Inside this issue:

Local news	4
Briefs	10
Crossword	14
Chapel schedule	18
Sports	22



Paratroopers pay tribute to those who lost their lives on D-Day in 1944.

Page 12



About 80 youths participated in the annual Brooks hit-a-thon.

Page 22

Don't forget Father's Day



June 20



The Discovery is published by Prime Time Inc., a private firm in no way connected with the United States Air Force, under exclusive contract with Brooks City-Base, Texas.

This commercial enterprise newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the military services. Contents of the Discovery are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the United States Government, the Department of Defense or the United States Air Force.

The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts and supplements, does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense, the Department of the Air Force or Prime Time Corp. of the products or services advertised.

Everything in this publication is edited, prepared and provided by the 311th Human Systems Wing Public Affairs Office of Brooks City-Base. Material for the Discovery should be typewritten, double-spaced and submitted to 311HSW/PA, 2510 Kennedy Circle, Brooks City-Base, TX 78235-5115 by noon the Wednesday prior to the week of publication. All photos are Air Force photos unless otherwise indicated. Articles may also be submitted by fax by calling 536-3235 or by e-mail.

Articles may be submitted by e-mail to: Cerise.Shapiro@brooks.af.mil or to: Discovery@brooks.af.mil.

The Discovery is published every other week on Friday. Contact the editor at 536-5141 for more information.

Discovery advertising

Deadline for display advertising is noon the Friday preceding the publication date. To advertise in the Discovery, call 675-4500 or send advertising copy to Prime Time Military Newspapers, P.O. Box 27040, San Antonio, Texas 78227.

Discovery Editorial Staff:

311th Human Systems Wing Commander

Col. Tom Travis

Director of Public Affairs

Larry Farlow

Editor

2nd Lt. John Chattaway

(john.chattaway@brooks.af.mil)

Staff Writer

Steve VanWert

Photography

Tech. Sgt. Anita Schroeder

Staff Sgt. Alfonso Ramirez Jr.

Staff Sgt. Brandy Bogart

Senior Airman Samantha Shieh

Discovery logo by Arlene Schirmer



Sylvia Black, Publisher
Pia Goodman, Prod. Mgr.
Pat McCain, Classified Mgr.
Diane Bohl, Sales Manager
Sherry Snoga, Account Exec.
Brandy Davis, Account Exec.
Gabriel Lira, Account Exec.
Henry Perez, Account Exec.
Cindy Stratouly, Account Exec.
Monica Cruz, Account Exec.

Advertising
(210) 675-4500
FAX:
(210) 675-4577
E-mail:
sblack@txdirect.net

William A. Johnson
President
Gregg R. Rosenfield
Senior Vice President Sales and
Marketing



Newspapers

Community Newspapers:
North San Antonio Times — Northside Recorder
Bulverde Community News — Southside Reporter
The Herald

Military Newspapers:

Fort Sam Houston News Leader
Lackland Talespinner — Kelly USA Observer
Medical Patriot — Randolph Wingspread
Brooks Discovery

Specialty Publications:

Daily Commercial Recorder — Que Pasa!
S.A. Kids

Graphics & Printing Services:
Prime Time Graphics
Christopher Press (Web printing)



Adapting the AEF — longer deployments, more forces

By Gen. John Jumper
Air Force Chief of Staff

For the past 12 years, our Air Force has adapted to the demands of a changing world. Beginning in the early 1990s, we developed composite wings, expeditionary organizations and crisis-response packages that allowed us to rapidly deliver combat capability to combatant commanders. In 1998, we formalized the structure into 10 Air Expeditionary Force packages. These responsive air and space capabilities allow us to present forces in a consistent manner and conduct military operations across the spectrum of conflict. Throughout the late 1990s, our AEF concept of operations has proven itself time and again. Even with the high demands of Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM, our AEFs surged to support the combatant commanders' warfighting and deterrence missions, employing nearly eight AEFs of combat forces. When major air and space operations diminished last year, we began the process of reestablishing the AEF battle rhythm. Our reconstitution target was March of this year, but the continued demands of global operations, additional contingencies in other theaters, and a tasking to support Army operations with 2,000 of our expeditionary combat support forces required us to reassess our planning assumptions, and to adjust our AEFs to a new mission set.

Simply put, the demands on our deployable forces have not diminished and are not expected to decline for some time. We have a new rotational requirement for nearly 20,000 Airmen — about three times the demand prior to Sept. 11, 2001. Further, the Air Force component commander in the Central Command area of operations has asked us to deploy people for longer tour lengths to allow greater continuity for expeditionary commanders in the field. To adapt to this new set of circumstances, I've directed a change to the AEF rotational cycle and have asked our major commands to expand the pool of deployable Airmen in each AEF.

Beginning with AEF Cycle 5 in September, the baseline deployment will be 120 days vice 90, and the AEF cycle will change from a 15-month rotational cycle to a 20-month cycle. We will continue to expect that each Airman will deploy only once during each cycle, although some stressed specialties will deploy longer, and in greater frequency, until manpower levels are adjusted or the theater requirements diminish. For those already deployed in AEFs 7/8 (March – May) and those deploying in AEF 9/10 (June – August), it is our intent to stick to our 90-day deployment cycle. For those identified to deploy in AEF 1/2 (September – November), you should prepare to be gone a minimum of four months. This evolution of the AEF is not a temporary adjustment. More appropriately, it is recognition of new demands around the world for air and space power.

It is important to remember several fundamental principles regarding our AEF concept of operations. First, we are not changing the basic composition of each AEF; each will continue to provide about five AEWs and six AEGs of capability during each vulnerability period. Our low density/high demand units will continue to follow DoD-approved deployment guidelines. Finally, Air Force global mobility forces will continue to follow our AEF Presence Policy, with mobility aviation units postured in multiple AEFs to support the USTRANSCOM mission and other combatant commander needs.



Gen. John Jumper
Air Force Chief of Staff

The 20-month cycle will continue to provide commanders and Airmen the ability to plan ahead, allowing a sense of predictability while providing greater continuity to the in-theater commander. Still, I recognize longer deployments will present challenges to our Reserve Component, possibly affecting the number of ARC volunteers, and requiring selected use of Presidential mobilization authority. We will manage these matters very carefully, ensuring equity and fairness across the Total Force.

In addition to extending tour lengths, it is my intent to expand our pool of deployable Airmen from our current level of about 272,000. I have asked all of our major commands to aggressively review the assumptions upon which they exclude Airmen from our AEFs and take immediate steps to maximize those postured in the Air Force Worldwide UTC System and our AEF libraries. The MAJCOMs will posture the maximum number of manpower authorizations into standard UTCs, and if required, we will develop new ones to provide additional expeditionary capabilities. Residual authorizations will be postured into associated UTCs and will be coded to support AEF requirements across the range of military operations.

Let me be perfectly clear — in our Air Force, every Airman is expeditionary, every Airman will know his/her place in the AEF system, and every Airman will be prepared to support the combatant commander, whether deployed, in CONUS via reachback, or employed at home station. If you are wearing the uniform of the U.S. Air Force, you are a part of the AEF.

We are at war today, and will remain engaged around the globe against a brutal and resilient enemy. Every Airman — Active, Guard, Reserve and civilian — must be focused on our national commitment to the Global War on Terrorism. Our job is to deploy and deal with terrorists wherever they are in the world so we never again have to deal with them on our own soil. You will be the difference between our success and failure in this vital cause. Once again, I want to thank each and every one of you for your dedication, professionalism and service to our nation.



Survey update takes AFMC leaders toward finding 'the next generation'

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio — Looking to better mold present and future generations, Air Force Materiel Command officials are hitting the road on an across-the-command tour to discuss the recent Junior Force Study.

Lt. Gen. Richard Reynolds, AFMC vice commander, and Ray Pelletier of the Pelletier Group are scheduled to visit Brooks June 15. They are not coming to collect information, only to discuss the information that has been collected and analyzed.

General Reynolds and Mr. Pelletier left June 7 on a visit to AFMC installations to learn about existing issues in the junior force talent pool. Gen. Greg Martin, AFMC commander, sent Mr. Pelletier and his organization out early this year to conduct a series of intensive fact-finding sessions throughout the command.

The resulting Junior Force Study 2004, titled The Next Greatest Generation, focused on AFMC's junior enlisted people, junior Air Force civilians and company grade officers. It was designed to gain insight on a cross-section of this segment of the command so AFMC leaders can better lead, coach and train them.

The Pelletier organization's study had two primary functions. The first was to focus on how the junior force feels regarding the work they are doing; and second, to make recommendations on how to improve their morale and increase retention.

"I asked the study participants to provide the Pelletier Group with honest, unvarnished opinions and observations about their concerns and their

ideas as part of the Air Force and AFMC and they delivered," General Martin said. "The study found that we were doing many things right, but there is room for improvement.

"I promised the junior force we would share the results of the study as soon as we had a chance to review and begin to understand the thoughtful comments they provided us while participating in this study," General Martin said, "and that's exactly what we're doing with this tour."

During the tour of installations, General Reynolds and Mr. Pelletier are meeting with study participants and their front-line supervisors to share the findings of both the Pelletier study and data from the recent Chief of Staff Survey.

"I asked General Reynolds and Mr. Pelletier to share a couple of thoughts on junior force development and the future of AFMC," General Martin said. "Our nation has been dominant on the battle field in five significant conflicts since 1991 as a result of this nation's air and space forces — when we use air and space power correctly, we win ... and we win quickly and decisively!"

"The whole Air Force rides on the backs of the men and women of AFMC," General Martin continued. "The work that you do powers the greatest air and space force in history with ingenuity, technology and sustainment. But often times, I don't think we get the thanks or respect that we deserve for our efforts. This study gives us that impression as well."

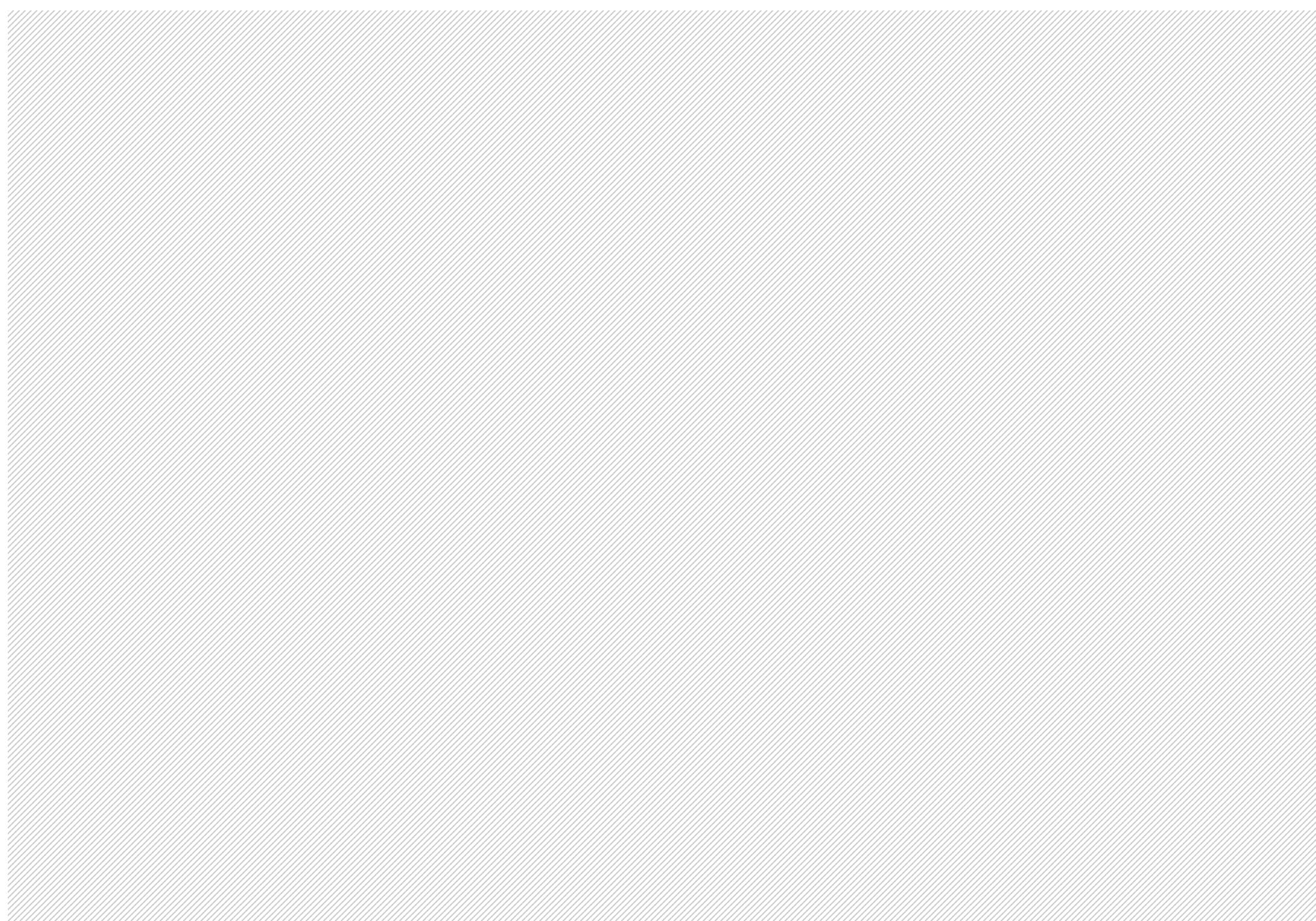
General Martin acknowledges that some of the significant changes in the way AFMC is organized and structured has created a certain amount of turbulence. Those include moving program executive officers from Washington to the product centers; making those center commanders both PEOs and commanders; and reorganizing the headquarters and center staff structures to properly support acquisition and sustainment processes brought about that PEO restructure.

In addition to these changes, AFMC leaders are reviewing the command's goals and standards to better understand its performance to the operational major commands.

"All of these changes have been initiated with the single-minded purpose of giving our people the best chance to continue building the world's most respected air and space force while receiving the credit they deserve," General Martin said.

Under General Martin's guidance, command leaders formed a team to combine the results of the Junior Force study with those from the current Air Force Chief of Staff Air Force survey. He said team members plan to use this information to develop an action plan designed to provide better opportunities throughout the command.

"We must work together, as the top leadership of today and tomorrow, I am calling on you to make a positive difference for the future," General Martin said. "I'm counting on each and every one to work with me to improve the development of our junior force."





311th HSW staff share base's top award

By Rudy Purificato
311th Human Systems Wing

They've never subscribed to the old saying "always the bridesmaid, never the bride" during the nine years their boss has handed out the base's highest honor to recipients other than themselves. For the first time since its inception in 1995, the 311th Human Systems Wing's Commander's Award has been presented to some of the Wing commander's own staff.

Col. Tom Travis awarded the Commander's Trophy June 1 to members of the command suite, the Commander's Action Group and Protocol. Of that group, only retired Protocol officer Hazel Holden had previously earned the award.

"I was very surprised that we received it," said Emma Chapa, Dr. Brendan Godfrey's secretary, of the award that was originally created by former Human Systems Center commander Brig. Gen. Robert Belihar. Three previous commanders had de-

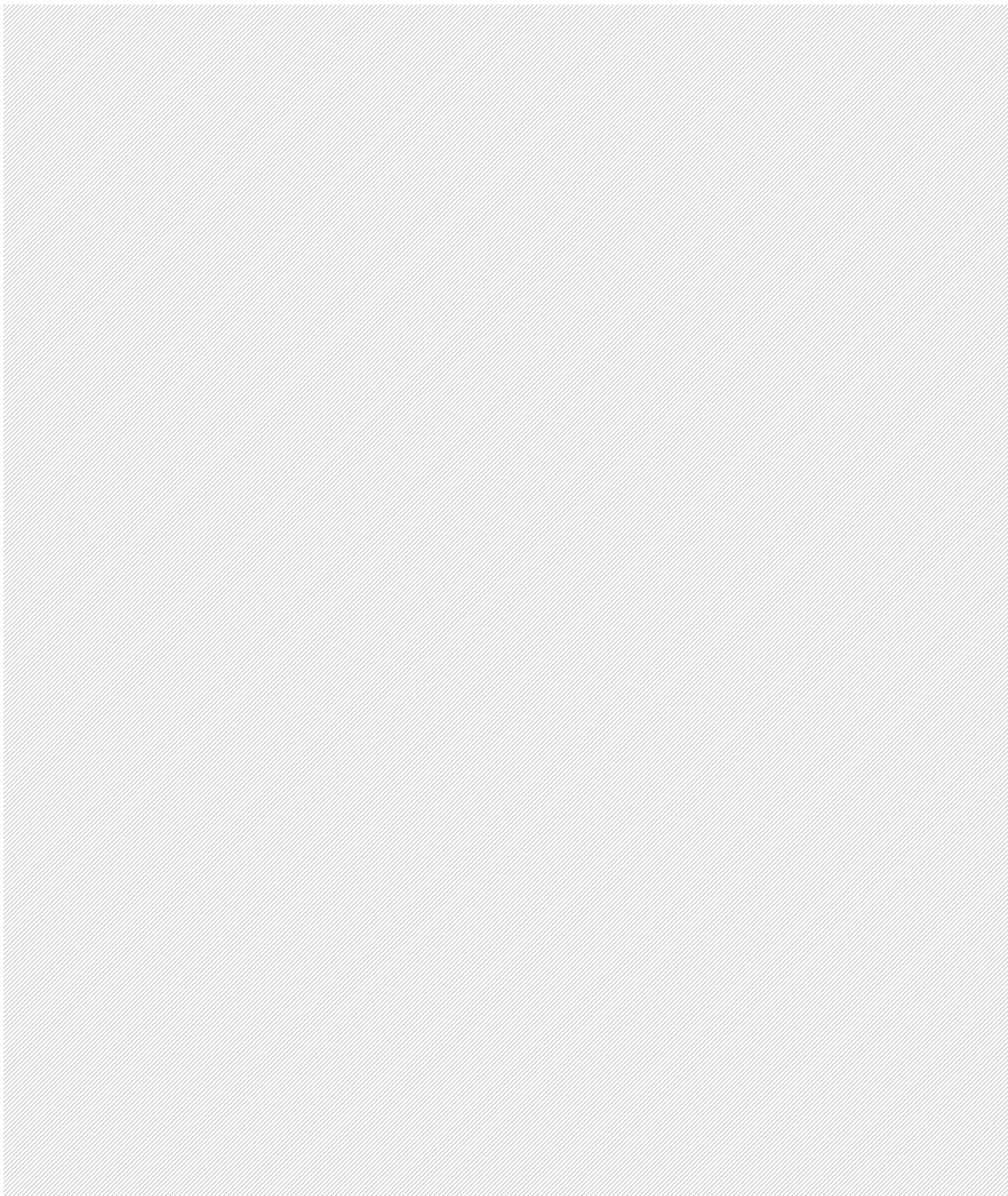
cided not to award the Commander's Trophy to their own staff, Mrs. Chapa believes, because it may have created a perception of favoritism. However, after nearly a decade of not publicly recognizing the 311th HSW staff's contributions, such a belief appears to be without merit, she said.

This group was specifically cited for actions that epitomize teamwork and professionalism. Among the honorees' contributions was the planning and conduct of the first base-wide administrative meeting for administrative professionals that was designed to improve efficiency and communications.

Honorees include command suite personnel Lisa Hamilton, Sally Criollo, Emma Chapa, Aaron Ortiz, Command Chief Master Sgt. Richard Hollins, Staff Sgt. Voncelle James and Capt. Karey Dufour; Protocol officer Lucy Riojas; and Commander's Action Group members Lt. Col. David Cohen, Capt. James Culver, Senior Master Sgt. Donovan Brown, Technical Sgt. Kenton Lee, Staff Sgt. Shakira Ramos, Thomas McDade and LaDonna David.

Give the gift of life, donate blood.

Contact the nearest blood donation center, the American Red Cross or visit www.bloodntissue.org for additional information.





BROOKS

SPORT NIGHT

Things to do around Brooks

By Jan McMahon
Brooks Services Marketing Office

Brooks Club

Bldg. 204, 536-3782

Bring a friend and cook your own steaks just the way you like them. Join the Brooks Club staff for "You 'B' The Cook Steak Night" on June 23 from 4 to 7 pm. The cost of \$7.50 will purchase your steak plus potatoes and a veggie.

Youth Services Center

Bldg. 470, 536-2515

Registrations are still being accepted for toddler through teen swim lessons. Classes will be given in two week sessions, Monday through Thursday, and begin in June. The cost will be \$18 per session. Toddlers must be out of diapers to participate.

Registrations for the Barracuda Swim Team for girls and boys, ages 7-

16, are being accepted. We are looking at being part of the Palo Alto Summer League. The cost will be \$35 for Youth Center members and \$50 for nonmembers. Contact the center staff at 536-2515 or stop by bldg. 470 to register or for more information.

Health & Fitness Center

Bldg. 940, 536-2188

What better place could you find to spend your time than at the Brooks City-Base swimming pool? Season passes are \$10 per pass and the daily user fee is \$1.50 per person. Passes may be purchased from the Health and Fitness Center or at the pool. Pool parties can be scheduled through the head life guard. Hours of operation will be:

- Sunrise Swim - Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays — 6:15-7:15 a.m.
- Adult Swim - Mondays - Fridays — 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Open Swim - Mondays - Fridays — 1-7 p.m.
- Open Swim - Saturdays - Sundays — 1-6 p.m.

The Commanders' Fitness Club meets every Wednesday morning at 7 a.m. Military and civilian personnel are encouraged to participate in the run/walk that starts at the center. Participants receive a t-shirt after participating four times. Call the center for more details.

Family Child Care

Bldg. 1154, 536-2041

Would you like a career where you could work out of your own home, set your own hours, set your own rate of pay, receive free training, network with other professionals, acquire equipment on loan for your business, or help shape America's future by fos-

tering a positive environment for infants and children?

If you answered yes to any of the above, call Jeanie Smith at 536-2041. The FCC Program is in need of providers to care for infants, children with special needs and during non-traditional hours (shift work, evenings and weekends).

Any individual caring for other families' children for a total of more than 10 hours per week on a regular basis must be licensed to provide care in on-base quarters. If you are not licensed and are providing care on a regular basis, the support group commander may revoke your housing privileges.

Providers' benefits include rewarding career opportunities, free training, extensive lending library, networking with other professionals, setting own wages and hours, opportunity to participate in food programs, family environment, flexible hours such as evenings and weekends, your children stay together, consistency in care and smaller group sizes.

For more information please contact Jeanie Smith, Family Child Care Coordinator.

2004 Bringing Families and Community Together

Annual Base Picnic/Summer Bash

June 18 is the new day everyone has been waiting for, the annual Summer Bash picnic at the base picnic grounds. Tops in Blue will bring you one hour of entertainment at the picnic immediately following the Opening Ceremony at 11 a.m. Enjoy top-notch entertainment along with great food and beverages. The following foods and beverages will be sold by organizations during the picnic.

Foods:

MSG/SVS - Chalupas
MSG/LG - Hot Dogs
CGOC - Hamburgers
HSW/YA - Shish kabobs/Chicken sandwiches

AFRL Top 4 - Sausage/Tortilla Wrap
NCO Council - Candy
AFCEE/OD- Cake/Toy Walk, BJ's - Fruit Cups

AFIOH- Turkey legs
USAFSAM - Sno Cones
Top III - Ice cream
HSW/FM - Frito Pie
MDC/UAC - Popcorn/Nachos
AAC - Sliced watermelon
UAMRD - Fajitas/ Tacos
JMI Foods - Funnel cakes/Veggie Hoagies/Beer biscuits, barbecue - barbecue ribs/ brisket

4 Stars Construction - Peanut Brittle/barbecue beef ribs.
Beverages:

MSG/MDF - Bottled water
68th IOS - Lemonade
MSG/SVMP - Sodas
BJ's - Iced tea
USAMRD - Gatorade
JMI Foods - Kool-Aid.

Games:

AFSA - Dart game
68 IOS - Dunking booth
HSW/FM - Football toss
USAMRD - Face painting
HSW/YA - Gold fish game
Airmen's Council - Moonwalk
SVS - Water maze/Obstacle course/
Assorted children's games

Other activities include a petting zoo, pony rides, buffalo soldiers mini museum and campsite, Goldie the Clown, San Antonio Classic T-Bird Club antique car display, plus a "surprise" NBA player autograph and photo session.

Entertainment includes Tops In Blue, Goodtimes Band, Blues Crafters Band, DJ- Marvin Lee, Hula Hula Ohana Elikapeka, plus more.



ACTION LINE

536-2222



The COMMANDER'S ACTION LINE is your opportunity to make Brooks a better place to live, work and play.

If you have a suggestion for improvement, a complaint or a problem that you have not been able to resolve through normal complaint channels or the chain of command, call the COMMANDER'S ACTION LINE, 536-2222.

Only items of general interest will be published, so please leave your name and number for a personal response.

The base agencies listed below can be contacted directly:

311th Security Forces Squadron.....	536-2851
SFS after duty hours.....	536-2851
311th Civil Engineer Squadron.....	536-3861
311th Communications Squadron.....	536-6571
311th Mission Support Group Logistics Division.....	536-3541
Safety.....	536-2111
Housing Maintenance.....	533-5900
Housing Office.....	533-5905
311th Services Division.....	536-2545
311th Medical Squadron (Clinic).....	536-4715
Military Personnel.....	536-1845
Civilian Personnel.....	536-3353
Military Pay.....	536-5778
Civilian Pay.....	536-8370
I.G. (FWA).....	536-2358
Military Equal Opportunity.....	536-2584
EEO Complaints.....	536-3702
BXMarket.....	533-9079
Brooks Development Office.....	536-3655
Brooks City-Base Marketing and Development Office.....	536-5366



Brooks Family Support Center activities

Call 536-2444 for information

Sponsor training

June 15, 10 - 11 a.m., Bldg. 537

In accordance with Air Force Instruction 36-3011, sponsor training is mandatory for all first-time sponsors and those who have not sponsored in the past year. Others are more than welcome to attend and learn about tools and resources available for sponsors.

Basic investing

June 16, 11 a.m.- 1 p.m., Bldg. 537

The kind of future you and your family will have depends on the decision you make today. This seminar prepares the beginning investor by concentrating on basic investment terms and the six fundamental investment principles. Make the right decision by attending this investment workshop now.

Single Parents Group

3rd Tuesday of each month, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., Chapel Annex

Stop by and join us for a free lunch. Meet other single parents for open discussions or outings, a great moral booster. The Chapel, Life Skills Support Center and the Family Support Center are sponsoring this class. Point of contacts are LaWanda Roper, 536-2444 and Sandra Cervantes, 536-5301. To register, contact the Family Support Center at 536-2444.

Transition assistance

June 22-24, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., Bldg. 537

Making the transition from the military to the civilian sector can be a big undertaking. This seminar allows us to better serve separating and retiring members and their spouses. Topics include job search preparation, resume writing, interviewing skills, appropriate dress, veteran's benefits and more. Members should attend at least 180 days prior to retirement or separation. Spouses are welcome to attend.

To register for class or for more information, call the Family Support Center at 536-2444 or toll free number 877-747-5938.

VA benefits assistance

Wednesdays 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., Bldg. 537

Schedule an appointment to receive VA assistance in filling out your claims, screen medical records or one-on-one consultations. Bring a copy of your medical records.



Prevent deployment-related legal problems

By Capt Michael Felsen
311th Human Systems Wing/JA

Active component military personnel ordered to deploy, or Reserve and National Guard members being mobilized realize that the time to put their personal and legal affairs in order may be relatively short once the deployment order is issued or the mobilization begins. Most military members realize that problems may arise when they are suddenly separated from their families and, for reserve component members, their business, and civilian job. Advance planning will help avoid many legal problems upon mobilization or deployment. In addition, taking care of personal legal affairs now will give them and their family peace of mind.

Begin by anticipating what would happen if you were required to be apart from your family at a distant location for an indefinite period of time, un-

able to remain in continuous communications with your family and friends. There might be substantial legal and other changes in your life and in the lives of those you left behind. What can you do now to anticipate and prevent legal problems that might arise? Put your personal, property, and financial affairs in good order now so that there will be no confusion or uncertainty.

In addition, you need to start or maintain an efficient system of records. It is best to maintain a file system of important papers and store them in a safe-deposit box or fireproof container. It is also essential to compile a personal inventory of all-important documents and where they are kept. Your unit and the legal office can provide you with deployment checklist and legal advice to assist you in preparation for deployment.

With deployments rising, the length of deployments increasing, and current world situation, it is

very likely that you could be deployed in the near future. Although wills, advance medical directives, and powers of attorney are generally associated with pre-deployment legal assistance, any issue within the scope of the legal assistance program is also mobilization- and deployment-related if it would have an adverse effect on the service member's ability to perform his or her duties. Here at Brooks City-Base, Texas, we want to enhance our legal assistance/preventive law program by not only offering the traditional legal services and publishing articles in the base bulletin and newspaper, but also by briefing units on various legal topics. These topics can range from Family Law issues to Consumer Law protections and common consumer scams.

For more information about the Legal Assistance/ Preventive Law Program, contact Capt. Mike Felsen at 240-3301.

Don't Drink and Drive; Always Designate a Driver



Education notes

By Carolyn Croft-Foster
Brooks Education Services Office
536-3617

AWC nonresident seminar

Recruiting for the Academic Year 2005 Air War College Nonresident Seminar Program is underway. Seminar meetings will be held weekly starting in early August and run until mid-June 2005. The AWC Nonresident Studies Seminar Program is open to active duty, National Guard and Reserve colonels, lieutenant colonels and lieutenant colonel-selectees (or their equivalents) of any component of the US Armed Forces and civilian employees (GS/GM-13 or above). At least eight people are required to form a seminar. Students with term credit from other editions may also enroll and should check with an AWC faculty advisor for details.

For those students who cannot take advantage of the seminar program, the correspondence program is also available for immediate enrollment. Correspondence students have six months to complete each term in the three-term core program with the required elective completed sometime during this 18-month period.

Applications are available at <<http://www.maxwell.af.mil/au/awc/ns/ns-enroll.htm>>. Bring a copy of the completed application to Educa-

tion Services in bldg. 558. Call 536-3618 for more information.

ACSC nonresident seminar

The Education and Training Center is now seeking eligible candidates (major, major-selectees, GS-11, and above) for the ACSC Nonresident Seminar Program. Nonresident seminars meet weekly for 11 months from August until June 2005. The course grants Phase 1 Joint PME credit, Intermediate Service School credit, up to 27 semester hours of graduate course work, and Reserve points as determined by AFPC. Seminars need eight enrollments per site. To register, visit Education Services in bldg. 558 to complete an ACSC application or call 536-3618 for more information.

CLEP eCBT paper-based testing on base

CLEP General and a limited number of CLEP Subject exams have returned to the DANTES Test Centers. These exams include the following 14 titles: General English, Social Sciences and History, Natural Sciences, Humanities, College Mathematics, Analyzing & Interpreting Literature, College Algebra, Freshman College Composition, History of the US I, History of the US II, Information Systems & Computer Applications, Introductory Psychology, Introductory Sociology, and Principles of Management. All examinees must wait 180 days to retest on exams previously administered.

Unfunded civilians enrolled in on-base education programs are authorized space-available testing at a DANTES Test Center, however, testing opportunities are limited. The fee has been increased and is now \$120 at DANTES Testing Centers for unfunded civilians. There are no authorized administrations of DANTES-funded paper-based CLEP eCBT tests for Defense Acquisition Workforce University personnel. They must be referred to a National Test Center for DANTES-funded testing. CLEP eCBT funded testing of Reserve Components and Coast Guard spouses and civilians is no longer authorized at active duty Army, Navy, Air Force and

Marine DANTES Test Centers or at National Test Centers operating under an MOU with an active duty installation.

Upper Iowa on base and online

Register now for Upper Iowa University – Distance Learning. The next online term runs July 8 – September 1. Students may register for correspondence courses at any time. Courses are available in business, public administration, criminal justice and other majors. The Upper Iowa University office in the Brooks Education Center is open Monday through Friday. The coordinator also holds advising hours at Lackland on Thursdays. For more information, visit the website: uiu.edu, stop by the Brooks office in bldg. 558 or call 536-4033.

Webster University Fall 1 and Fall 2 registration

Registration for Fall 1 (Aug. 16 - October 15) and Fall 2 (October 18 - December 17) graduate-school programs begins on June 14. Classes meet one evening per week, Monday through Thursday, 6 to 10 p.m. The Saturday programs are: 8 to noon and 1 to 5 p.m. Visit the Webster University office in Bldg. 558 or call 210-534-0757.

Funding of CLEP exams at National Test Centers

DANTES is now providing up-front funding of the CLEP eCBT examination fee at identified National Test Centers (colleges and universities.) DANTES will fund the current \$50 test fee for eligible military and civilian examinees on-campus. Examinees are responsible for paying the non-refundable, advance registration fee charged by the test center, in some cases, this registration fee (usually \$20) is reimbursable. Students may test only at schools identified as "military friendly" or "open." In the San Antonio area these schools include: Northwest Vista, St. Mary's University, San Antonio College, UTSA, Our Lady of the Lake, and the University of the Incarnate Word. Visit the website



NEWS briefs

Military ballot initiative 'an important service'

Officials will soon begin contacting each of the more than 3,000 county election offices nationwide as part of a newly announced initiative to ensure an expedited delivery of absentee ballots to servicemembers stationed overseas.

The U.S. Department of Defense, together with the United States Postal Service, launched a series of initiatives this week aimed at expediting the process of sending absentee ballots to U.S. military personnel while they serve abroad during this year's general election.

Approximately 3,000 county election offices are currently accepting requests for absentee ballots. Postal employees will contact the offices to initiate the initial mailings of the prepared ballots via overnight Express Mail. The ballots will then be mailed to the three military gateways (San Francisco, Miami and New York).

Once the ballots arrive at the military gateways, they go through a sorting process which is handled by the Military Postal System, a division of the Department of Defense and extension of the USPS. The MPS then ensures that ballots are handled properly and delivered in an expeditious manner. Ballots will be given priority handling through each phase of handling and return.

America — United We Stand capturing stories

The United States military has been invited to participate in a publication entitled, *America — United We Stand*. This book will be formatted in a coffee table, photo/narrative style that will share real stories of many Americans, both military and civilian, reflecting

the values, heritage and unique spirit that have shaped America throughout its proud history. This book will celebrate those ideals, and why they continue to motivate us to stand up for justice and confront evil.

The producers of this book, along with your military leadership, welcome you to share your personal stories, and, in turn, look forward to sharing and celebrating these magnificent stories with readers throughout the world. They also wish to state that the goal of this book is to avoid taking any political stand whatsoever. Labels such as "conservative," "left," "right," or "politically correct" are inappropriate here.

The editors will carefully review and select those stories that best portray their book's central theme of appreciation for our country. These need not be "spectacular" stories of intense drama or notoriety, but rather, how the events and experiences of each individual story inspired each featured American to come to love his or her country even more.

Please submit your essays to 311th HSW/PA, no later than August 30.

As stories are reviewed by the author/producers, one-on-one interviews may be requested, and will be facilitated through the proper command.

Do you know your rights?

Did you know you have the right to file an Inspector General complaint without fear of reprisal? First, verify the facts and give your chain of command a chance to handle the problem. Experience has shown that supervisors, first sergeants and commanders can solve most problems. However, if they are not able to help you, you can contact the IG staff for IG-related issues.

As the "eyes and ears" of the commander, the IG welcomes your com-

ments, legitimate problems or wrongdoings. The IG Complaints Program helps you, as well as commanders, prevent, detect and correct fraud, waste and abuse, mismanagement and abuse of authority.

The IG not only assists you but protects you, so don't feel intimidated or fear reprisal. Anonymous complaints are welcomed but not encouraged. Getting factual information is difficult if evidence, dates, witnesses, etc., are not provided.

The 311th Human Systems Wing IG staff is located in Bldg. 150, Rooms 123 and 125. The phone number is 536-2358 and fax number is 536-3409.

We stand ready to serve as our motto is "Problem Solving and Prevention."

ASMC luncheon

The Alamo Chapter of the American Society of Military Comptrollers invites all members and non-members to attend June's luncheon. Topics for this month's luncheon include 'Hail and Farewell' to ASMC officers and a 2004 PDI Picture Review. Join us at the Gateway Club, Alamo Rooms I and II, Lackland Air Force Base on June 24 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. RSVP to your respective ASMC no later than June 17. Contact Wayne Wanner, USA HQ MEDCOM, at 221-7029 for more information.

10th Annual Technology Expo

The 37th Communications Squadron invites you to attend its 10th Annual Communications and Information Systems Products and Services Expo. The Expo will be held June 23, from 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. in Mitchell Hall, Lackland Air Force Base.

Exhibitors include Aruba Wireless, AT&T Wireless, CACI, CDW-G, Cisco

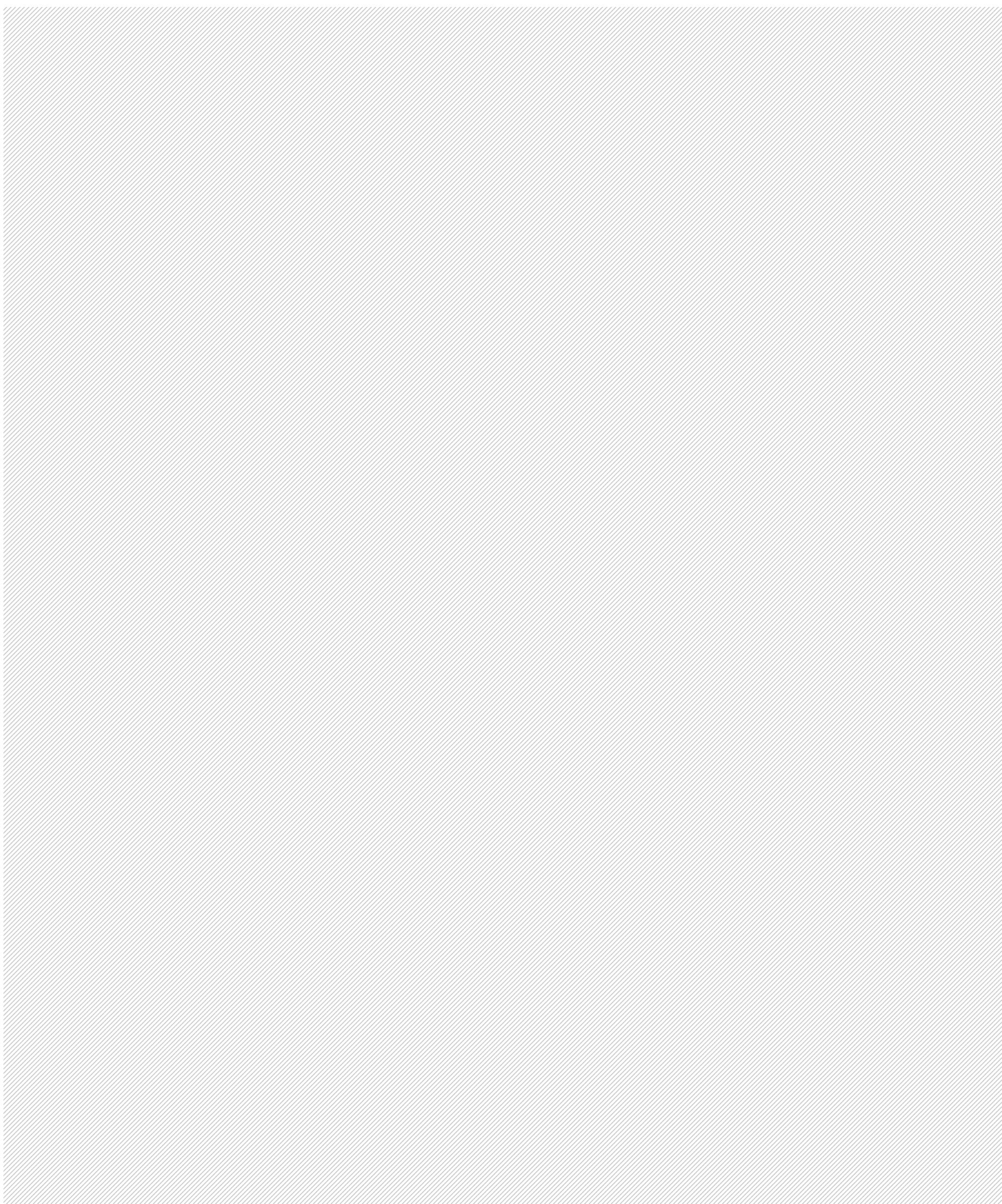
Systems, Consolidated Office Systems, Crystal Communications, Data Projections, Dell, Equinox, ErgoGenesis, Gateway, Graybar Electric, GSA, MPC, New Horizons CLC, Newark InOne, Orion Case, PalmOne, Pearson NCS, PFU Systems, PlanetGov, SBC Communications, SMU Advanced Computer Education Center, Staples, TANDBERG Techskills, Tyco - Amp Netconnect, Vbrick Systems, Visual Innovations, Wrightline and more!

This event is open and free to all DoD, government and contractor personnel. Refreshments will be served.

For more information please call the show producer, Federal Direct Access Expositions toll-free, 877-332-3976 or Robert Hutton, Chief, Network Administration, 37th CS at 925-1157.

Sensory Overdrive Arrives at the Alamodome

Welcome to the world's original and ultimate reality show. There's no rewind button, stunt doubles or special effects at the 133rd Edition of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey®. Instead, what you'll find is the greatest gathering of circus artists from across the globe, performing fantastic feats and dangerous displays that guarantee to leave mouths agape. Over two hours of pulse-pounding, mind-blowing, non stop amazement. This all new, all real, unexpurgated incarnation of The Greatest Show On Earth® can only be experienced live. You can catch the super sensor sensation June 30 - July 5 at the Alamodome. The 133rd Edition of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey® is only in town for a limited time, so see it now or miss this once-in-a-lifetime spectacular. Tickets are on sale at Ticketmaster ticket centers, the Alamodome Box Office or by phone at 224-9600.





America, France pay tribute to airborne heroes

By Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

As the United States and France paid tribute to those killed in airborne operations during the Normandy invasion, everyone was brought close to tears and every person's chest swelled with pride here June 5.

Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, saluted the World War II veterans in the audience — most now older than 80 — and said the new generation of servicemembers is living up to their legacy. General Myers said it was a "great and deep honor and privilege to be in the company of those who made history here 60 years ago."

He told the veterans that the United States is "grateful for your service then and your presence today."

Part of the salute came when almost 700 of today's Soldiers and Airmen jumped into the same drop zone that many of the veterans jumped into late June 5, 1944. Then, Soldiers of the 82nd Airborne Division and the 101st Airborne Division jumped from C-47s. Today's Soldiers and Airmen jumped from C-130 Hercules, HC-130s and C-17 Globemaster IIIs. The aircraft made three passes and every time the U.S. paratroopers began jumping, the veterans applauded.

"The best thing about this whole week has been the veterans," said Army Sgt. Charles Cooper, an infantryman with the 2nd Battalion, 502nd

Airborne Regiment of the 173rd Airborne Brigade in Vincenza, Italy, who was among the jumpers. "We've had some time to meet with them and hear their stories. There are men here who made four combat jumps during the war. I can't even imagine that. Anything we can do is a tribute to them."

The airborne veterans were stunned at the reception they received from the French and from today's servicemembers.

As the veterans walked to the grandstand at the drop zone the crowd applauded. The veterans looked around to see who famous had just walked in. While they clearly enjoyed the attention, many seemed embarrassed by it.

It was many veterans' first time back in France since 1944. Many looked out at the peaceful fields and compared it to the first time they saw it.

"The Germans flooded this whole drop zone," said Tom Pelluca, a 508th Infantry Regiment veteran. "They tell me about 40 guys drowned in the fields. When I landed, I was able to find three other guys. It took us four hours to get out of the water."

Mr. Pelluca and the rest of the airborne troopers liberated Sainte-Mere-Eglise and held it against numerous counterattacks. He said he went on to fight in Holland and in the Battle of the Bulge before being wounded.



Department of Defense photo by Jim Garamone

Paratroopers jump from a C-130 Hercules on June 5 during a tribute to airborne Soldiers who died in the liberation of France in 1944.

At the beginning of the tribute, the 101st Airborne Division Band played the French and American national anthems. The veterans came to attention and saluted, and belted out "The Star Spangled Banner" with such obvious pride and respect that many others in the crowd could not sing because they were choked up.

"These veterans are thanking us for all that we're doing for them," said a private first class medic. "I tell them, 'Don't thank me. I'm the one who should be thanking you.'"

Following the tribute at the drop zone, the veterans and today's paratroopers went up the hill to the statue

of "Iron Mike" — the French memorial to those airborne troopers killed in the liberation of France. The mayor of Sainte-Mere-Eglise spoke of the "honor and courage" of the airborne troopers of 1944. He said his people will never forget the cost of their liberation.

Veterans joined General Myers and local officials in placing wreaths at the memorial. Veterans and today's paratroopers saluted as a bugler played "Taps."

"People call us heroes," said Robert Murphy, an 82nd Airborne veteran. "I wasn't a hero. The guys that didn't come back, now they were the heroes."



Water safety, anywhere, any time

By Kathryn Keck
American Red Cross

School's out and swimming is definitely in. Trying to beat the heat and have some fun in the water can also lead to dangerous situations. The American Red Cross has long been committed to helping prevent water related accidents.

Water do's:

— Learn how to swim; it is the best thing anyone can do to stay in and around water. Parents must supervise their children during water activities. Always swim with a partner and in areas where a lifeguard is on duty.

Water don'ts:

— Never swim near a boat ramp or dam. If you can't see the bottom of the pool or if the water is cloudy, don't swim there. Stay away from rivers with currents. Avoid swimming at night in unlighted areas.

— Horseplay can be dangerous. Do not push or shove people, or run near water. Obey all rules and posted signs. Also do not chew gum, or eat while swimming as doing so can lead to choking.

— It is very important to check the depth of the water and look for any hidden objects before you dive. Diving in shallow water or hitting a hidden object can cause serious or fatal head injuries.

When not to swim:

— If you are very tired, very cold, overheated, or have been drinking alcohol. All of these situations can impair your ability to swim.

Weather conditions:

— Always pay attention to the weather conditions. Get out of the water immediately whenever you see lightning or hear thunder.

Water safety for children:

— Maintain constant supervision. Watch children around any water environment whether it's a pool, stream, lake, tub, toilet, or even a bucket of water, no matter what skills your child has acquired and no matter how shallow the water.

— Don't rely on any substitutes. The use of floatation devices and inflatable toys cannot replace parental supervision. Such devices could suddenly shift positions, lose air, or slip out from underneath, leaving the child in a dangerous situation.

— Enroll children in a water safety course or Learn to Swim program. Your decision to provide your child with an early aquatic experience is a gift that will have infinite rewards. These courses encourage safe practices. You can also purchase a Community Water Safety manual at your local Red Cross.

— Parents should take a CPR course. Knowing these skills can be important around the water and you will expand your capabilities in providing care for your child. You can contact your local Red Cross to enroll in a CPR for Infants and Child course.

Home pool safety:

— Learn to swim. The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in and around the water is to learn to swim – this includes adults and children. The American Red Cross has swimming courses for people of any age and swimming ability. To enroll in a course to learn or improve your ability to swim, contact your local Red Cross chapter.

— If a child is missing, check the pool first. Go to the edge of the pool and scan the entire pool, bottom and surface, as well as the surrounding pool area.

— Never leave a child unobserved around the water. Your eyes must be on the child at all times. Adult supervision is recommended.

— Enclose the pool completely with a self locking, self closing fence with vertical bars. Openings in the fence should be no more than four inches wide. If the house is part of the barrier, the doors leading from the house to the pool should remain locked and be protected with an alarm that produces sounds when the door is unexpectedly opened.

— Never leave furniture near the fence that would enable a child to climb over the fence.

— Keep toys away from the pool when it is not in use. Toys can attract young children into the pool.

— Always keep basic lifesaving equipment by the pool and know how to use it. Pole, rope and personal floatation devices are recommended.

— Pool covers should always be completely removed prior to use.

— Install a phone by the pool or keep a cordless phone nearby so that you can dial 911 in an emergency.

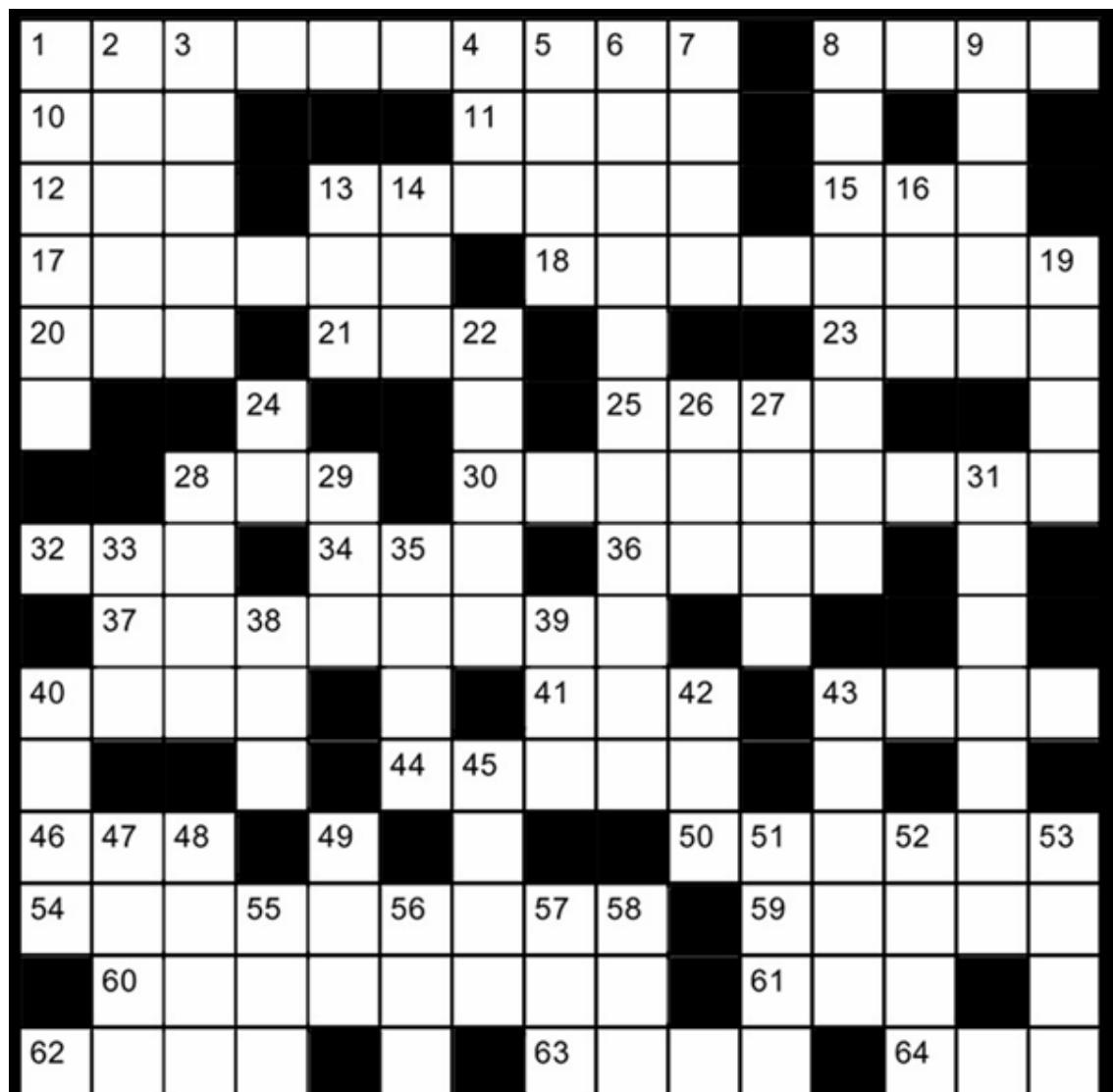
— Post CPR instructions and 9-1-1 or your local emergency number in the pool area.

— To learn more about home pool safety, you can purchase the video It Only Takes a Minute from your local Red Cross chapter.



Happy Birthday, U.S. Army

By 1st Lt. Tony Wickman
Alaskan Command Public Affairs



solutions page 18

ACROSS

- 1. First American Army general
 - 8. Blueprint
 - 10. Oklahoma town
 - 11. Train
 - 12. Clauswitz's famous "___ of war"
 - 13. Singular tooth (two words)
 - 15. Sign of Aries
 - 17. CENTCOM leader for OEF/OIF
 - 18. Ancient army weapon
 - 20. Mil. pay statement
 - 21. Used to increase music output
 - 23. Zeus' wife
 - 25. Indian princess
 - 28. stock offering (abbrev.)
 - 30. Follower of Communist leader
 - 32. Spring mon.
 - 34. Army bed
 - 36. Mar
 - 37. General: got 1953 Nobel prize
 - 40. Army field need
 - 41. Actress Arthur of Golden Girls
 - 43. Story
 - 44. Abides by
 - 46. Pie ___ mode
 - 50. General: "Old Blood & Guts"
 - 54. General: "I shall return"
 - 59. Nobody (two words)
 - 60. Army branch
 - 61. Sphere
 - 62. Worry
 - 63. Noble gas
 - 64. Still
- DOWN**
- 1. Pancake alternative
 - 2. Idolize

- 3. Epics
- 4. Pontiac muscle car
- 5. Soft mineral
- 6. Last general with 5 stars
- 7. Emperor who let Rome burn?
- 8. General: led US in WWI
- 9. Army branch
- 13. Alias abbrev.
- 14. Above Army Commendation Medal
- 16. Honest ___
- 19. Disney
- 22. Type of Italian dish
- 24. Duty for Beetle Bailey
- 26. "The Greatest"
- 27. Number of lives a cat has?
- 28. Middle East country
- 29. Army commissioning source
- 31. Last Army CJCS
- 33. ALS, SOS, ISS, AWC
- 35. State home to Wright-Patt
- 38. Path, in short
- 39. Army gear harness (abbrev.)
- 40. Box-shaped wagon on rails
- 42. Cleopatra killer?
- 43. Coach
- 45. Thai money
- 47. Den
- 48. Teen concern
- 49. Period
- 51. Old English for at once
- 52. Singer Keith
- 53. Succeeding
- 55. Back part of a ship
- 56. Explosive
- 57. Vase
- 58. Type of bread



Roadcheck 2004 to enhance vehicle safety

AUSTIN, TX — Highway safety in Texas will get an extra boost when Texas Department of Public Safety troopers participate in Roadcheck 2004, a 72-hour intensive commercial vehicle inspection program.

DPS Commercial Vehicle Enforcement troopers, along with Highway Patrol troopers who have received specialized training in commercial vehicle inspection, will be stopping commercial vehicles to inspect safety equipment, as well as checking driver licenses and endorsements. Troopers also will look for possible drug or alcohol use.

"We are pleased to participate in this international program to promote truck safety," said Chief Randy Elliston, head of the Texas Highway Patrol for DPS. "The Roadcheck program continues to make an impact on truck safety in Texas."

Last year, Roadcheck 2003 resulted in more than 3,558 vehicle inspections in Texas. The inspections found that 126 of the drivers and 900 of the vehicles

had serious enough safety violations to be removed from service.

The Roadcheck program, which stretches from Mexico to Canada, is designed to reduce commercial vehicle highway fatalities through increased vehicle safety. The Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, which sponsors Roadcheck, reports a significant decrease in the commercial vehicle crash rate in North America since the program's start in 1988.

During Roadcheck 2003, more than 55,784 vehicles were inspected at almost 1,100 locations across North America. Of those vehicles, 22.7 percent were placed out-of-service because of safety violations, and 5 percent of the commercial drivers inspected were placed out-of-service for violations of federal safety regulations.

Vehicles passing inspection receive a CVSA decal exempting the vehicle from inspection for a 90-day period, unless they have an obvious safety defect.

MILITARY PERSONNEL & IMMEDIATE FAMILY

To reach members of your family in times of emergency need, call the Red Cross AFES emergency messages toll-free number

1-877-272-7337



Kuykendall

Q&A

FULL NAME:
1st Lt. Mehtap Kuykendall

DUTY TITLE, ORGANIZATION:
Technology Application Team Lead,
311th Human Systems Wing/YASR

IN SIMPLE TERMS, WHAT I DO?:
Provide program management support to aeromedical evacuation and combat medicine efforts valued at \$20 million, develop capabilities to satisfy major command needs, direct market research and analysis of technology applications to satisfy warfighters' requirements.

BIRTHDAY:
March 15, 19??

HOMETOWN:
Adana, Turkey

FAMILY STATUS:
Married and have one son

PERSONAL MOTTO:
"Never give up on your dreams."

PET PEEVES:
People who talk on cell phones at gas stations

INSPIRATIONS:
My family, my mom and my son

HOBBIES:
Crocheting, marbling, and running after my 17-month-old son

BOOKS AT BEDSIDE:
Fiction and historical documentaries

IF I WON THE LOTTERY I'D:
Establish a charity that helps young people who cannot afford their education, from elementary through college.

FAVORITE MUSIC:
Classical

I JOINED THE MILITARY BECAUSE:
I wanted to be a part of the world's greatest Air Force

MY MOST PRIZED POSSESSION IS:
My family

Fate accomplished

Photo by Staff Sgt. Brandy Bogart



By Steve VanWert
Discovery staff writer

Sometimes I think it's just all fate," said 1st Lt. Mehtap Kuykendall, speaking about her life's journey from the town of Adana, Turkey, to the U.S. Air Force and Brooks City-Base, Texas.

She may be right. Her life these days is certainly a far cry from where it began. The lieutenant, now a technology application team lead at the 311th Human Systems Wing, was born in Adana, a town in southern Turkey, near Incirlik Air Base. Her home life was a crowded, busy one — she is the youngest of 11 children. Her mother is a homemaker and her father a mechanic, so money went first for the essentials. There wasn't a lot extra for luxuries.

"We couldn't have everything we wanted," she said.

But the family was able to afford to send her to college. She graduated from Istanbul University with a bachelor of science degree in chemical engineering, then stayed and earned her master's in chemical engineering, as well. She returned to Adana, where she began working for the Chamber of Chemical Engineering. Her life seemed successful and her future set.

Then fate stepped in.

One day while she was working at the Chamber of Chemical Engineering, a young Airman from nearby Incirlik AB came into her office. "He was actually in the wrong office," she said. "He needed to go to the

Chamber of Mechanical Engineering, not chemical, but I took him to the right building." The two struck up an acquaintance on the way that would lead to marriage.

"Joining the Air Force as an officer was in my mind from the beginning of our marriage," she said. "But I had to wait until my citizenship papers came through before I could apply to OTS." Lieutenant Kuykendall became a U.S. citizen in December 1999, and immediately took the AFOQT, the officer qualifying test. In the meantime, the couple was reassigned to Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., where she was accepted for Officer Training School. In September 2001, the Air Force gained a new second lieutenant. The next month, her husband was reassigned to Lackland AFB and she came here to Brooks.

"I feel privileged," she said, "to be able to serve in the U.S. Air Force. It's wonderful. Not everyone can become an officer."

Her job at Brooks is a little different than she envisioned. For one thing, there's no lab work and she doesn't wear a white smock.

"It's a great pleasure working here," she said. "Everyone is so supportive and helpful. My coworkers and bosses are a great team. I'm very fortunate."

"I've been given the opportunity to improve every day," she said. "I had to learn all about acquisition. It's different, but I love it. I feel I have an impact on what our frontline warfighters can do. I feel like I'm part of their success."

The lieutenant, who should pin on captain's bars in September 2005, feels that part of her success lies in her education.

"It is really important to stress education," she said. "Young people should always be looking to better themselves, and education is the best way to do it. I wouldn't be here today if I hadn't attended college. I stress it to everyone I meet."

When not at the office, Lieutenant Kuykendall can be found listening to Vivaldi, probably "The Four Seasons." But she doesn't sit still, not even at home. She crocheting, or better yet, marbling.

Marbling?

"It's a creative art process where you float colors in a suspension and carefully place a piece of art paper on the surface," she said. "When you slide the paper off, and let it dry, the design is beautiful. And none of the designs are ever exactly the same. I'm not all that good at it yet, but I really enjoy it and I'm working to get better."

But fate isn't finished with the lieutenant and her family. She's moving on to a new assignment at the Air Force Technical Applications Center at Patrick AFB, Fla., in October.

"We're looking forward to the beaches and the change of scenery," she said. "And it's only an hour from Orlando and the theme parks. My son will love that."

Of course he will. It's just fate.



PROFILES IN TIME

A Centennial of Flight series

Doolittle did much to foster aviation innovation

By Rudy Purificato

311th Human Systems Wing

Barely five feet tall, but projecting a larger-than-life image on the face of American aviation, General James Harold Doolittle's remarkable career as an innovator was to him but a footnote to history. The true measure of this giant among men was his public admission, in his 1991 autobiography *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again*, that all the accolades he earned in life were insignificant compared to his wife Josephine Daniels, who he affectionately called Joe.

In the last line of his memoirs he writes, "The best thing I ever did was to convince Joe that she should marry me; the luckiest thing that ever happened to me was when she finally did. That's why, whenever I'm asked, I say that I would never want to relive my life. I could never be so lucky again."

Nor could our nation, some historians suggest, be so lucky again to produce the kind of military leader whose courage and vision had such a



Photo by Rudy Purificato

A commemorative plaque honoring the Doolittle Raiders is on permanent exhibit at Hangar 9.

profound impact on future generations of aviators.

Born a carpenter's son in Alameda, Calif. on Dec. 14, 1896, the future aviation legend's gritty determination was evident as a youngster growing up on the mean streets of Nome during the Alaska gold rush. Seeking an elusive fortune in the gold fields, his father moved the family there in 1900. Young "Jimmy" as he was called, survived the ordeal by learning to fight. He put his fearlessness and moxy to good use after he and his mother returned to California in 1908. While attending Los Angeles Arts High School, where he met his

future wife, the 15-year-old slugger became the West Coast's amateur flyweight boxing champion.

While his fists were flying before he became airborne, young Doolittle nevertheless had become a rabid aviation enthusiast by 1910. When America entered World War I, the lad left his University of California at Berkeley studies in mining engineering to enlist in the Army's Signal Enlisted Reserve Corps to train as a pilot. He earned a commission and his wings in 1918. Limited to instructor pilot duty during the war, Lieutenant Doolittle made a name for himself as both an academician and daredevil racing pilot. In 1922 he earned the first of three aeronautical engineering degrees, culminating with one of the first doctorates in the field, from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His doctoral dissertation, "Wind Velocity Gradient and Its Effect on Flying Characteristics," contributed to the fledgling field of instrument flight. Based on test pilot and laboratory data, he successfully defended his work by promoting the idea that aviators needed visual aids to correctly determine air speed and flight direction.

His experience as an air racing champion, combined with his aviation science knowledge, later contributed to this visionary achieving several flying milestones. While his Brooks Field counterpart Col. William Ocker was experimenting with instrument flight as a "blind flying" pioneer, Lieutenant Doolittle helped develop fog flying equipment in 1928 by perfecting the use of artificial horizontal and directional gyroscopes. He also engineered an aviation first on Sept. 24, 1929 at Mitchell Field on New York's Long Island by using flight instruments he helped develop. He became the first pilot in history to fly "blind" by relying solely on instruments to guide his hooded cockpit aircraft.

Two years earlier at Wright Field, Ohio, this acrobatic flying pioneer became the first aviator in history to successfully execute an outside loop, a maneuver previously thought to be fatal due to great physical stresses exerted on the aircraft.

While he left his mark on aviation science, his legacy is forever associated with his contributions to air power strategy during World War II. He successfully led the world's



first successful launching of land-based bombers from an aircraft carrier during the April 18, 1942 raid over Tokyo.

"He was smart, fearless and calculating. I really think he was, at the time, the best pilot of propeller-driven airplanes," said Lt. Col. Robert Cole, General Doolittle's co-pilot, during a 2003 Discovery interview. Lt. Col. Cole, one of 19 surviving Doolittle Raiders, characterized his former commander as an aviation genius. "I was lucky to be his co-pilot," recalls Colonel Cole of the raid involving 16 B-25 Mitchell bombers that took off from the U.S.S. Hornet to bomb targets in and near Tokyo. The attack dealt a devastating psychological blow to Imperial Japan. It directly led to the subsequent defeat of the Japanese fleet at the Battle of Midway.

The raid's 45-year-old leader was promoted by two ranks to brigadier general and awarded the Medal of Honor. In 1985, President Ronald Reagan promoted him to general

when he pinned on the same four-star insignia that General George Patton had worn during the latter's promotion to that rank.

Not all of General Doolittle's aviation contributions were made during his military career. As a Shell Oil executive, his leadership led to the development and manufacturing of high-octane aviation fuel. He also contributed to the development of U.S. Air Force aviation and space technologies as chairman of the Air Force Scientific Advisory Board.

While he was never stationed here, the sentinel event of his aviation career is chronicled in a Hangar 9 plaque commemorated by the Doolittle Raiders on the 25th anniversary of that historic mission.

General Doolittle died in 1993 at age 96. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Like so many others before him, he certainly fulfilled his philosophy of "trying to leave the Earth a better place than he found it."



Courtesy photo

General Doolittle, third from the left, front row, seen here in 1925 as a U.S. Air Service test pilot at McCook Field, III.



Happy Birthday, U.S. Army



from page 14

LifeBuilder's

The LifeBuilder's noon luncheon and program is on a summer recess until September 8.

Midweek Mass

A midweek mass is held only on Thursdays at the Brooks Chapel at 11:30 a.m. A Eucharistic service is held Monday through Wednesday in the Blessed Sacrament Room. Mass is also held each days of obligation. Mass is open for the entire base Roman Catholic community.



Religious classes on summer recess

The Catholic and Protestant Religious Education and Sunday School classes will resume after a summer break. A Vacation Bible School will be held August 2-6. The 10:30 a.m. congregation has a weekly children's sermon and children's ministry.

Chapel schedule

Weekdays:

11:30 a.m. — Thursday Mass
Mon. - Wed. Eucharist

Wednesdays:

5:30 p.m.—Protestant choir rehearsal
6:30 p.m. — Catholic choir rehearsal

Sundays:

9 a.m. — Catholic Mass
10:30 a.m. — Interdenominational worship,
includes children's church
6 p.m. — Praise and Worship service followed by a meal



Officials remind Airmen to register to vote

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — General elections are approaching and Air Force voting officials at the Air Force Personnel Center here are reminding everyone to register to vote.

Department of Defense officials recently announced they have worked out a plan with the U.S. Postal Service to get absentee ballots to servicemembers overseas faster, but registering to vote is the first step to getting a ballot.

"Getting registered to vote is not a difficult process, it's just a matter of making it a priority," said Lt. Col. Lee Shick, an Air Force voting action officer.

Deadlines and state-specific rules on voter registration can be found on the

Federal Voting Assistance Program Web site at www.fvap.gov. The site includes a list of 10 things to do to ensure a person's vote counts.

"Our goal is 100-percent contact with every Airman by a voting representative," Colonel Shick said. "The opportunity to vote has been emphasized as a command responsibility and our installation voting officers play a key role."

"We want to make sure each individual gets the word about voting and that they have the tools and information to apply for an absentee ballot and vote," he said. "If Airmen can't get registered online, installation voting officers will have a supply of federal post-card applications."

AAFES back to school catalog now available

DALLAS, Texas — The Exchange Services' newest catalog, Back to School 2004, is now available. Packed with cool gear both children and adults will love, this new all-services catalog showcases great furniture, bed linens, small appliances and a hot electronics section with the latest technological gadgets. Military children from grade school to college are sure to find just what they need to get this school year off to a great start.

Prices in this all-services catalog are valid June 1 - September 30, and anyone with exchange privileges can order from it. Active duty military members of the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard, as well as military retirees, reservists, National Guardsmen, Department of Defense civilians stationed overseas, exchange employees and their family members are authorized to shop.

Orders can be placed by mail, fax or phone. To place orders toll free from the United States, Puerto Rico or Guam just call 1-800-527-2345. AAFES' catalog center is open around-the-clock, seven days a week and complimentary international access calling is available from several countries.

Authorized customers can also shop the 2004 Back to School Exchange catalog on the Internet at aafes.com <<http://www.aafes.com>>, usmc-mccs.org, <<http://www.usmc-mccs.org>> navy-nex.com <<http://www.navy-nex.com>> or cg-exchange.com <<http://www.cg-exchange.com>>. Active duty military members of the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard, as well as military retirees, reservists, National Guardsmen, Department of Defense civilians stationed overseas, exchange employees and their family members are authorized to shop. Anyone with exchange privileges can shop the Back to School catalog.

Earnings generated by purchases in the exchange and exchange online store as well as exchange catalogs such as the Back to School catalog are returned to the military community in the form of funding for Morale, Welfare and Recreation facilities and programs.

AAFES is a joint command of the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force, and is directed by a Board of Directors who is responsible to the Secretaries of the Army and the Air Force through their Chiefs of Staff. AAFES has the dual mission of providing authorized patrons with articles of merchandise and services and of generating non-appropriated fund earnings as a supplemental source of funding for military Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs. To find out more about AAFES' history and mission or to view recent press releases please visit our Web site at <<http://www.aafes.com/pa/default.asp>>.

Health & fitness

Commanders' Fitness Club

The Brooks Commanders' Fitness Club meets at the Health and Fitness Center every Wednesday at 7 a.m. for a run/walk. Military and civilian personnel are encouraged to participate. Participants receive a Commanders' Fitness Club T-shirt after participating four times. Additional prizes are offered for other sessions. Sign up at the Fitness Center or call 536-2188 for details.

Power Cycling

Power cycling is offered every Tuesday and Thursday at 11:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. at the Fitness Center. Classes are free but limited seating is available for the first 12 participants to sign up for each class. Participants must bring bottled water, a towel a "can-do" attitude to begin the ride of your life. Contact the Fitness Center at 536-2188 or stop by and talk to a staff member for more information.

Fitness is the key to health



Military shoplifting, 'not worth the risk'

VICTORY BASE, Iraq — More than 120 soldiers were apprehended for shoplifting from Army and Air Force Exchange Service facilities in Iraq between January 1 and March 31. These shoplifting cases equated to more than \$34,000 of lost merchandise and an incalculable loss in integrity, careers and respect.

The worst part, according to David Drake, AAFES Iraq loss prevention area manager, is that most of the soldiers apprehended had enough money on hand to pay for the items they stole. They just didn't think they'd get caught. "Most of our stores have some kind of surveillance, whether it's cameras, detectives or both," said Mr. Drake. "My estimation is that on any given day, we catch a tenth of the people who steal from AAFES. If you shoplift repeatedly, you will eventually get caught. I wonder if those soldiers ask themselves if their military career is worth a one in 10 shot of getting caught?"

Mr. Drake and Baghdad Loss Prevention Manager Rich Cubbage said they have heard all kinds of reasons and excuses as to why soldiers steal, but the one they hear the most is, "I forgot I had it." "I was going to pay for it later," is another, said Mr. Cubbage, who has frequently caught more than one person a day. "I've detained everyone from privates to majors," he said.

The things people steal make Mr. Cubbage and Mr. Drake raise their eyebrows. They said once they caught a coalition soldier who stole four pairs of gloves - each on separate occasions — but only took the left-handed glove. Recently, said Mr. Cubbage, it was light bulbs. "They were stealing the light bulbs out of the mini-Mag-Lites. They left the flash light and stole the bulb," he said.

"Even if someone only takes a part of the item, it's still shoplifting," said Mr. Drake. "Shoplifting," he said, "is stealing any item or part of an item, or changing the price to pay less than it is marked."

When Mr. Drake, Mr. Cubbage or the many loss prevention specialists throughout AAFES facilities observe someone shoplift, they will watch the per-

son until they exit the building. Then they will stop them, identify themselves, ask for an ID, explain why they stopped them and escort them to their office. There, they call the military police and wait for them to arrive and take control of the individual.

"We start our paperwork and for the most part, they sit quietly. Most realize it will make the situation worse if they get belligerent. But some do," said Mr. Cubbage. The Loss Prevention Specialist also explains the civil recovery act. "We charge all U.S. military and their supporters a \$200 fee per shoplifting incident. They can pay that on the spot, which some do, he said or they can make payments in an allotted amount of time," said Mr. Drake.

When the MPs arrive, they will take statements, recover the items and release individuals back to their unit for Uniform Code of Military Justice action. Whatever action the unit takes, "they're going to lose a heck of a lot more in pay than what the item was worth. Add to that the loss of their career, and it's just not worth it," Mr. Drake said.

Mr. Cubbage listed their most shoplifted items as CDs, video games, electronics, DVDs, sunglasses and Soldier-accessory items like head wraps and Buttstock ammunition holders.

In addition to the cameras and detectives, Mr. Cubbage said the locally hired workers also watch out for shoplifters. "We lock the high-ticket stuff up and train the entire work force to watch and ask questions."

Associates at contingency operations are trained to look for more than just shoplifting. The workers also stay on the look out for counterfeit bills. "In my 17 years as loss prevention, I've had maybe three cases of detaining people passing counterfeit money. Here (in Iraq), I got three people in three days. All three knowingly passed the money," Mr. Drake said.

"Our cashiers are very good at catching counterfeit bills. Most can tell by touch. We've had at least 15 instances in the Baghdad area. We hand those Soldiers and the money directly to the Crimi-

nal Investigation Command who hands them to the Secret Service for investigation. That's an instant felony," Mr. Cubbage said.

In addition to shoplifting and passing counterfeit bills, AAFES Loss Prevention has detained soldiers for trying to return shoplifted items for refund at a later date, for passing bad checks and for credit card fraud.

"Our job is loss prevention. And knowing that we catch 10 percent of all shoplifters, I'd rather deter the other nine from stealing," Mr. Drake said. "You might get away once but eventually, you're going to get caught. It's not worth the risk. There's nothing in that store worth risking your military career."

"AAFES gives all customers a chance to pay for merchandise. After they leave the store, it's too late. AAFES has a 100 percent prosecution rate. It's up to the military police to determine the reality of if they stole, not us," said Mr. Cubbage. "We have to turn everyone in," said Mr. Drake. "We prosecute them all," Mr. Cubbage emphasized.

No matter how long the line or how lucky they feel, Drake and Cubbage encourage all AAFES shoppers to pay the marked price for everything they want. Otherwise, they can pay with their careers and their reputations. And while AAFES merchandise and eventually military rank might be recovered, the loss of integrity and reputation can't.

The Army & Air Force Exchange Service is a joint command of the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force, and is directed by a Board of Directors who is responsible to the Secretaries of the Army and the Air Force through their Chiefs of Staff. AAFES has the dual mission of providing authorized patrons with articles of merchandise and services and of generating non-appropriated fund earnings as a supplemental source of funding for military Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs. To find out more about AAFES' history and mission or to view recent press releases visit the Web site at <http://www.aafes.com/pa/default.asp>.



Dominguez

Continued from page 1

He was initially overwhelmed by the material he collected. "When I first started doing research for the article I had too much information," he said, noting, "One article wasn't going to cut it. The San Antonio stories (alone) could fill a book." He realized then that his idea should be expanded. He never wrote the newspaper feature, concentrating instead on an initial book manuscript that would give him the freedom to convey veterans' graphic tales about the war in realistic language.

From 1983 to 1986, Mr. Dominguez scoured the country searching for stories from Hispanic veterans. He placed ads in veterans' magazines and wrote letters to editors that led to interviews. He only wanted primary source material gleaned from veterans, not accounts from buddies or family members of veterans.

Originally intended as an oral history, Mr. Dominguez changed the concept to include more historical background information about some of the battles chronicled in the stories. "What I tried to do was write about personal accounts," he said, explaining that his intention was to create a work that truly represented Hispanics as a group. His goal was to include stories from a variety of Latinos, including Mexicans, Cubans, Dominicans and Puerto Ricans. He expanded his search by targeting publications in areas of the country that had large Hispanic populations such as New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Chicago and Houston.

He culled the massive amount of data down to 21 veterans in an 18-chapter, 220-page book that chronologically covers the war from the 1965 account by Army Medal of Honor recipient Benavides to the 1973

story of Air Force veteran Hector Acosta's POW experiences at the infamous "Hanoi Hilton" prison.

In 1990, a Houston publisher offered Mr. Dominguez a book deal that was not to his liking. "He (publisher) wanted me to dwell more on what I consider the negative aspects of the Vietnam experience. He wanted me to describe the discrimination that Latinos faced in the military and how badly they were treated because of their ethnicity." The author balked at that suggestion noting, "To be honest, I just didn't find that much discrimination or maltreatment. As one veteran told me, 'When someone is watching your back you don't care what color he is.'"

The author killed the deal. The manuscript gathered dust for years until his wife Rosemarie persuaded him to try again. The many letters from veterans thanking him for writing the book has been his reward. He has no illusions of getting rich on what he considers a labor of love. He used the phrase "answered the call" because it was a common theme expressed by Hispanic veterans who he said "never shirked their duty and who responded to our nation's call to arms."

"I just thought it would fill an informational gap that existed and continues to exist in the history of the Vietnam War. My purpose was not to diminish in any way what other vets have done," he said. In a small way, this AFCEE civil servant has also "answered the call." He has helped express fellow Vietnam vets' sacrifices as today's American service men and women continue that tradition with our nation at war.



Sports

Brooks men's softball team takes third at Colorado tourney

By Rudy Purificato

311th Human Systems Wing

The prognosis for the Brooks men's varsity softball team's post-season survival appears bright after they finished a respectable third at the 14th Annual Band Aid Tournament held last month at Fort Carson, Colorado.

Led by Master Sgt. Dave Miles, the team's player-coach from the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine, Brooks posted a 5-4 record in the round-robin tourney won by Randolph Air Force Base. The Air Force Academy finished second.

"We lost twice to Randolph and the Air Force Academy," said Technical Sgt. Rob Taylor, the Brooks left centerfielder who is a veteran of the past three Band Aid tournaments that his coach founded.

Sergeant Miles, who pitched for Brooks, was the team's opponent last year when the Air Force Academy won the tourney. Brooks finished second

in the 2003 tourney and fourth in 2002.

"Last year during the preliminary round of the double-elimination tourney, we beat the Air Force Academy. (Sergeant) Miles was an outfielder for them. Three months later he PCS'ed to Brooks," said Sergeant Taylor, recognizing the irony of having the tourney's founder and the team's former adversary now guiding the Brooks club.

Brooks competed in the varsity division against such foes as Petersen and Shriver AFBs, Colo., and Fort Carson. Because the tourney featured an intramural division for the first time this year, Brooks played against fewer teams. Nevertheless, the squad showed signs of becoming a cohesive unit. "We're starting to come together as a team," Sergeant Taylor said.

Last week, the team showed further progress when Brooks posted a

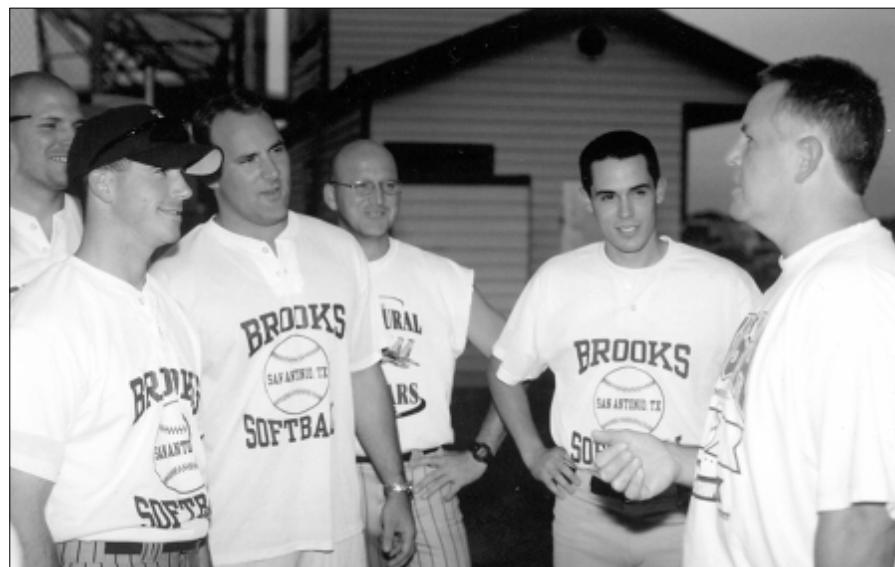


Photo by Rudy Purificato

Master Sgt. Dave Miles, right, Brooks men's varsity softball coach, gives his squad a pep talk prior to the club's participation in the Band Aid Tournament in Colorado.

4-2 record at a military tournament held at Fort Sam Houston.

The team's next two post-season appearances involve playing against some of the top military clubs on Earth. Within a month, they are

scheduled to compete in the U.S. Sports Specialty Association military tournament in Dallas, Texas, followed by the U.S. Armed Forces world tournament Aug. 12-15 in Garland, Texas.

Base youth 'hit-a-thon' is Brooks' version of home run derby

By Rudy Purificato

311th Human Systems Wing

Most parents of Brooks Youth baseball players weren't even born when Major League sluggers like Mickey Mantle and Harmon Killebrew competed against one another on TV's "Home Run Derby" show telecast on Saturdays during the 1950s. Nevertheless, their children are doing their best to perpetuate a baseball tradition by 'tearing the cover off the old horsehide' in tape-measured shots as part of Brooks Youth Sports' annual 'hit-a-thon.'

"We've been having hit-a-thons for about 10 years to test their (players') batting ability," said Larry Flores, Brooks Youth Sports director who uses a tape measure to determine the distances balls are hit. "They get three hits between the lines (fair balls). The longest hit is counted for distance. The top three (hitters) are awarded trophies," Flores explained. He said the event provides an extra incentive for about 80 youths who participate in the hit-a-thon.

All Brooks youth baseball teams are represented at the competition. In past years, some hit-a-thons have



Photo by Rudy Purificato

Brooks Youth Sports baseball commissioner Tom Beza uncorks a pitch during the annual youth league's 'hit-a-thon.' About 80 youths participated in the event this year.

been staged at the youth football field complex known as the Eagles' Nest. In May, the event was held at youth baseball field No. 1, also known as the senior field. Dead center field measures 392 feet from home plate, a challenge for even major leaguers. Down the lines in left and right field, the distance is about 300 feet. Hitters who try to slug home runs here also have to contend with about an eight-foot-high chain link fence.

"Nobody has hit a ball over the (centerfield) fence during this competition," Mr. Flores said, noting that youngsters mostly hit line drives to all fields. The object of this extracurricular exercise, Mr. Flores noted, is for kids to just make contact with a pitched ball.

Nevertheless, hitting one out during a hit-a-thon is not an impossibility for these youngsters. Mr. Flores said, "Last year during a regular sea-

son game, Matthew Gonzales, who played on the 15-17 year-old Eagles (team), hit a home run to dead center."

Brooks Youth Baseball commissioner Tom Beza, who coaches Brooks baseball team No. 9 that consists of 10-12 year-olds, is an active hit-a-thon supporter. This year, Mr. Beza was the hit-a-thon pitcher who lobbed baseballs to kids without the benefit of a protective batting practice fence or a pitcher's glove.

"I've been coaching for 25 years and have coached 10 Brooks teams," Mr. Beza said about his devotion to youth sports that help develop athletic skills. He didn't indicate how many line drives have hit him during these competitions, but knows from experience that such an activity builds confidence. The coach believes that confidence and talent can take a kid a long way, even as far as the Major Leagues.



Photo by Rudy Purificato

A Brooks Youth Sports baseball player helps Larry Flores, Brooks Youth Sports director, measure the distance a baseball traveled during the youth league's annual 'hit-a-thon.'



Brooks crooner learns 'show must go on' with Tops In Blue tour

By Rudy Purificato

311th Human Systems Wing

He fractured his foot, shed 20 pounds and lost countless hours of sleep, yet Staff Sgt. Eddie Bernal cherishes the lessons he learned as a member of the 50th anniversary Tops In Blue record-setting 14-month world tour.

Noticeably trimmer and decidedly more muscular, this U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine videographer has recently returned to Brooks with renewed confidence and a showboat load of new skills.

"It was the hardest thing I've ever done in my life so far, but it's something I am very proud of," said the 29-year-old Texan whose prior entertainment experience had been limited to high school choir in Kerrville, Texas.

Tops In Blue selected Sergeant Bernal primarily for his singing ability as a first tenor, demonstrated during the Air Force Entertainment Services' Worldwide Talent Contest held at Lackland Air Force Base in February 2003. The USAFSAM crooner did not know then that his whirlwind experiences would have a profound effect on his life.

"I thought I was patient, but I learned to be more patient," he said. No longer a procrastinator, he is now punctual, more adaptable to change, and is far better prepared for a future career as a professional entertainer. "My dream has been to become an entertainer. After Tops In Blue, I feel like I have something to offer," he said of his polished performances as a song and dance man.

To be sure, Sergeant Bernal didn't think performing for Tops In Blue would be easy. He certainly got more than he had bargained for. "I felt like it was a music boot camp at first," he said, describing the grueling regimen of learning 45 musical numbers and a variety of dance routines. "We had aerobics and vocal training daily and dancing sessions that totaled seven hours a day," Sergeant Bernal said of the two-month preparation for the show called "Soaring With Eagles."

Already physically fit before he joined the tour, Sergeant Bernal learned what stamina really means. "I was in shape, but I wasn't prepared for the constant dancing. It was difficult and fast-paced," he said of the varying styles that ranged from Latin and swing to jazz. "Our choreographer was amazing. He pulled things out of you (talent-wise) that you never thought you could do."

Sergeant Bernal also learned to persevere through an injury that would have hobbled lesser hoofers. "I danced

so much that I fractured my right foot," he said of the malady suffered at Pope Air Force Base, N.C. He wore a removable cast and used crutches off stage, but during performances he never showed anyone how much pain he truly felt. He also never missed a performance during the tour, the longest in the 50-year history of Tops In Blue.

Besides the constant dancing and vocal performances, Sergeant Bernal and the other 30 cast members had to master setting up, tearing down and packing into two 18-wheeled truck staging, sound and lighting equipment, multimedia gear and wardrobes totaling 40,000 pounds.

"That's the one thing I didn't know going in, that we were our own roadies (crew). When we first started, it took us 14 hours to set up the stage. By the end of the show it took us two and half hours to do it," he said, noting that they also set a record for loading the trucks at just under two hours.

All of these tasks were part of what show biz's calls "being real troupers." Sergeant Bernal also adjusted to the stage's requirement that "the show must go on." "I had to learn to do things quickly," he said, partly referring to the show's 15 costume changes. He also

realized that the fast-paced performances were unforgiving. The show truly went on despite performers passing out back stage from exertion, or the handful of souls who literally took to heart the traditional show biz good luck wish of "breaking a leg." In fact, a musician broke both legs in separate accidents.

While rehearsals didn't kill them, the road show had these globetrotting performers dead tired by tour's end. The tour began in the United States and continued in Europe. No location was too remote or too small for the Air Force's elite entertainers who performed anywhere the United States had military forces stationed. From Iceland and Greenland to Guam, Singapore and the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia they went, all the while displaying perpetual smiles to conceal chronic fatigue.

"I didn't realize (at first) the magnitude of what we did. It (the show) was seen by everybody," said Sergeant Bernal. They helped boost morale with Marines at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and Army personnel based in Pakistan and Afghanistan. However, it was in Baghdad, Iraq where the group was given a combat zone real-



Photo by Staff Sgt. Alfonso Ramirez

Staff Sgt. Eddie Bernal displays a Tops in Blue 50th anniversary commemorative coin that he plans to give Col. Tom Travis, 311th Human Systems Wing commander. Formed in 1953, the organization is headquartered at Lackland Air Force Base.

ity check as they heard explosions rip through their neighborhood.

The tour's Middle East phase was especially challenging to the group that performed 15 shows in 14 days. "It definitely takes a toll on the body," admits Sergeant Bernal, who fought exhaustion and sleep deprivation. He said there were times when he felt like he was "sleep dancing."

The Tops In Blue veteran now plans an encore: working off duty hours at a local recording studio where Harry Connick, Jr. once recorded some songs. He has learned that to get a break in show biz, you have to be in the right place at the right time.



Courtesy Photo

Staff Sgt. Eddie Bernal, a videographer from the United States School of Aerospace Medicine, left, was part of a Tops in Blue trio who sang their version of the 1940s hit song, "This is the Air Force, Mr. Jones."