

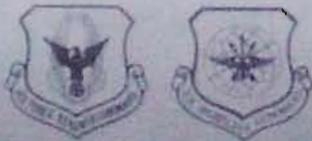
VIKING FLYER



934th Airlift Wing (AFRC)
Minneapolis-St. Paul IAP
Air Reserve Station, Minn.
January 2004, Vol. 26 No. 1

AIR FORCE

143
10 AW



Inside:

- ★ Airmen react to Saddam Hussein's capture
- ★ New C-130 models arrive
- ★ Wing wins Installation Excellence Award
- ★ Wing brings gifts, cheer to veterans



EDITORIAL STAFF

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This funded Air Force newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military services. Contents of the *Viking Flyer* are not necessarily the views of or endorsed by the U.S. government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Air Force.

The editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the 934th Airlift Wing Public Affairs Office (Air Force Reserve Command), Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport Joint Air Reserve Station, 760 Military Highway, Minneapolis, MN 55450-2100. For more information, call (612) 713-1217. All photographs are Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated. The newspaper is distributed on Friday before the unit training assembly. The deadline for unsolicited submissions is the Monday after the UTA.

On the cover:

An aircrew with the 934th Airlift Wing disembarks from one of four H2 model C-130 aircraft that arrived Nov. 21 to replace the wing's older E models.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jon Juliot

VIKING FLYER

Security forces

Ed Rossi retired Nov. 29 after 30 years of civil service.

During the December UTA, squadron members conducted ancillary training and a blues inspection. A holiday party was held Dec. 6. Many spouses and children attended. They visited with Santa Claus, who was on-hand to give presents for the children. Thanks to **Tech. Sgt. Bradley Weis** for organizing the party, and to all of his crew for making the party a great success.

Plans

Capt. Dan Johnson received 10-year pin for civil service.

Aerial port

The unit said goodbye to **Lt. Col. James Kirchoff** and welcomed **Maj. Craig Bogan** as the new commander Dec. 6.

The squadron auction raised more than \$3,500, which will be donated to families in need and other organizations. The unit also secured private donations that allowed for the donation of 15 27-inch color TVs to the Minneapolis Veterans Home.

Tech. Sgt. Lowell Olson received the Air Force Commendation Medal. **Senior Master Sgt. Adan Sylva**, **Master Sgt. Dale Place**, **Tech. Sgt. Kenty Long**, **Tech. Sgt. Mike Running** and **Tech. Sgt. Mike Severin** received the Air Force Achievement Medal.

Chapel

The chapel staff will miss **Chaplain (Capt.) Derek Lauer**, who will soon leave the 934th Airlift Wing to work as a corrections officer in Sioux Falls, S.D.

Chaplain (Capt.) Steve Svoboda will attend Commissioned Officer Training at Maxwell AFB, Ala., from Jan. 6 to Feb. 5.

Tech. Sgt. Paul Ives will attend the Chaplain Assistant Apprentice Course at Maxwell AFB from Jan. 12 to Feb. 20.

Welcome back, **Tech. Sgt. Jan Wills!** Wills returned after 12 months of partial mobilization, at Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command at Robins AFB, Ga., in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle.

Wing coin recipients

Coins were awarded to the following individuals: **Col. Mark Arnold**, AW; **Staff Sgt. Dan Bonar**, OG; **Bob Brinkman**, MSG; **Donnita Cook**, 315th AW; **Senior Airman Allison Feiseler**, ASTS; **Brig. Gen. Michael Gjede**, 910th AW; **Tech. Sgt. Derek Green**, MXG; **Liz Hill**, MSG; **Rex Hodge**, MSG; **Retired Gen. Doyle Larson**; **Deb Manselle**, MSG; **Senior Master Sgt. Robert McGonigal**, LG; **Maj. Dave Mohr**, XP; **Senior Airman Joshua Nason**, MSG; **Master Sgt. Jeffrey J. Nyhus**, MSG; **Nancy Ripley**, AW; **Lt. Col. Reinhart Schmidt**, OG; **Lt. Col. Stan Sheley**, MXG; **Al Sparling**, MSG; and **Phil Thompson**, OSF

Air Mobility Command Coin recipients

Maj. Maureen Banavige

Tech. Sgt. Bob Braesch

Lt. Col. Gary Bray

Maj. Mike Burns

Chief Master Sgt. Mike Dressen

Col. Paul Groskreutz

Senior Master Sgt. Ann Hawkins

Maj. Todd Kay

Tech. Sgt. John Kline

Margo Leslie

Senior Master Sgt. John Maki

Staff Sgt. Kristin Maloney

Senior Master Becky Ogden

Maj. Ray Otto

Tech. Sgt. Steven Priebe

Senior Master Sgt. David Provo

Tech. Sgt. Jason Rebholtz

Senior Master Sgt. Larry Schyma

Maj. Bonnie Tremblett

Chief Master Sgt. Mike Zurn

The coin is given to the top one percent of military and civilian members in Air Mobility Command.

For individuals or squadrons to be included in this section of the *Viking Flyer*, speak with a Unit Public Affairs Representative. For guidelines and deadlines, call the 934th Airlift Wing Public Affairs office at (612) 713-1217.

Vice commander says farewell

By Col. Mark Arnold
934th Airlift Wing
vice commander



Like so many others before me, my time to depart the 934th Airlift Wing has arrived. I have an opportunity to serve at Air Mobility Command Headquarters in an IMA position within the Tanker Airlift Control Center. The chance to participate at that level of command

is both humbling and exciting for me. My hope is that as a reservist, I can help in some small way to bring to the table at Scott Air Force Base, Ill., something that contributes to our Air Force and our country.

As an IMA, I will still be part of Air Force Reserve Command, and since it is a part-time position, I plan to commute to Scott when required. So I will still be kicking around in the neighborhood.

I say this in part to communicate that I hope I will always be associated with the 934th AW in some way. You all have had such an impact on me and who I am today. Through the

patience and efforts of many of you, I have grown and become a better officer and a better leader. I owe many of you a lot for that, but all I can do is say a very heartfelt "thank you."

It is difficult for me to say goodbye. From Just Cause, Desert Shield, the many Oak deployments, Provide Promise and Joint Guard, Operations Enduring Freedom, Noble Eagle and Iraqi Freedom, Expeditionary Operational Readiness Inspections, Unit Compliance Inspections, Aircrew Standardization Evaluations, etc., I have been so proud to be with you as this wing has stood up to answer the challenges,

one after another. I have seen the greatness in this wing, across all the groups, throughout all the squadrons and flights. The greater the challenge, the greater your response.

As trying as these last two years have been, through all the activations, deployments and family separations, your response has been nothing short of phenomenal. Awards and recognition of all kinds continue to pour in from all levels of our chain for individuals, units and the entire wing. While this recognition is great, it barely reflects the true depth and breadth of your achievements.

During these last few months, it has been

my pleasure to work with our new wing commander, Col. Jim Muscatell Jr. He is a caring, thoughtful commander who will do a fantastic job for this wing. I believe the future of the 934th, even in the face of today's challenges, is brighter than ever. Commanders will come and go, but the heart of the 934th remains strong and will continue to grow stronger.

Thank you for the 15 great years that you allowed me to serve with you in our mission. Mostly, thank you for the friendship so many of you have shown me. God bless each of you as you carry on for the 934th and our country.

OUTSIDE THE REGS

By Staff Sgt. Nicholas Olson



I don't think this is what we had in mind when we asked for a new hangar design.

The **Commander's Hotline** is your direct link to the wing commander for kudos, questions, concerns or suggestions about matters related to the 934th Airlift Wing. Call (612) 713-4685.

Recruiting needs help

By Senior Master Sgt.
Michael S. Formica
934th Airlift Wing recruiter

Thank you to the members of the 934th Airlift Wing, my recruiters had an outstanding year. This year, you referred 54 of your friends, relatives and acquaintances to the recruiters.

Twenty two of these individuals were enlisted or appointed into our program. This is 17 percent of our yearly recruiting goal. We truly appreciate your tremendous help.

We need your help again. The Get One Program is an Air Force Reserve command-wide program that gives reservists a way to refer friends, family members and co-workers to the Reserve program. Reservists receive token awards for referring someone and earn additional awards

if the applicants join. There is no restriction on the number of referrals made, and a referral name will remain in the system for 24 months or until the person joins.

You can refer someone by calling toll-free (877) 786-2372 or logging on at www.afreserve.com/getone. You can also complete and mail a reply card that can be found at a local recruiting office, Citizen Airmen Magazine or in your unit.

I ask you to continue to talk about the outstanding things this unit does for our country and continue to refer people to join our team. If every reserve member referred just one person, your recruiters could easily achieve their mission. Another way of thinking about this is that you are helping to man your wing and have the help to get your mission done.

Thanks again for all you do!

Airmen react to Saddam's capture

By Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Williams
506th Air Expeditionary Group
Public Affairs

KIRKUK AIR BASE, IRAQ - There was cautious enthusiasm at Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq, Dec. 14 when the rumors floated that Saddam Hussein, the Ace of Spades in the "55 Most Wanted" deck of cards, might be captured.

For most people, the sound of gunfire outside the perimeter gate was nothing out of the ordinary, since small arms fire happens in the area regularly. This time, however, the gunfire would turn out to be anything but ordinary.

Senior Airman Heather Gondek, 506th Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron, woke up when she heard the gunfire, but thought it was just another firefight.

"I thought, 'Here comes an alarm red,'" she said. "And then I woke up and heard the giant voice tell us to put on the flak vest and helmet. Then someone else came in and told us that we may have caught Saddam. I was excited. I thought it was really cool that we finally got him after all these years."

Chaplain (Maj.) Pete Lambert was in the middle of Mass with 20 people when he heard the gunfire.

"All of a sudden, we heard all these gun shots going off. It got so intense



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Williams

Members of the 506th Expeditionary Group headquarters staff at Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq, watch a press conference on television announcing the capture of former Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, Dec. 14.

that some soldiers got up and ran out to see what was going on," Lambert said. "It must have been about 11:45 a.m. We just continued Mass. At the end of Mass, the group commander announced it was celebratory fire because there were rumors around town that Saddam Hussein had been captured."

"I was very happy, but cautious because so far it was only a rumor. I checked the Internet and there was nothing there," Lambert said. "Maybe half an hour after that, they talked about the possibility he had been captured. Later, I went down to the medical tent and there was a press conference with the general and the pictures of Saddam. It feels good."

Reactions from the 506th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron members were similar.

"I'm glad they captured Saddam Hussein," said Airman Ronald Beltran. "At first, I didn't think it was true, but I'm glad we got him. I hope we go home soon, but if we don't, we'll finish and complete our mission."

"As soon as the word came out that he had actually been captured, I went over and called my wife," said Staff Sgt. Raymond Nesbitt, who was patrolling one of the base defense sectors when he first heard the celebratory gunfire. "She had just gotten to work. I told her and she just started screaming with excitement. She told all the people in her office and they couldn't believe it.

They were all excited."

Nesbitt also called his 17-year-old daughter and 12-year-old son.

"They were watching TV and couldn't believe they were actually sitting down watching history take place. They see a light at the end of the tunnel, just like the rest of us. It's a great Christmas present," Nesbitt said.

"I was skeptical at first until I heard the confirmation on the news. Then I was pretty happy about it. Extremely happy about it, actually," said Airman 1st Class Nicholas Tardiff of the 506th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron.

Airman 1st Class Amber Taden, 506th Expeditionary Services Squadron, saw a bullet from the celebratory fire land near her.

"We just heard the 'dink' of an AK-47 round that we found on the floor of the recreation center," she said. "This is good stuff. I'm happy they're celebrating."

Senior Airman Nicole Hunter, 506th Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron, was working on the airfield when she heard the small arms fire. Her viewpoint is less about Saddam and more about the importance of the event.

"I'm just enjoying the moment right now," she said. "Being a young airman in the Air Force, when stuff like this happens it puts in perspective what's really going on in the world. To be honest,

I'm kind of happy because I joined up to serve my country. Right now, I'm happy I can tell my family that I was in Iraq at this point of time in history."

What will be the effect of Saddam's capture?

"The long-term consequences will be good. I expect some short-term backlash to it. Hopefully, after a week or so, even that will dissipate. The hope is that it will rapidly lead to the collapse of what resistance there is out there without any indication of a formal leader continuing (the fight)," said Col. Dan Peabody, 506th Air Expeditionary Group commander. "Even though we may not have had a direct role, we certainly have contributed significantly to the on-going activities that led to what happened. I'm very proud of everyone here and all that they contributed."

While many at the base agreed about the amount of work that remains ahead, others reflected on the historical event and flew flags to mark the occasion.

"When everybody found out it was confirmed, they all started flying flags," said Master Sgt. Michael Brown, 447th Expeditionary Air Control Squadron. "We flew about 18 flags. They were pretty excited to be able to have that as a memento to take home, a flag that was flown over Kirkuk that day. It was pretty special."

Wing welcomes four newer aircraft

By Cristina Oxta
934th Airlift Wing
Public Affairs

The 934th Airlift Wing welcomed new additions to the base when four H2 model C-130 aircraft arrived at the base Nov. 21.

The H2 model will replace the older C-130 E model, which were built in 1962 and is currently used by the wing. These particular H2s, which were built in 1991, will improve the way the wing accomplishes its mission each day. It has a more powerful engine along with a better avionics package that includes enhanced flight instruments. It can also fly at a higher altitude and increased range. In addition, flying newer aircraft means more reliability and more flight hours with less maintenance required.

"The C-130 H2 is certainly a welcome addition to our wing," said Col. James J. Muscatell Jr., 934th AW commander. "The 934th Airlift Wing has established a legacy

with the people of Minnesota as we play a vital role in ensuring our country's defense. Now, this momentous occasion signifies another new and important chapter to this proud legacy."

The four H2 model aircraft were originally based at the 914th AW at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Base, N.Y., and a year or two later, were transferred to the 910th AW at Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio.

"I know they're going to a great wing," said Brig. Gen. Michael Gjede, 910th AW commander, to members of the 934th AW at a ceremony welcoming the aircraft. "Congratulations! These are yours. You're going to love them."

Two of 934th AW's E models are now being used at Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., another was given to the 913th AW at Willow Grove ARS, Pa., and a fourth was retired because of structural problems. Four more H2 models will join the 934th AW some time early next year.

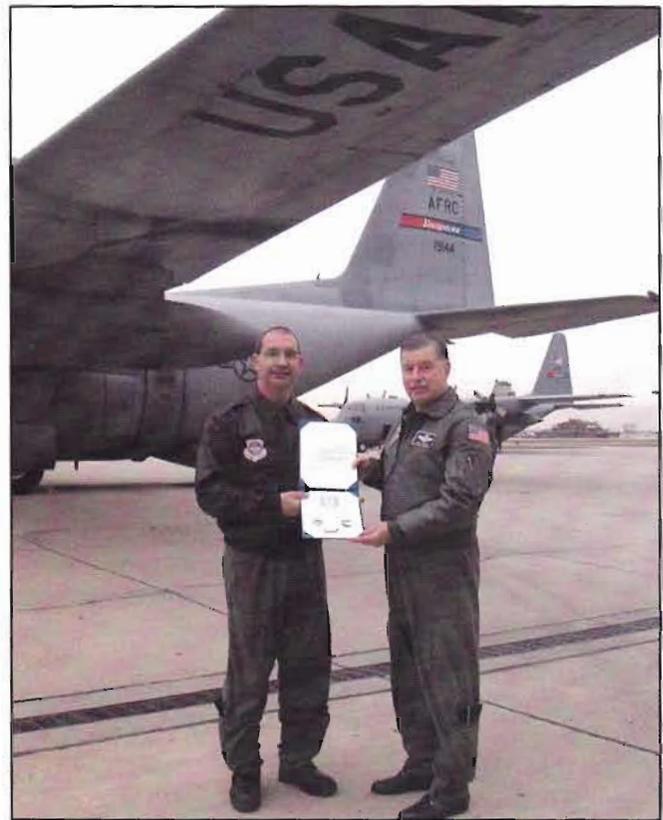


Photo by Staff Sgt. Troy Novak

Brig. Gen. Michael Gjede (right), 910th Airlift Wing commander, and Col. James J. Muscatell Jr., 934th Airlift Wing commander, shows a certificate they signed Nov. 21 signifying the transfer of ownership of four H2 model C-130 aircraft from the 910th AW to the 934th AW.

Wing wins Installation Excellence Award

By Cristina Oxta
934th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

The 934th Airlift Wing was named the winner of the 2003 Air Force Reserve Command's Installation Excellence Award recently.

The base will compete next at the Air Force level.

"Winning this award is a strong testament to the dedication, commitment and superb work ethic of the outstanding professionals we have in the 934th Airlift Wing, and they are truly deserving of this recognition," said Col. James J. Muscatell Jr., 934th

AW commander.

The first place winner at the Air Force level will receive \$500,000 to be used for quality-of-life improvements and two second place winners will receive \$250,000.

"I am so proud of everyone at the wing. With all of our wing's great accomplishments, I know we have a great chance to take the Air Force competition," Muscatell said.

The wing earned the award for its many accomplishments in numerous areas, including improving installation work environment, improving quality of life, promoting unit cohesiveness and recog-

nizing outstanding individual efforts, promoting environmental safety to include compliance, remediation and stewardship, enhancing productivity of the installation workforce, increasing customer satisfaction, and encouraging communication and team problem-solving.

The President of the United States established the annual Awards for Installation Excellence in 1984 to recognize the efforts of the people who operate and maintain Department of Defense installations and who have done the best with their resources to support the mission.

Safety chief named 2003 Civilian of Year

By Cristina Oxta
934th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Jan Dalton, chief of the 934th Airlift Wing safety office, was named 22nd Air Force 2003 Outstanding Civilian of the Year in the ground safety category recently.



Dalton

She will next compete at the Air Force Reserve Command level.

This is not the first time Dalton has won an award at the 22nd Air Force level. She received the 22nd Air Force Outstanding Civilian of the Year in the weapons safety category in 2002.

"I'm honored to win this award," Dalton said. "However, I still have so far to go to get this safety program where I want it."

The award was given for achievements

made from Oct. 1, 2002 through Sept. 30, 2003.

Dalton creates and publishes the monthly Safety News newsletter, which is also available online and includes safety tips for the workplace and home.

As weapons and explosives safety manager, Dalton completed a 261-hour weapons course and received the highest marks in the course.

When Dalton assisted the 133rd Air National Guard during an inspection in May 2003, an inspector said of Dalton, "The 133rd weapons safety manager has the fortunate opportunity of benefiting from her."

When a sandstorm kicked up in May 2003, Dalton obtained and personally delivered goggles to maintainers on the flight line while they loaded and pre-flighted aircraft. She was selected to lead a team of experts to complete the automated site plan for the 934th AW and 133rd ANG.

When 934th AW warfighters deployed in July 2003 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Dalton monitored and ensured the safety of a refueling operation, involving the upload of 2,000 pounds of JP-8 fuel during the cargo load. She made sure there were no safety violations or incidents.

Dalton's list of accomplishments for the year also included coordinating and delivering ground burst simulator training for those who needed it, creating a base level inspection and reporting process with access database, and developing solutions to eliminate parking hazards on base.

WARNING: Firing range off limits

The 934th Airlift Wing firing range, located on the Fort Snelling grounds, is off-limits to unauthorized persons.

Trespassing is illegal and dangerous.

For more information, contact the 934th Security Forces Squadron at 760 Military Highway, Minneapolis, MN 55450 or call Master Sgt. Anthony Gamboni at (612) 713-1815.

CE earns environmental award

By Senior Airman Curtis Holden
934th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

The 934th Airlift Wing's base civil engineering division was recently awarded the Gen. Thomas D. White Environmental Quality Award in the reserve component category for the period from Oct. 1, 2002 to Sept. 30, 2003. CE will next compete in the Air Force level, at which it won in 1996 and 2000.

The environmental award review board considers all aspects of an installation's environmental program. Air Force bases are nominated with emphasis placed on their program improvements and initiatives, achieved objectives, interagency cooperation, community relations, environmental awareness and command support.

John Marchetti, chief of the environmental flight is proud of CE's achievement.

"Personally, it tells me I've got the best people working in the civil engineer shop," Marchetti said.

Marchetti said he and CE also worked closely with other units and individuals on the base to achieve their environmental success. Senior Master Sgt. David Pudney, 934th Maintenance Squadron, works closely with CE in the management of hazardous waste and other pollutants.

"It's a great award," Pudney said. "It's a tribute not only to CE, but also to everyone at the wing who actively contributes to reducing waste on the base and in the state of Minnesota."

CE's environmental efforts have an impact beyond the base.

"Our neighbors don't want us polluting their backyards, so implementing safe and sound environmental practices helps maintain good relations with and provides a mutual benefit for the community," he said.

Demobilized troops to get admin leave

Air Force Reserve
Command News

WASHINGTON

— In a recent memorandum, President George W. Bush directed executive departments and agencies to grant five days of uncharged, administrative leave from civilian duties to federal employees returning from active-duty to reservist status.

“The federal government will continue to be the model for employer support to the Guard and Reserve,” wrote the president in the memorandum. “We are the guarantors of the rights of returning service members under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, and I am personally committed to providing each of them with our full support, recognition

and assistance.”

Kay Coles James, director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, issued guidance to department and agency heads on implementing the president's order.

“Many of our employees have endured great disruption to their families and their normal lives as a result of their service in the war against terrorism,” James said. “Therefore, I join the president in urging that agencies do everything possible to ease their return to civilian life.”

The five work days of excused absence covers employees who were activated for military service in connection with Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Federal agencies will release more guidance on the policy.

Recruiting Duty

Air Force Reserve Command is accepting applications for recruiting duty. Recruiters perform a three-to-four year Active Guard and Reserve tour at one of the more than 100 recruiting locations in the United States. In some cases, recruiting duty may be performed at the applicant's present location.

Applicants must be participating reservists in good standing.

Call Senior Master Sgt. Michael S. Formica at (612) 713-1454 or Senior Master Sgt. Danny Bretthorst at Robbins Air Force Base, Ga., at (478) 327-0156.

Tax relief law to aid military, families

Air Force Reserve
Command News

WASHINGTON—Reservists who travel more than 100 miles to attend drills or meetings no longer have to itemize to claim a tax deduction for overnight travel expenses.

The change and other benefits for members of Air Force Reserve Command and their families are the result of the Military Family Tax Relief Act of 2003, signed into law by President George W. Bush Nov. 11. The “above-the-line” deduction for overnight travel is retroactive to Jan. 1.

“(Reservists will) be able to deduct unreimbursed travel expenses such as lodging, 50 percent of meals and any transportation costs,” said Lt. Col. Janet Fenton, director of the Armed Forces Tax Council.

Another major change increases the death gratuity payment to \$12,000 and provides that the full payment is tax-free.

That portion of the act is retroactive to Sept. 10, 2001, to provide for servicemembers who died in the terrorist attacks the following day and in the ongoing global war on terror.

“If you are killed on active duty, regardless of whether you're in theater, or in a training accident or die from disease, your family receives \$12,000 death gratuity that is not taxed,” Fenton said. “And that's a big change. In addition, any future increases to the death gratuity will remain tax-free.”

Since 1991, the death gratuity had been \$6,000, with half of it being taxed, Fenton said.

“It just didn't seem to be fair for the military family who was left grieving for their servicemember to get hit with a tax bill,” she said.

When the tax code changed in 1986, it allowed any military benefit

existing in September 1986 to remain tax-free, Fenton said. However, it was always unclear whether military child care was included in that, she added.

“This act merely makes it clear that those provisions of child care were intended to be tax-free to military members,” she said.

The tax act also provides for extra tax-filing time for servicemembers serving in contingency operations.

The internal revenue code allows servicemembers who are serving in combat zones or hazardous-duty areas to have an extension of time — usually 180 days from the time the person leaves the combat zone — to file taxes.

“A lot of military operations don't rise to the level of being declared by the president as ‘combat,’” Fenton said. “But there are several contingency operations where servicemembers are outside the continental United States.”

The act also includes modifying eligibility criteria of tax-exempt veterans organizations; tax-free treatment of homeowners' assistance program payments; suspension of tax-exempt status for designated terrorist organizations; and extension of victims' tax relief to astronauts who die on space missions.

Capital-gain exclusion for home sales is another area people are looking for tax relief in, Fenton said.

“This act will allow members to suspend the period of time which they have to sell their home and take the tax exclusion so they won't have to pay that capital gains,” she said. “It's retroactive to 1997 so military members who have sold their homes since 1997 have one year from Nov. 11, 2003, to request a refund for any tax they did pay.”

Under this act, military and foreign service people can suspend (for up to 10 years) the time transferred away from home on official extended duty for purposes of applying the five-year portion of the two-out-of-five-year rule.

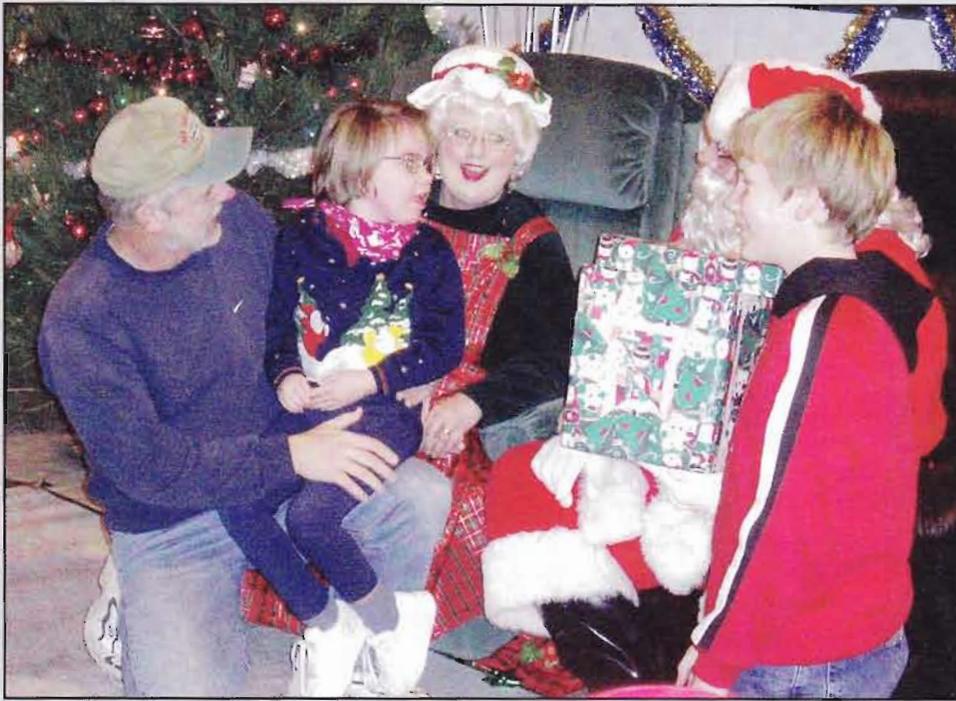


Photo by Maj. Tim O'Reilly

Operation Santa brings smiles

Ninety nine seriously ill and disabled children and their families visited with Santa and Mrs. Claus at the 934th Airlift Wing's annual Operation Santa in Eau Claire and Madison, Wisc., Dec. 6. A C-130 aircrew with the 934th AW took the group for a trip to the "North Pole," which is actually a hanger on the other side of an airport in Wisconsin. The ride aboard the C-130 as it taxis on the runway simulates a flight to the "North Pole."

Officials urge use of flu protection

By Army Sgt. 1st Class
Doug Sample
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON - With flu season here and deadly outbreaks of the virus being reported across the country, Department of Defense health care officials are urging servicemembers, DOD civilians and family members to get vaccinated.

Dr. David Tornberg, deputy assistant secretary of defense for clinical and program policy, advises that the "most protective" measure to prevent or lessen the harshness of the virus is to get vaccinated annually.

Officials from the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the flu is caused by the influenza virus, which infects the nose, throat and lungs. The flu usually spreads from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks, sending the virus into the air.

Unlike other viral respira-

tory infections like the common cold, the flu causes severe illness and can be life-threatening to many people. Symptoms include fever, headache, tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, nasal congestion and body aches.

Tornberg said while the vaccine is not 100 percent effective in preventing the flu virus, it is "100-percent effective in reducing" the severity of symptoms that many people will encounter.

Tornberg suggested that people should take other preventive measures to protect themselves, such as avoiding or being in close contact with anyone who may have the flu. He also stressed the importance of frequent hand washing. He said hands transmit the virus.

In addition, he said people should minimize contact between their hands, mouths and eyes.

"If their hands are contaminated, they can very well infect themselves through transmission

through the eye and its secretions, the nose or oral pathway," Tornberg said.

Another recommendation is to "lead a healthy lifestyle."

"Adequate rest and nutrition and hydration are very important as part of a daily approach keeping the body healthy to fight off disease," he said.

These protective measures should become part of a person's daily activities to keep from getting the flu virus, Tornberg said.

"Combined with the flu vaccine, personal health care measures, such as hand washing and hygiene all will go a long way to minimizing the chances of getting sick," he said.

Although last year at this time DOD health officials were faced with a more serious form of respiratory illness, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS, that is not the case this year.

Tornberg said World Health Organization officials have not reported any cases of SARS any-

where in the world and there are no reported cases among U.S. servicemembers.

SARS has flu-like symptoms that include fever, body aches, headaches, sore throat, dry cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing. CDC officials said the syndrome may be associated with other symptoms, including headache, muscular stiffness and loss of appetite, malaise, confusion, rash and diarrhea.

Tornberg said if a person is experiencing symptoms of influenza or SARS, he or she should consult a doctor to obtain definitive care and diagnosis to prevent spreading the condition to friends, family and associates.

"That's where public health measures come into play," he said. "The public needs to be proactive with regard to respiratory diseases. We need basically to stay aware, follow the news and understand where potential pockets of illness may be, whether it is flu or ... SARS."

Medics treat special breed of patient in Iraq

By Tech. Sgt. Jeff Williams
506th Air Expeditionary
Group Public Affairs

KIRKUK AIR BASE, Iraq - When members of the 506th Expeditionary Medical Squadron received word recently that they had an important patient waiting for them, they were surprised to see Staff Sgt. Todd Brabender of the 506th Expeditionary Security Forces.

Actually, the patient was not Brabender. Instead, it was his constant companion for nearly three years, Black, a five-year-old German shepherd military working dog.

"(Black) had a previous injury that was aggravated from the conditions over here," Brabender said. "It never really healed properly, but nobody really knew that. So, we decided to bring him (in) for evaluation."

"It actually felt nice," said Master Sgt. Johnnie Gandolfo, a medical technician. "It makes me feel like I'm home again. Black is a highly trained, well-disciplined dog. He has one of the best dispositions of any working dog I've ever been around."

Gandolfo, a veterinary technician in civilian life in Idaho, is deployed from the Washington Air National Guard's 116th Air Refueling Squadron based at



Courtesy photo

Capt. Dave Schillen, an orthopedic surgeon deployed in Iraq, poses with a muzzled Black, a military working dog he treated recently. Black will be flown to Texas soon for surgery and rehabilitation.

Fairchild Air Force Base, Wash.

"I didn't expect to (treat) canines at all," Gandolfo said.

"It was a nice change."

Gandolfo credits Master Sgt. Deb Alaniz, an X-ray technician, for helping with the diagnosis.

"I took X-rays of the good

ankle and the bad ankle...He (lay) so still. He was such a good boy," Alaniz said.

Deployed orthopedic surgeon, Capt. Dave Schillen, was the only one qualified to properly treat the animal.

"When they asked me to see

Black, I was a little surprised," Schillen said. "Then I realized that I was the only one qualified to look at a stress fracture on a working dog, since we don't have a vet in Northern Iraq."

"It was a little more difficult to work on dogs than humans because they can't tell you where it hurts," he added.

Schillen said the experience taught him a few things about the physiology of dogs.

"I realized they have a really high pain threshold," he said. "It was difficult to find where it hurt. It was a little awkward reading dog X-rays at first, but...we were able to see that (the dog) had a stress fracture of one of the bones in his hind midfoot."

Black was given a splint and plenty of rest for his treatment.

"They do a lot of work and walk all day," Schillen said. "He's not in a position to do that right now. With appropriate follow up, Black should do just fine."

Brabender and Black will rotate out of Iraq soon so Black can receive further treatment at Lackland AFB, Texas.

"(Black is) doing alright. You can tell that it bothers him," Brabender said. "We just can't wait to get back so he can undergo surgery and rehabilitation, and return to full duty just like a human would."

Online voting available for some deployed troops

By Staff Sgt. Jeff Schoen
Air Force Reserve Command
Public Affairs

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. -

Some reservists may be eligible to vote online in 2004 based on a government initiative to simplify the absentee ballot process.

The Secure Electronic Registration and Voting Experiment program is part of the Federal Voting Assistance Program. Program organizers hope SERVE will encour-

age as many as 100,000 absentee voters, including reservists stationed worldwide, to register and vote in state primaries and the general election in 2004.

The initiative is designed to improve access to the polls for military people and American citizens overseas, who historically have had difficulty receiving and returning ballots because of mail transit time and their mobility. In 2000, a post-election survey found that almost 30 percent either did not receive a ballot or received it too late.

"It is extremely important for us to ensure that every servicemember is afforded the opportunity to vote," said Lt. Col. Deborah Divich, voting assistance officer for the Air Force Reserve Command.

So far, more than 50 counties from seven states are expected to participate in the program. The states are Arkansas, Florida, Hawaii, North Carolina, South Carolina, Utah and Washington. Voters can learn if their county is participating by visiting the SERVE Web site at www.serveusa.gov.

934th wing members visit vetera



Above: Clara Harp, a former Navy nurse, waves a friendly hello while Margo Leslie, 934th Services Squadron, watches her.

Above left: Alan Saatkamp, Minneapolis Veterans Home administrator, welcomes 16 military and civilian members of the 934th Airlift Wing when they visited the veterans at the facility Dec. 12. Saatkamp thanked them for their visit and for bringing all kinds of holidays gifts to the veterans. The 934th AW adopted a wing on the fourth floor of the veterans home and purchased gifts for 66 veterans there.

Left: Tech. Sgt. Louis Herbes, 934th Mission Support Flight, talks to veteran Ray Harmer, during 934th AW members' visit to the Minneapolis Veterans Home.

Photos by
Cristina Oxta

ans to share gifts, holiday cheer



Chief Master Sgt. Thomas Foss, 96th Aerial Port loadmaster, hugs veteran Chuck Bradehoff, who he has known for four years. Foss visits Bradehoff regularly and the two even corresponded through letters while Foss was recently deployed in Southwest Asia in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Left: A staff member at the Minneapolis Veterans Home wheels one of several carts full of holiday gifts donated by members of the 934th AW as Tech. Sgt. Louis Herbes, 934th Mission Support Flight, looks on. Wing members presented to the home several television sets as well as numerous gifts to veterans at the home. The military members visited the facility Dec. 12. Above: Master Sgt. Dan Shaddrick (back), 934th Services Squadron, and Tech. Sgt. Bill Liberatore (foreground), 934th Military Personnel Flight, sits down and chats with veteran Harold Oster, at the Minneapolis Veterans Home.

Iraqi translators share feelings, thoughts on Saddam's capture

By Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Williams
506th Air Expeditionary Group
Public Affairs

KIRKUK AIR BASE, IRAQ - "No more nightmares!" exclaimed Mohammed Taha. "A lot more good will happen in Iraq after 35 years of nightmares."

Taha was just one of thousands of Iraqis who reacted with joy over the news that Saddam Hussein was captured Saturday night and is now in U.S. custody.

What makes Taha unique is that he is one of a handful of Iraqi exiles working as a translator for the U.S. Air Force at Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq.

After the initial shock and disbelief, Taha reflected on the wounds Hussein and the Ba'ath party inflicted on his family.

"My brother was killed. Three or four of my cousins were hung. A lot of our houses were destroyed by Saddam," Taha said. "Many of my relative's tongues or hands were cut by knives. One hundred-eighty thousand Kurdish people disappeared. Today, right went up, wrong went down."

Taha got a lump in his throat as he reflected on July 1, 1981, a day of personal tragedy for him.

After Hussein gained power in Iraq, thousands of Arabs from the southern part of the country occupied land in the north, he said. It

a translator from Dahuk, Iraq, who now resides in upstate New York, was in his office doing translations Dec. 14 when he heard shooting in down-

an end," he said. "I saw the Iraqis in the conference. When they saw the pictures they were saying, 'Long life for Iraq,' and 'Down with Saddam.' I was in the same mode."

Doski smiled and proclaimed, "Today is a very historical day! It's a very historical moment for everybody!"

Then tears came to his eyes.

"I wish the people that were killed had stayed alive to see this moment and to enjoy this, like my father. He didn't stay alive to see this moment,"

of his homeland.

"I hope this moment will bring all Iraqis together to bring them to reconciliation," Doski said. "Between the Kurds, Arabs and Turkmens, I hope they will start a new life with the support of the United States and the coalition friendly countries."

Doski was also thankful.

"I would like to take this moment to thank the President of the United States for finishing the job. We've been waiting so long,



Doski

was land that belonged to Taha and his fellow Kurds.

"When those people came, Saddam gave them money and land - everything," he remembered. "One guy bought a taxi. He didn't drive a day in his life. He hit and killed my eldest son, who was 12. He was killed by Saddam's friends."

After 23 years of teaching, Taha quit his job and paid \$45,000 to escape to Turkey. He left his family behind and started a new life in Minnesota. He returned to his homeland after Operation Iraqi Freedom began.

Mohammad Doski,

town Kirkuk. He tuned his radio to the local radio station looking for news. He was quite surprised at what he heard.

"The local news was announcing to the people, 'We have some good news. Saddam is captured,'" he said. "This was around 10 a.m. They also told people not to shoot bullets because they were coming down in the city."

At 3 p.m., he watched the press conference from Baghdad. He was quite surprised to see the images on television.

"We saw the real face of Saddam. He was captured. I was so happy to see the nightmare come to



Taha

Doski cried. "Thousands of Iraqis were killed and hurt by this regime over the last 35 years."

After taking a moment to regain his composure, Doski continued and shared his optimism about the future

Now today, as we finish the job, we would like to thank him, the U.S. troops here, and everybody who participated in doing this job. It's been my honor and pleasure to be here working with them," he concluded.

Airmen make C-130 missions safer

By Master Sgt. Val Gempis
Air Force Print News

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan - Air Force survival equipment technicians are helping make Pacific Air Force nighttime airlift operations safer by replacing the interior insulation on C-130 Hercules aircraft during an ongoing refurbishment program here.

During night training, C-130 aircrews use Night Vision Imaging System equipment. The aircrew members said they had difficulty performing their nighttime missions with the bright green insulation on the flight deck and in the cargo area.

The 10-person sur-

vival equipment element from the 374th Maintenance Squadron here has been removing the green insulation in the C-130s and replacing it with newer NVIS-capable charcoal gray insulation assembled from scratch.

The unit supports C-130 cargo planes from here and Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska.

Armed with markers, ladders, scissors, screwdrivers and garbage bags, airmen work their way around a C-130 carefully marking, modifying, removing and stowing the worn-out pieces in plastic containers.

"It takes quite a bit of time to modify the aircraft. It's a lot of work. There are about 300 pieces of insulation on one C-130 aircraft,"



Photo by Master Sgt. Val Gempis

(Front to back) Airman 1st Class Brian Hiatt, Senior Airman Kyle Richardson, Airman Mark McMorris and Staff Sgt. Sam Farrell sew aircraft insulation pieces at Yokota Air Base, Japan. The airmen are replacing the green C-130 Hercules aircraft interior insulation pieces with the gray-colored ones during a refurbishing program. The airmen are all survival equipment technicians from the 374th Maintenance Squadron.

said Staff Sgt. William Brodie, a survival equipment technician.

These include all of

the cargo pieces, the seat covers, bunks, armrests, dash covers, kick panels, throttle covers and

bumper pads.

"We have a timeline of about one day to completely gut (an) aircraft and three to five days to (install) the new NVIS-capable insulation," Brodie said.

The team uses heavy-duty sewing machines to make precise designs and patterns for the new insulation.

They also use semiautomated machines to install studs and cap fasteners on the material. The airmen said it takes about six weeks to produce all of the new custom-made insulation pieces.

"We're proud to make an important contribution to the mission here," said Staff Sgt. Sam Farrell, a survival equipment technician.

Ways to support for military now available

Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

The support and generosity of many Americans have touched the lives of the more than 300,000 military members deployed overseas.

Here are ways Americans can show their support for the nation's military, especially those who are serving overseas.

In September 2003, the Pentagon started giving soldiers stationed in Iraq two-week leave periods. The soldiers can fly to Germany or Baltimore Washington International Airport for free, but they are responsible for the cost of flights to their final destination. Returning soldiers often have to purchase high-priced, last-minute airline tickets so they can

spend time with their family.

Help American troops travel home to spend quality time with their loved ones through **Operation Hero Miles**. Go online to <http://www.heromiles.org/index.htm>.

Contribute to **Gifts from the Homefront**. Certificates from the Army Air Force Exchange System. A gift certificate can be sent to a loved one, family member or friend in the military. Certificates are redeemable at all locations around the world. Go to <http://www.aafes.com/docs/homefront.htm>.

Donate to the **Operation USO Care Package** program at <http://www.usocares.org/home.htm>.

The **Gift of Groceries** program helps meet the family needs

of our Guard and Reserve troops fighting the war on terrorism. Go to <http://www.commissaries.com/certificheck/index.htm>.

Donate a calling card to help keep servicemembers in touch with their families at Operation Uplink at <http://www.operationuplink.org/>.

Send a greeting at <http://anyservicemember.navy.mil/> or www.OperationDearAbby.net.

Sign a virtual thank you card online at <http://www.defendamerica.mil/nmam.html>.

The Stars and Stripes newspaper includes a daily **Messages of Support** section. Send messages to messages@stripes.com.

Donate to a military relief agency, such as the Army Emergency Relief, Navy/Marine Relief

Society, Air Force Aid Society, Coast Guard Mutual Assistance, Special Operations Warrior Foundation, American Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors or National Military Family Association.

Purchase a Patriot Bond at <http://www.ustreas.gov>, volunteer at a Veterans' Hospital to honor veterans or reach out to military families in the community.

Do not flood the military mail system with letters, cards and gifts. Due to security concerns and transportation constraints, items mailed to "Any Servicemember" cannot be accepted. Do not send large numbers of packages to an individual servicemember's address because they clog the mail and cause unnecessary delays.

Programs help make deployments more 'bearable' for many children

By Senior Airman Cheryl Hackley
Minnesota Air National
Guard Public Affairs

ST. PAUL, Minn. - Saying goodbye is never easy, especially to children who may not understand why their parents must deploy to support their country.

One of the many tools Minnesota Family Programs Office officials offer is the Guardian Bear, which is available for children from infants to age 16.

The Guardian Bear is a plush brown teddy bear with a camouflaged vest. It has become an important part of the deployment process for families, officials said. Inside the vest is a small note written to the child from the deployed parent.

Besides a personalized note to his children, one father told them he stored thousands of hugs and kisses in their bears, so that any time they were missing him, they should just hug their bears.

Another man left a bear with a note to his unborn child apologizing for his absence during his birth. In many families, the child and bear have become inseparable.

While some servicemembers may feel the older children may not respond to a stuffed ani-



Photo by Senior Airman Cheryl Hackley

The daughter of a Minnesota National Guard member shares her blanket with her new Guardian Bear. More than 1,000 Guardian Bears have been handed out in 2003. The bears, which are free to Minnesota Guard members, are purchased through donations given to the National Guard Foundation.

mal, the note and the familiar camouflaged vest can still represent a gift from their father or mother who is away serving his or her country.

More than 1,000 Guardian Bears have been handed out in 2003. The bears, which are free to Minnesota Guard members, are purchased through donations given to the National Guard Foundation. Volunteers sew the small vests worn by the bears.

The 133rd Airlift Wing at the Twin Cities Air National Guard Base has a similar program for families.

stuffed dogs.

Another resource available to Guard families while their loved ones are deployed is an electronic program designed to link military families with local volunteer organizations. The program, called the Military Family Care Initiative, was started by Minnesota's first lady, Mary Pawlenty.

Any volunteer, community or faith-based organization can register to provide assistance with normal household chores, such as cleaning, repairing or gardening that can be difficult for one parent to handle while his or her spouse is deployed.

A family member can also go online and search for these organizations within the local communities.

"No matter how big or small the problem, help is available," said Pawlenty. She said her one concern when starting the program was military members being too strong to ask for help. This is one reason the program does not track recipients.

Separation is a fact of life in the military, but it is comforting to know there is support for the families while their soldiers and airmen are deployed, officials said.

Hercules, a small stuffed Guard dog mascot, is available to anyone who deploys. Ruth Anderson, the Guard Family Network liaison for the base, said the Guard wanted to give something to everyone affected by a deployment, because many deploying airmen did not have children or their children were too old to receive the Guardian Bear.

The dogs were donated by a local charity that collects stuffed animals to be given away. In total, the Guard Family Network received 4,000

Donate blood at the VA Medical Center

Ward 4D Blood Donor Center
Tuesday and Thursday 1 to 7:30 p.m.
Friday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Donors must have a valid photo identification card or American Red Cross donor card.

ID must include donor's photo and birth date.

Volunteers are also needed to assist in preparing coffee, snack trays and observing donors.

For more information, call (612) 725-2275.

Babies can help parents with workout

By Airman 1st Class
Susan Stout
56th Fighter Wing
Public Affairs

LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz. - Balancing a career, family and fitness program is not always easy.

A training routine, created by fitness trainer Mindy Mylrea at Luke Air Force Base, may help new parents get fit and spend quality time with their babies.

The routine is designed for mothers and fathers with a 20- to 30-pound baby and should be done twice a week for about an hour. Instead of hoisting weights, parents use their child.

"The exercises will keep you fit and feeling good while giving you time to connect with your baby," Mylrea said. "As you do each move, make eye contact with your baby and talk to him or her throughout the workout."

"This routine is good especially for people like me, a mom who works full time, so we don't have to take more time away from our baby to go to the gym," said Debbie Diveney, 56th Services Squadron.

The following are ways a child can help parents get fit:

*** Piggyback squat:** Let the baby climb onto your back, wrapping his or her hands around your neck and legs around your waist. Hold onto the child's arms. Stand with your feet hip-width apart, keeping your abdomen tight and back straight. Slowly bend your knees to lower yourself until your thighs are as close to parallel with the ground as you can get. Do not extend past your toes. Straighten knees to return to starting position.

Perform one to two sets of eight to 12 repetitions.

*** Calf raise:** Sitting in a chair with feet placed together



Photo by Staff Sgt. Corey Drury

Debbie Diveney, 56th Services Squadron, lifts her daughter, Julianna, while doing an "overhead press." The press is part of an exercise routine designed to help parents get fit while spending quality time with their babies.

on the floor, put your baby on your lap facing you and hold him or her around the waist. Raise your heels off the floor until the baby's weight is on the balls of your feet.

Hold for one count then return to starting position. Do Perform one to two sets of eight to 12 repetitions.

*** Overhead press:** Stand with your feet about hip-width apart, keeping your abs tight and back straight. Bending your knees, pick your baby up off the floor, and lift him or her over your head, straightening your legs as you extend your arms.

Be careful not to lock your

knees or elbows. Bend your elbows and knees to lower your baby to chest level. Perform one to two sets of eight to 12 reps.

*** Triceps dip:** Sit on the edge of a chair and place your baby in your lap with his or her arms wrapped as far as they can go around your waist. Place your hands on the sides of the chair, palms down and scoot your buttocks off the chair, making sure your thighs and calves form a 90-degree angle.

Lower yourself by bending your elbows, keeping them pointing toward the wall behind you (not out toward the sides). Lower yourself until your upper arms are parallel with the

floor, keeping your buttocks as close to the chair as possible.

Slowly straighten your arms to raise yourself back up. Do not lock your elbows at the top of the move. Perform one to two sets of eight to 12 reps.

*** Chest press:** Lie face up on the floor, with your baby resting facedown on your chest. Holding your baby with both hands, extend your arms, lifting him or her up as far as you can without locking your elbows.

Hold for one count then lower your baby back to your chest. Perform one to two sets of eight to 12 reps.

*** Push-up:** Lie facedown on the floor with your hands directly under your shoulders, fingers pointing away from your feet and your baby resting on your back. Straighten your arms to lift your body away from the floor, keeping your back straight, buttocks tucked, abs tight and head aligned with your spine. Hold for one count then bend your elbows to lower yourself to starting position. Do one to two sets of eight to 12 reps.

*** Crunch:** Lie face up on the floor with your knees bent, feet flat on the floor and abs tight. Let your baby sit on your stomach, leaning against your thighs, facing you. Loosely lace your fingers behind your head, and lift your upper body until your shoulders are two to three inches off the floor. Hold for two counts then return to starting position. Perform 25 reps.

*** Rocking cool-down:** Lie face up on the floor with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Let your baby lie facedown on your chest and wrap your arms around him or her. Gently rock your body from side to side for two minutes, letting your baby hear your heartbeat. Both of parent and child can now relax.

2-4-1 Chicken parmesan - Jan. 13
 Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday - Club closed Jan. 19
 Club membership applications are at services facilities.

Enlisted Club (612) 713-1655

Call Bingo: Every Friday night from 5 to 7 p.m.
Bonanza Bingo: Available during lounge hours.
Sunday and Monday: Closed
Lunch: Tuesday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Daily specials are offered.
Dining: Available at the Officers' Club Wednesday through Saturday from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Lounge: Tuesday and Thursday from 4 to 9:30 p.m.; Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.; Friday and Saturday from 4 p.m. to midnight
Friday: Bar menu available 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday: Navy "A" Jan. 10 to 11; Navy "B" Jan. 24 to 25. Open for lunch from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Officers' Club (612) 713-3678

Sundays: Closed
Lunch: Tuesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Dinner: Wednesday to Saturday from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Lounge: Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Thursday from 4 p.m. to 11 p.m. Friday to Saturday from 4 p.m. to midnight.
 Lounge menu available from 4 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday to Friday and from 4 to 8:30 p.m. Saturday
Mondays: Dining room closed. Lounge open from 4 to 11 p.m.
Tuesdays: Dining room closed for dinner. Lounge menu available from 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Wednesdays: Jan. 7- Wiener schnitzel; Jan. 14 -Meat loaf; Jan. 21 - Pork chop; Jan. 28 - Pork roast Scandinavia
Thursdays: Jan. 1 - Club closed; Jan. 8 - Chicken stir fry; Jan. 15 - Calf's liver with bacon and onions; Jan. 22 - Chicken cordon bleu; Jan. 29 - Chicken primavera
Fridays: Jan. 2 - Shrimp scampi New Orleans; Jan. 9 - Blackened catfish fillet; Jan. 16 - Grilled salmon with fresh herbs; Jan. 23 - Surf and Turf; Jan. 30 - One-pound peel-and-eat shrimp
Saturdays: Jan. 3 - Prime rib (K or Q cut); Jan. 10 - Beef medallion with wild mushrooms; Jan. 17 - Prime rib (K or Q cut); Jan. 24 - Pork medallion; Jan. 31 - Prime rib (K or Q cut)

Officers' Spouses' Club

Meetings held at Officers' Club. No meeting in January.
Tuesday Bridge: Second and third Tuesday each month at 10 a.m. Call Germaine Reuter Dahl at (951) 881-0107.
Evening Bridge: First and third Wednesday each month

at 7 p.m. Call Roberta Gronemann at (763) 494-3517 or Innez Gugisberg at (651) 481-1983.

The OSC raised \$5,000 from its annual fall nut sale. The proceeds will be donated to the Family Support Center.

New members are welcome. Membership fee is \$20 per year. Call Lee Claar at (952) 831-5252.

Flower and Garden Club

Meetings held at the Officers' Club. Call (651) 457-6386.

North Country Lodge (612) 713-1983 or 713-1984

Reservations: Call 1-888-AF-Lodge or (612) 726-9440 or go to the Web page at <http://www.afrc.af.mil/934aw/Lodgingweb/lodging.htm>.

The lodging staff showed off the results of the completion of Phase III of the facility's construction to base leaders and Congressional representatives Dec. 11. The contract for Phase IV went out for bid Dec. 5, 2003 and 56 more rooms are expected to be built by the end of the year.

Fitness Center (612) 713-1496

3-on-3 basketball league and tournament: Sign up by Feb. 9. Teams must have five members.

Cycling: Air Force cycling continues all year. Earn water bottles, golf towels, caps, T-shirts, fanny packs and patches. Register at the fitness center front desk.

Volleyball: Sign up at the fitness center January and February. Talk to Sandy Gutierrez or David Lewis.

Racquetball ladder: This is offered now through April. Sign up at the fitness center. Talk to David Lewis.

Bowling and basketball will be offered in March.

Discount Tickets (612) 713-1496

Camp Snoopy discount coupons are available.

Underwater Adventures tickets costs \$9 for adults and \$5 for children

Chanhassen Dinner Theater tickets are available.

Minnesota Zoo and IMAX Theater 20 percent discount cards are available.

Outdoor Recreation (612) 713-1496

Storage: Due to storage issues, Outdoor Recreation equipment rental has been temporarily suspended.

Armed Forces Vacation Club: Time-share units are available for \$249.99 a week. Go online at www.afvclub.com.

Air Force Travel: Go on line at www.aftravelonline.com.

Colorado R&R U.S. Air Force Academy travel service: Go online at www.coloradorandr.com.