

AFSOC IG releases UCI results

By Tech. Sgt. Andre Nicholson
Public Affairs

After two weeks of intense scrutiny on behalf of the Air Force Special Operations Command Inspector General's office, the results from the Unit Compliance Inspection held Dec. 1-12 are in, and the wing was found to be 100 percent compliant.

"A heartfelt congratulations goes out to everyone who participated in the inspection," said Lt. Col. Gary Reynolds, 16th SOW IG. "The wing should feel great about the results."

The evaluation team, comprised of inspectors and functional experts from across the command, inspected 18 different areas during the two-week period.

"The whole UCI was an opportunity for the wing to validate compliance with Air Force Instructions, checklists and technical orders," Colonel Reynolds said. "We did that, and in the process recognized some laudatory areas, two best practices and 59 professional performers. As expected some areas were identified for improvement, but I'm confident we can use them to help improve on our already excellent programs."

Several people were given special mention in the final report, but three specific areas stood out and received a laudatory from the inspectors: 16th Operations Support Squadron, Life Support, for outstanding support of the 25th Information

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Photo by Senior Airman Sam Taylor

Thousand-yard stare

A U.S. Marine with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit stands guard as amphibious landing vehicles cross U.S. Highway 98. The Marines completed a training exercise on the Eglin Range Wednesday, in which 16th Special Operations Wing units took part. For more on this story, see Page 7.

Hurlburt Field units earn AFOUA

By Tech. Sgt. Andre Nicholson
Public Affairs

The year will soon be over and the 16th Special Operations Wing will end it with another Air Force Outstanding Unit Award under its belt.

Since the wing was first established as the 1st Air Commando Wing in 1963 it has gone on to bolster 13 AFOUAs with the news of the most recent award coming Dec. 12.

The AFOUA, which covers the period July 1, 2001 through June 30, 2003, is awarded to numbered units, wings, groups or squadrons that performed meritorious service or outstanding achievements that clearly set the unit apart from similar units.

"During this time period the men and women of the 16th Special Operations Wing performed in an outstanding fashion while conducting

operations on a world-wide scale," said Col. O.G. Mannon, 16th SOW commander. "Their extraordinary efforts enabled the wing to live up to its 'Any Time, Any Place' credo in spectacular form while supporting multiple contingency operations and numerous theater combatant commanders."

The 720th Special Tactics Group was also awarded the AFOUA with Valor for the period Sept. 1, 2001 - Aug. 31, 2003.

The 18th Flight Test Squadron was awarded the AFOUA for the period Sept. 1, 2001 - Aug. 31, 2003.

"The presentation of the AFOUA to the 18th FLTS reflects the incredibly hard work our people have done in support of the global war on terrorism," said Lt. Col. Joseph Maguire, 18th FLTS director of operations. "In the past two years the squadron has

been giving our war fighters the tools they need to complete their missions. Both Lt. Col. Jeff white (18th FLTS commander) and I are very proud of our folks."

Continuing with the wing's impressive record of accumulating awards, members involved with Joint Special Operations Task Force Dagger for the period Oct. 6, 2001 to Feb. 28, 2002, were awarded the Joint Meritorious Unit Award.

The award was submitted on behalf of the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Campbell, Ky.

"This award is a testament to the dedication and sacrifice of the airmen of the 16th Special Operations Wing," said U.S. Army Col. John Mulholland, former 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) commander.

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Last '03 newspaper

The 16th Special Operations Wing Public Affairs Office wishes everyone a safe and happy holiday. This is the last issue of the Commando for 2003. The next issue will hit the streets Jan. 9. As a reminder, the deadline for articles published in the Commando is no later than Friday the week prior to publication. Articles will be edited for space, clarity and style. For more information call 884-7464.

Feature



Christmas Wish
Holiday cheer brought to Honduran orphans
Page 14

Sports



Football champions
16th EMS AGE seize second base championship
Page 11

Weather

Weekend forecast
Today - sunny, High 56 Low 33
Saturday - scattered showers, High 57 Low 35
Sunday - scattered showers, High 58 Low 37
 www.hurlburt.af.mil/milonly/weather/5day



VIEWPOINTS

SECAF, CSAF holiday message

WASHINGTON – *The following is a holiday message from Secretary of the Air Force Dr. James Roche and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John Jumper:*

During this holiday season, Americans have placed their hopes for peace with those who have answered the call to secure freedom: the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines of our nation's armed forces.

Indeed, there's no mission more vital, and no cause more noble than to be a defender of freedom, particularly when the values we cherish are under attack and our citizens are going into harm's way.

Your service has been stellar. You are why we have the best air and space

force the world has ever known.

We are also humbled by the sacrifices made by your families, as you work long hours or deploy far from home. Our families are the source of support that enables us to serve with pride and enthusiasm and defend the democratic ideals of our great country. During this special season, our thoughts and prayers will be with them.

Americans are grateful for your selfless service. You have earned their trust and support through your courage, bravery and sacrifice. And, simply put, we are honored to serve with you.

It's our hope that you will have a joyous holiday season and a safe and prosperous new year. **(AFPN)**

Open Line

The Commander's Open Line is your direct line to me for questions or suggestions about subjects of concern to the Hurlburt Field community. I really appreciate your feedback.

*To receive a response, leave your name, unit and telephone number. Open lines of general interest will be printed in the **COMMANDO**. I'll answer the others by letter or phone call. Remember, the quickest and most efficient way to resolve a problem is to talk directly to the*



Col. O.G. Mannon

agency responsible. This gives them an opportunity to help you, and perhaps improve their process.

However, if you're not satisfied with the answer you receive, feel free to give me a call at 884-OPEN (6736), or e-mail your concerns to commando@hurlburt.af.mil.

AFSOC CC: Have a safe, fun holiday season

By Lt. Gen. Paul Hester
AFSOC Commander

This holy season is traditionally a time to rejoice and celebrate the treasures of the past and the promises of the future.

Most importantly, this is "THE" season to take time for family and friends – a time of reflection. This past year has been quite remarkable. We've toppled an evil empire and restored hope to a nation by fighting alongside our allies, greeting our sister services on the ground, keep-

ing the supply and morale chains open, providing fire support from overhead and sitting alert for search and rescue missions we hope will never be launched.

We have persistently engaged in our role in the Global War on Terrorism, but our nation's success has come at a great price. Our professional success has kept many families separated and unfortunately, some of our Air Commandos and Air Rescue Warriors laid down their lives for us all. We will remember them

always and carry them in our prayers.

With the hectic pace that we maintain, safety is an issue that is always a major concern. At this time of year we need to be very aware of the choices we make. Exercise extra care and avoid a tragedy this holiday season. I ask each of you to be disciplined with caution and concern for yourselves and your loved ones to ensure we will all be here to enjoy a prosperous 2004.

Lynda and I wish you a very safe and fun holiday season!

Wing CC sends holiday greetings

By Col. O.G. Mannon
16th SOW Commander

What an extraordinary year 2003 was for all of us serving in the Air Force Special Operations Command community. We were tested severely, along with the rest of the Air Force and our sister service members, but continued to make important gains in the war on terrorism.

This success was not without sacrifice. Here at Hurlburt Field, and many other towns across our nation, there are empty seats at the table for those who've paid the ultimate price or whom are still deployed in harm's way.

As we enter this traditional season of celebration and renewal, we must not forget those heroes and carry them close to our hearts, remembering them and their families in our prayers. For those of us

who are home this Christmas, I encourage you to take time to embrace your families and celebrate the grandness of living free as Americans. I also ask you to reach out to those who remain here on the Emerald Coast alone for the holidays and help them celebrate with one of our families here.

Wherever your holiday travels and schedule may take you, I implore you to make safety a critical item on your personal checklist. We don't want another empty chair at the table next year because of a poor safety choice!

Thanks to each of you and your families for your dedicated service defending our way of life. It's an honor to serve beside you. Barb and I wish you continuing success in 2004 as the Air Commando and Air Rescue Warrior Team strides forward with unrelenting resolution.

My Air Force family

By Chief Master Sgt. Eddie Alicea
16th SOW Command Chief

On Nov. 9, I celebrated 25 years in our Air Force. What a great day for me. I was and am still elated to have served for a quarter century.

As I was speaking to a CPAC class that same week, a young airman asked me why I continue to stay. He referenced my computer networking background, language qualifications and education and he said, "Chief, you have options, why do you stay on?" Wow, that question literally came out of the blue. My answer was instantaneous – because we are a family.

Look up the word family in the dictionary and you'll find: a group of individuals living under one roof and usually under one head; a group of people united by certain convictions or a common affiliation; a group of things related by common characteristics; and a closely related series of elements or chemical compounds.

Our Air Force is all of the above and more...we're individuals from all walks of life united by a chemical bond we call the U.S. Air Force – this is especially true here at Hurlburt Field. This bond is strengthened by a unique mission driven by core values derived from common experiences. It's this delicate chemistry that must be preserved, especially when we're charged with protecting our nation.

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Hurlburt Field DUI Tracker

Dec. 12 – Dec. 19: 1 DUI	Total DUIs for 2002: 47
16th Logistics Readiness Squadron	Airmen Against Drunk Driving Don't Drink and Drive.
Days since last DUI: 6	Call 884-8844
Total DUIs this year to date: 52	Potential saves this year: 124

NEWS

Top 3 hosts flag retirement ceremony

By Master Sgt.
Ginger Schreitmueller
AFSOC Public Affairs

The Hurlburt Field Top 3 gathered at the Enlisted Hooch to retire six American Flags during a flag retirement ceremony here, Dec. 4.

The organization of senior enlisted airmen from the base sponsored the ceremony to pay respects and properly dispose of American Flags.

“Since September 11th, we’ve seen an increase in patriotism across the nation as more people display American Flags at their homes and businesses,” said Master Sgt. Mike Garrouette, who led the ceremony committee. “Unfortunately, many of these flags have fallen into disrepair. The (Hurlburt Field) Top 3 felt this was a perfect opportunity to properly retire flags which were tattered and faded.”

U.S. Code, Title 36, Chapter 10 addresses the proper display and use of the American Flag. In the code, if an American Flag is “...in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, it should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.”

“We collected hundreds of American Flags from around the area which were in disrepair,” said Sergeant Garrouette, who is assigned to the Air Force Special Operations Command Inspector General directorate. “We selected the six to represent various organizations and locations in the local area.”

The remaining flags will be retired at later dates throughout the New Year.

Though there are no formal ceremony guidelines, the committee worked



Photo by Amy Shackley

with the local American Legion chapter who holds similar ceremonies throughout the year. Local Cub Scout Pack 104 from Navarre, Fla., assisted in collecting the flags and attended the ceremony.

During the event held near sunset, a flag detail presented each of the six flags for disposal. Each flag was unfurled prior to placing in the burn barrel, and those in attendance were brought to attention and rendered a salute as flames “laid the flags to rest.”

The master of ceremonies reminded the crowd of the ceremony’s intent.

“These flags have become faded and worn, and deserve an honorable retirement and proper disposal,” said Master Sgt. J.C. Chambers. “They are a precious symbol of all that we and our comrades have worked, lived and died for – a free nation of free men, true to the faith of the past, devoted to the ideals and practices of justice, freedom and democracy,” he said.

The ashes from the flags and the grommets will be buried near the Enlisted Hooch, with a marker designating the area.

“It is our hope that people under-

stand the importance of flying ‘Old Glory’ with respect, and that when the flag becomes worn and faded that they replace it with a new flag,” said Sergeant Garrouette. “The Top 3 intends to continue this new tradition as our way of helping ensure American Flags flown in our area reflect the pride and patriotism for which it was designed.”

The flags presented for disposal were:

- Presented by the Hurlburt Field Honor Guard and used by the honor guard for practicing military funerals
- Presented by the Hurlburt Field Airmen Council and flown over a private residence in Floral, Ala.
- Presented by the Hurlburt Field FOCUS 56 and flown by Boy Scout Troop 509.
- Presented by the Hurlburt Field First Sergeants Council and flown over a private residence in Navarre, Fla.
- Presented by the Hurlburt Field Chiefs Group and flown over Air Commando Air Park.
- Presented by the Hurlburt Field Company Grade Officers Council and flown over a private residence in Fort Walton Beach, Fla.

(left to right) Senior Master Sgt. Charles Spence stands guard as Master Sgt. Mike Garrouette and Master Sgt. Dave Janney place an unfurled American flag in the burn barrel during a flag retirement ceremony Dec. 4.



AF leaders celebrate Centennial of Flight

By Dr. James Roche
Secretary of the Air Force, and
Gen. John Jumper
Air Force Chief of Staff

WASHINGTON – It was the most significant 12 seconds of the last 100 years.

On Dec. 17, 1903, two bicycle builders from Ohio, Orville and Wilbur Wright, launched the world on a path to the heavens when their rudimentary airplane of wire, wood and canvas wings lifted off a windy, grassy hill at Kitty Hawk.

Since their marvelous achievement, aviation has enabled our expansion, enhanced our commerce and expanded our communication.

Military aviation developed quickly after that first flight. The names and exploits of our airpower pioneers are melded into our nation’s history: Rickenbacker, Mitchell, Doolittle, Davis, Cochran and Yeager, to name just a few.

While our past is storied, our present and future remain as boundless and adventurous as the Wright Brothers’ dream. Because of our great airmen in today’s Air Force, we have developed, operated, and exploited advanced weapons systems and technologies – from sensors and aircraft to lasers and satellites – enabling us to own the ultimate high ground and dominate any battlespace.

The Centennial of Flight is as much about our future as it is about our past. We commend you for all that you do every day to promote this heritage and provide our nation with the finest air and space force in the world.

We’re proud to serve alongside you as we continue to discover ways to slip the surly bonds and deliver peace and freedom for our nation. (AFPN)

AF suicide prevention recognized

By G.W. Pomeroy
Air Force Surgeon General Public Affairs

WASHINGTON – A landmark University of Rochester study of suicide in the U.S. Air Force concluded that the service's suicide-prevention program reduced the risk of suicide by 33 percent during the past six years.

Researchers compared Air Force rates of suicide, homicide, accidental death and family violence before and after the suicide-prevention program was in place in 1996.

Severe family violence declined 54 percent, while homicides dropped 51 percent, suicides decreased 33 percent and accidental deaths slid 18 percent, according to the study. Suicide rates in the

What's all this stuff on my leave and earning statement?

By Tech. Sgt. Andre Nicholson
Public Affairs

Beginning Jan. 1, leave and earning statements will be going paperless. Airmen will be required to access the myPay Web site in order to view or print out a hard copy.

LES statements are provided to inform members of their monthly pay, entitlements etc. But, how many people actually understand or take the time to look at what the entitlements, deductions and allotments really mean?

Receiving a paycheck is something everyone probably looks forward to. But if the pay was more or less than it should be, would it go unnoticed?

"We receive almost 400 customers each week with questions about their LES," said 1st Lt. Wade Kornahrens, 16th Comptroller

Squadron. "Generally 75 percent of them are simple quick fix solutions, but it just goes to show that a lot of people do have questions about their pay and entitlements."

The three biggest areas that people should be aware of on their LES are the entitlements, deductions and allotment areas, according to the finance office.

To receive a myPay pin, see the wing finance office or access the myPay Web site at <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>.

Entitlements include things like: base pay, basic allowance for housing, flight pay, family separation allowance and other pay entitlements.

"But, an important thing to look at in this area is if a significant debt has been identified, which will be noted as an advance

Air Force have declined throughout the last six years. From 1997 – the year in which the prevention program was fully implemented – through 2002, the annual average was 9.1 per 100,000. The service's suicide rate in 2002 was 8.3 per 100,000 people – its second lowest in 20 years.

As of Dec. 11, there had been 34 suicides among active-duty airmen in 2003. No suicides were among active-duty airmen deployed in Operation Iraqi Freedom, officials said. (AFPN)

Mandatory suicide prevention briefings for all Hurlburt Field employees will be held hourly from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday at the 20th Special Operations Squadron auditorium and Tuesday at the base theater. For information about these briefings, call 884-4237.

debt," Lieutenant Kornahrens said. "This is your notification to contact finance and set up a repayment schedule within 30 days to avoid financial hardship."

Deductions are things like: Service members Group Life Insurance, taxes and mid-month pay. Allotments include: contributions such as the Combined Federal Campaign, discretionary (rent, car payment, child support and insurance).

"These areas are important as well, because people need to make sure that the correct amount is being designated and allotted to the correct place," the lieutenant said.

The finance office said that people should also pay attention to: the leave, taxes and pay data boxes.

The comptroller squadron will be sending out more information at a later date.

Giving without receiving:

Base volunteers give time for Florosa school clean up

Story and photo by
Airman 1st Class
Heidi Davis
Public Affairs

With rakes, paintbrushes and weed eaters in hand, Hurlburt Field personnel worked for hours to help landscape and restore Florosa Elementary School, Mary Esther, Dec. 5 and 6.

Prior to that week, Florosa Elementary School Principal, Carolyn Lulue contacted Chief Master Sgt. Eddie Alicea, 16th Special Operations Wing command chief, about the clean up, and he requested help from the base; more than 100 people answered the call.

"It's our duty as equal partners in the Hurlburt Field and local civilian community to help

clean up around our schools," said Senior Master Sgt. Patrick O'Neal, 16th Medical Group.

Approximately 90 percent of the students attending the school are dependents of Hurlburt Field active-duty, retired or civilian personnel."

However, before the crews could get started on the school, subject matter experts from the 16th Civil Engineer Squadron and the 823rd RED HORSE Squadron briefed Sergeant O'Neal on the basics of what to do, how to do it and when to do it.

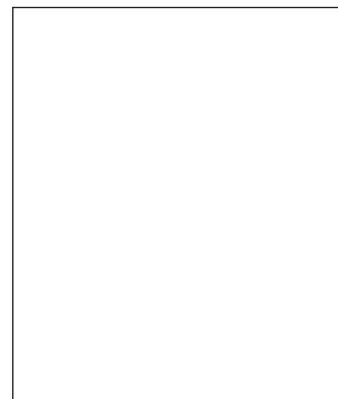
"The prep crews, especially Master Sgt. Nicki Cordell and Tech. Sgt. Miguel Caraballo from CE and Tech. Sgt. James Ludwig from RED HORSE, were instrumental in the prepping, planning and execution

process of the clean up," Sergeant O'Neal said. "They were experts when it came to picking out the paint, primer and supplies needed to get the job done."

In fact, 50 members from CE and RED HORSE got the ball rolling the first day as they sanded, scraped and power washed storage sheds, and primed railings and a cement wall (that runs along the circumference of the school yard) for painting.

Over the course of the two days, volunteers from almost every squadron/tenant unit on base were scattered all over the school lawn doing what they could to make the school a safer, cleaner place for the children to learn.

Duties included: raking leaves; clearing weeds, over



Tech. Sgt. Cedric Barron, 16th Equipment Maintenance Squadron, rakes some of the rubbish lying around the school yard.

brush and potential hazards on the school ground; pressure washing, priming and painting two storage buildings and a four-foot retaining wall; and sanding, priming and painting metal railings.

In all, Hurlburt Field saved the school more than \$3,000 in labor costs.

News Briefs

War trophies prohibited

Service members serving in Iraq and Afghanistan are prohibited from bringing back to the United States any items that were formerly in the possession of the enemy, officials said.

With about 140,000 American service members scheduled to rotate out of Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. Central Command officials are very clear that service members can't bring home weapons, ammunition or other prohibited items.

Army Gen. John Abizaid, the commander of U.S. Central Command, who put out the policy, said that under no circumstance can individuals take (as a souvenir) an object that was formerly in the possession of the enemy.

Commissaries not closing

To soothe anxiety among service members and their families about reports of the Defense Department closing commissaries, a top Department of Defense official emphasized that the department strongly supports commissaries as an important benefit of military service.

DoD officials called recent media coverage of the commissary issue "slanted and inaccurate."

The governing priority that keeps a commissary open is the number of active-duty people assigned, which should be at least 100.

DoD officials don't want to close any commissary, but they'll do so if one is draining the system to the point of affecting customer support throughout the system.

There are 276 commissaries worldwide, and 19 have been put on a "watch list."

That leaves 257 that are in good shape, operating very well, officials said.

First shirt named outstanding Floridian

By Tech. Sgt.
Andre Nicholson
Public Affairs

The Florida Junior Chamber of Commerce recently recognized one of Hurlburt Field's first sergeants as an Outstanding Young Floridian.

Master Sgt. Kevin Robert, 16th Security Forces Squadron first sergeant, was selected for the award because of his selfless contributions, said Maj. Mike Reiner, 16th SFS commander.

"Sergeant Roberts earned this award," Major Reiner said. "He's always busy taking care of

people, and I wanted to get him the recognition he deserves for his contributions to our base and the community."

The award is presented by the Florida Jaycees – an organization that promotes a young person's leadership training through community service.

"I've always been heavily involved in the local community to make it a better place to live for my wife and daughter," Sergeant Roberts said.

"I didn't do anything out of character and nothing that any other person couldn't do," he said.

The first sergeant said he always encourages his troops to get involved in both on- and off-base community activities.

"Whether I'm at a deployed location or at home," Sergeant Roberts said, "I've always tried to leave the place better than it was when I had arrived."

It's not about the awards or the EPR material, he said. It's about self-satisfaction.

The Florida Jaycees presented the first sergeant with a trophy in the shape of a hand holding a globe. Sergeant Roberts said he'll display on his desk for all his troops to see.



Photo by Senior Airman Sam Taylor

Careful precision

NCOs from the 16th Security Forces Squadron, lower the flag during a retreat ceremony in front of the 16th Special Operations Wing Headquarters, Dec. 10. The Hurlburt Field Top 3 sponsors a retreat ceremony for different organizations on base every Wednesday. For more information about the retreat ceremony or to volunteer your unit, call Master Sgt. James Legg 884-8442 or e-mail james.legg@hurlburt.af.mil.

Customs and Courtesies

Use the following procedures when showing respect to the flag and the national anthem:

All personnel in uniform and outside must face the flag and salute during the raising and lowering of the flag. Upon the first note of the national anthem or "To the Colors," all personnel in uniform who aren't in formation should stand and face the flag (or the sound of the music if the flag is not visible) and salute. Hold the salute until the last note of the music is played.

All vehicles in motion should come to a stop at the first note of the music and the occupants should sit quietly until the music ends.

When in civilian clothes, face the flag (or the sound of the music if the flag is not visible) and stand at attention with the right hand over the heart.

If indoors during retreat or reveille, there's no need to stand or salute. However, everyone must stand during the playing of the national anthem before a showing of a movie while in the base theater. When listening to a radio or watching television, no specific action is necessary. Additionally, a folded flag is considered cased; therefore, it is not necessary to salute or continue saluting.

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Airman Against Drunk Driving is now a 24 hours a day, seven days a week alternative to drinking and driving. The program, which offers a free, confidential ride home, has also changed its phone number to **884-8844**.

**UCI, Continued from Page 1**

Operations Squadron's air-crews; 16th Equipment Maintenance Squadron, Plans and Programs, for outstanding unit deployment managers; 16th Comptroller Squadron, Financial Management, for exemplary customer service and support to customers.

The inspectors also noted two best practices: Robert Phillips, 16th Mission Support Squadron, for a TDY Post-Deployment In-Processing program – a process that ensures accountability of every returning member from contingency, exercise, and temporary duty assignments; Maj. Barbara Mercer and Master Sgt. Dennis Craig, 16th SOW IG office, for a Wing Self-Inspection program – established first class inspection procedures, checklist, and tracking methods and implemented them base-wide.

Part of the UCI during the

first week was a Major Accident Response Exercise, designed to evaluate the ability of emergency responders and support agencies to properly respond to a hazardous material release.

"The base's response was outstanding," said Sergeant Craig. "The emergency responders were on it in no time flat, saving lives, containing the scene and mitigating further damage in accordance with standard procedures."

"Although the UCI is over, the self inspection program provides opportunities to continue reviewing those checklists and procedures," Colonel Reynolds said. "The purpose of the inspection was more than just ensuring compliance was met, but to also ensure the wing is postured to meet the Special Operations mission when called upon to do so."

FAMILY, Continued from Page 2

We can't promise to make our troops rich, famous or totally content. But we can assure them that when they go into harm's way, it's for a critical cause. We can ensure that they have the best equipment and training to accomplish their mission. We can also do everything possible to provide them the best quality of life we can, be responsive to their concerns and provide them the opportunity for a fulfilling family life. When they deploy, we must do all we can to ensure their families are secure and well cared for. Our Air Force family deserves a quality of life commensurate with that of the nation they're sworn to defend.

Like most families, our Air Force isn't perfect. There are those who we want to go to dinner with and those we'd rather avoid. But we're a family. We're family when we take away the car keys after too much to drink. We're family when we help each other achieve goals. And we're certainly a family when tragedy strikes.

More than ever, we need to support each other. Let us not get so busy that we fail to say to each other, verbally and non-verbally, you are important. In our Air Force family, it takes all of us to accomplish the mission – an Air Force team of rookies and seasoned veterans (a nice way of saying "old heads.")

Your job, regardless of your rank or position, is important. You're very important. In this stressed-filled environment, may we never get so busy that we fail to express to the members of our Air Force family that we care.

The Hurlburt Field family has an awesome history of great accomplishments. I'm incredibly proud to be on your team and to be a member of this family. My sincere thanks for all you do everyday. I wish you a safe and happy holiday season.

Holiday tree safety tips

○Ensure artificial trees are fire resistant.

○If you buy a freshly cut tree, make sure the needles are hard to pull from the branches. Needles that easily fall from a tree are too dry. The trunk

should be sticky with sap.

○Fresh trees require watering daily. Cut a few inches from the bottom of the trunk to aid in water absorption

○Trim the lowest branches to allow proper fit in the stand.

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Gunships, Talons meld with Marine training

By Senior Airman
Sam Taylor
Public Affairs

Hurlburt Field aircrews joined forces with the Marines of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit during training exercises on the Eglin Range this week.

Gunships and Talons provided fire support from above and quick refueling capabilities for Marine rotary-wing aircraft.

AC-130H Gunships with the 16th Special Operations Squadron gave a first-class escort to Marine Force Recon teams with the 22nd MEU as they "infiltrated" the Eglin Range, said Master Sgt. Brad Barry, 16th SOS combat plans superintendent.

The dry-fire exercises were held for four days, during which Gunships played the role of an armed escort for vehicles, as Marine Forward Air Controllers called for simulated air strikes against invisible foes.

"We helped get the sneaky guys in," said Sergeant Barry.

MC-130E Combat Talons with the 8th Special Operations Squadron provided rapid refueling for Marine helicopters Dec. 11 and Monday, said Capt. Jason Humble, 8th SOS mission planner. Talons landed and set up Forward Air Refueling Points to rapidly refuel Cobra

attack helicopters.

"During this operation, both the Talons' and helicopters' engines are running," said Captain Humble. "The procedure expedites the refueling of helicopters."

Captain Humble and Sergeant Barry said the joint training benefits both services.

"This has been a great, mutually beneficial opportunity to work with Marine conventional forces and see how they do business," said Sergeant Barry.

Capt. Ryan Bohner, a 16th SOS aircraft commander, joined Navy and 22nd MEU personnel aboard the USS Wasp at Camp Lejeune, N.C., Dec. 6, as it sailed toward the gulf. The captain served as a liaison officer, planning Gunship missions to support the Marine "invasion."

"Spending time on the ship was amazing," said Captain Bohner, who remained aboard until Saturday. "The Navy and Marine personnel were very professional."

Captain Bohner said the Marines, whose exercise ended Wednesday, were amazed with the Gunships, and impressed with the Talon's capabilities.

"They're looking forward to future exercises with AFSOC," he said. "It's an outstanding opportunity to work with the Marines, and I hope they come back."

WING, Continued from Page 1

"The efforts of the men and women of the 16th SOW have helped define this wing as the premier unit among all others within the Air Force Special Operations Command," Colonel Mannon said. "These efforts exemplify the Air Force core values: Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence In All We Do, which are consistent with the highest standards associated with earning the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award."

The AFOUA will be automatically updated in the member's record by awards and decorations, so individuals don't need to report to the military personnel flight.

All 16th SOW personnel assigned to the following units from July 1, 2001 through June 30, 2003 are authorized wear of the AFOUA:

16th Operations Group
16th Maintenance Group
16th Mission Support Group
16th Medical Group
4th Special Operations Squadron
6th Special Operations Squadron
8th Special Operations Squadron
9th Special Operations Squadron
15th Special Operations Squadron
16th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
16th Civil Engineer Squadron
16th Contracting Squadron
16th Communications Squadron
16th Component Maintenance Squadron
16th Comptroller Squadron
16th Equipment Maintenance Squadron
16th Helicopter Maintenance Squadron
16th Logistics Readiness Squadron

16th Maintenance Squadron
16th Maintenance Operations Squadron
16th Medical Operations Squadron
16th Medical Support Squadron
16th Mission Support Squadron
16th Operations Support Squadron
16th Security Forces Squadron
16th Services Squadron
16th Special Operations Squadron
19th Special Operations Squadron
20th Special Operations Squadron
716th Maintenance Squadron

All units assigned to the 16th SOW prior to the Oct. 1, 2002 realignment:

16th Logistics Group
16th Support Group
16th Aircraft Generation Squadron
16th Component Repair Squadron
16th Helicopter Generation Squadron
16th Logistics Support Squadron
16th Supply Squadron
16th Transportation Squadron

Hurlburt Field's Dec, Jan holiday hours

	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Dec. 26</u>	<u>Dec. 31</u>	<u>Jan. 1</u>
Main store	9 a.m. – 6 p.m.	Closed	10 a.m. – 6 p.m.	9 a.m. – 6 p.m.	Closed
Military Clothing Sales	9 a.m. – 3 p.m.	Closed	Closed	9 a.m. – 3 p.m.	Closed
AutoPride	24 Hours	24 Hours	24 Hours	24 Hours	24 Hours
Minimall shoppette	9 a.m. – 3 p.m.	Closed	Closed	9 a.m. – 3 p.m.	Closed
Minimall food	6:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.	Closed	Closed	6:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.	Closed
Base exchange food	10:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Closed	11 a.m. – 5 p.m.	10:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Closed
Burger King	8 a.m. – 2 p.m.	Closed	8 a.m. – 2 p.m.	8 a.m. – 2 p.m.	Closed
Minimal concessions	Closed	Closed	Closed	9 a.m. – 3 p.m.	Closed
Base exchange Barber	9 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Closed	10 a.m. – 5 p.m.	9 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Closed
Base exchange Concessions	9 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Closed	10 a.m. – 5 p.m.	9 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Closed
J.R. Rockers	11 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Closed Thursday to Dec. 27	Closed	11 a.m. – 2 p.m.	Closed
Soundside Club	8 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Closed	Closed	7 p.m. – 2 a.m.	Closed
Hurlburt bowling center	Closed	Closed	4 p.m. – 11 p.m.	4 p.m. – 11 p.m.	Closed
Spare Time Grill	6:30 a.m. – Noon	Closed	4 p.m. – 11 p.m.	4 p.m. – 11 p.m.	Closed
Golf	7 a.m. – Noon	Closed	7 a.m. – Dusk	7 a.m. – Dusk	7 a.m. – dusk
Main Fitness	8 a.m. – 6 p.m.	Closed	8 a.m. – 6 p.m.	8 a.m. – 6 p.m.	1 p.m. – 6 p.m.
Library	9 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Closed	Closed	9 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Closed
Oasis Café	Lunch Only	Closed	Closed	Lunch Only	Closed
Reef	B 6 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.; L 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.; D 4 – 6:30 p.m. each of the listed days	Closed	Closed	9 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Closed
Outdoor Recreation Center	Closed	Closed	Closed	8 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Closed
Marina	Closed	Closed	Closed	Reservation Only	Closed
Paintball	Closed	Closed	Closed	9 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Closed
Auto Skills	9 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Closed	Closed	6:15 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.	Closed
Child Development Center	6:15 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.	Closed	Closed	6:15 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.	Closed
Youth School Age	6:15 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.	Closed	Closed	9 p.m. – 8 a.m.	Closed
Youth Open Recreation	Closed	Closed	Closed		Closed

Hours are subject to change, people are encouraged to call first.

Closed all days are: Velocity Subs, the Enlisted Hooch, Officer Hooch, ITT Ticket Sales, ITT Leisure Travel Sales, Frame Skills, Multi-Crafts, Wood Skills, Commando Fit, Community Activities Center and Teen Open Recreation.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Greg Davis

'Royal' perspective

A Royal Air Force EH-101 helicopter hovers over the Eglin Range during an orientation flight for Air Force Special Operators stationed at Hurlburt Field. The British personnel recovery platform recently completed a tour of U.S. military installations to acquaint Air Forces units with the aircraft's capabilities. The EH-101 is one possible replacement for America's rotor-wing assets.

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Influenza vaccine shortage

**Courtesy of the
16th Medical Group**

This year's nationwide increases in influenza cases has led to a higher demand for the influenza vaccine than in previous years. Due to a limited supply of the vaccine nationwide, the 16th Medical Group will now only provide it to high priority groups through Dec. 31.

High priority groups are: health-care workers, military members including active duty, trainees and recruit population.

Also, individuals at high risk for complications from influenza include: healthy children age

six to 23 months, adults 65 years and older, pregnant women greater than 14 weeks gestation, and people two years or older with underlying chronic medical conditions can receive the vaccine.

The 16th Medical Group plans to review this policy in January and offer remaining vaccines to low-risk beneficiaries.

This policy has been issued following policy guidance from the Office of the Air Force Surgeon

General and is consistent with Center for Disease Control recommendations for influenza control.



Tobacco at work – no go

The following information is an excerpt from Air Force Instruction 40-102 Tobacco use in the workplace.

The Air Force discourages the use of all tobacco products. The ill effects of tobacco use are well documented.

Workplace: The Air Force prohibits smoking (cigar, cigarette, pipe) and the use of smokeless (spit/loose tobacco) products in the workplace to protect the health of all workers.

The use of tobacco products is permitted only in designated tobacco use areas.

The Air Force recognizes equal work breaks (when these breaks are permitted) for tobacco users and non-tobacco users.

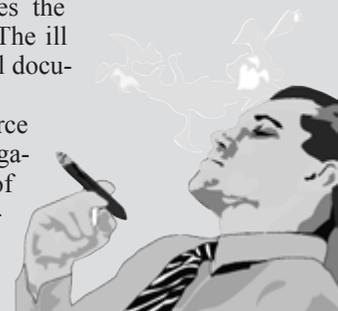
The Air Force prohibits indoor tobacco use in all Air Force facilities, except in assigned government housing and recreation facilities specifically designated by the installation commander permitting indoor tobacco use.

In such cases, the tobacco use area is designated and separate from common areas that non-smokers must utilize and the area must be enclosed and exhausted directly to the outside.

Exhaust from these enclosed areas must be located away from air intakes and maintained under negative pressure sufficient to contain tobacco smoke in the designated area.

The workforce must not be required to enter such areas during normal business hours while environmental tobacco smoke is present.

The designated indoor tobacco use area may not be a public, common-use area, such as: restrooms, hallways, stairways, or offices. Installation commanders are encouraged to limit the size of these areas.



Fill out a Hometown News Release

*Graduating from a course?
Getting promoted?
Receiving an award or decoration?
Assuming command?
Part of an award-winning team?
New to the base?*

Your 16 SOW Public Affairs office can help you fill out a Hometown News Release Form.

It's a great way to let the folks back home learn of your success.

For more information, call the public affairs office at 884-7464.



Photo by Senior Airman Ebony Pierre

'Parading' around

The 16th Operations Group commander, and his daughter ride through town on a Humvee during the Destin holiday parade Saturday. The Hurlburt Field Honor Guard was awarded the "Commanders Award" as the best military unit.

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Warming hearts, one donation at a time

**Airman 1st Class
Heidi Davis
Public Affairs**

During the holiday season and throughout the year, the Operation Warmheart organization does what it can to provide for family members here.

Through financial donations and fundraising events throughout the year, the organization is able to financially support a large number of Hurlburt Field family members. Operation Warmheart helps families who are experiencing financial challenges due to a family emergency or incident beyond their control.

"It's a known fact that if it's not right at home, then it's not going to be right on the job," said Senior Master Sgt. Jeremy Samuel, Operation Warmheart treasurer. "The military mission depends on focused airmen — they can't be worrying about how their families will sustain themselves during the holiday season or any other time of year when an emergency arises."

In order to raise enough money to support needy families throughout the year, Operation Warmheart has vol-

unteers manning booths at the base exchange, the commissary and the shoppette to receive donations.

The Hurlburt Field Advisory Council also gets involved in helping raise funds each year during the Annual Thanksgiving Drive. This year, the council raised \$8,302 and helped 224 families.

This year, Operation Warmheart volunteers have helped more than 200 families and raised more than \$9,500 in donations.

Other than manning booths throughout the year, Operation Warmheart participates in the local Combined Federal Campaign, in which monthly or one-time donations are collected during a period of six weeks. Last year, Operation Warmheart received more than \$7,000 through CFC contributions alone.

"Every penny that is collected goes straight back to the military community," Sergeant Samuel said.

"The military is a unique organization where duty goes well beyond the work day. Each individual is a vital asset to successful mission accomplishment," he said.

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SPORTS

EMS AGE defeats RED HORSE 26-6

Win nets AGE second consecutive base championship

By Senior Airman
Sam Taylor
Public Affairs

The 16th Equipment Maintenance Squadron, Aerospace Ground Equipment flight, flag football team galloped over the 823rd RED HORSE Squadron team 26-6 at the main fitness center, Dec. 10.

It's the second championship in a row for AGE.

After RED HORSE opened the game with a touch-down, AGE took control, issuing an onslaught of interceptions and TDs.

Paul Geno, AGE, scored the first points for his team, fol-

lowed quickly with another score by Robert Keegan. The ball in RED HORSE hands, AGE's Jeff White intercepted a pass, leading to a TD by Detwan Lewis. AGE coach Saul Bookman intercepted another RED HORSE pass, running it in for a fourth TD.

RED HORSE held AGE at bay through the final minutes of the game, but couldn't launch an offensive to match it's opponent.

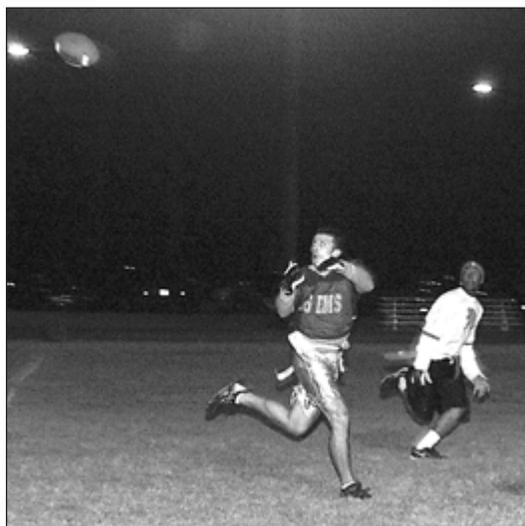
"These guys come out here every day," Coach Bookman said of his team. "We don't have some of the individual skill other teams might have, but we played better as a team. We'll win again next year."



Photos by Senior Airman Sam Taylor

The 16th Equipment Maintenance Squadron, Aerospace Ground Equipment flight, flag football team (above) comes together for a huddle after their championship win over the 823rd RED HORSE Squadron Dec. 10, at the main fitness center.

A player with 16th EMS AGE (left), sprints downfield to catch a long pass by team quarterback Paul Geno.



A player with 16th EMS AGE (right), gets his flags pulled by an 823rd RHS player.

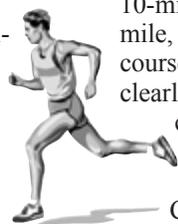
Runners reminded to mind manners

Hurlburt Field runners are reminded to practice jogging etiquette while hoofing it around base.

○When using jogging routes on base, people must run in the proper direction, marked with arrows.

○Runners are also required to give right-of-way to vehicles when their route takes them on streets. Headphones are also prohibited when running on streets.

○There are five regular



running routes on base: a 10-mile, 4.6-mile, 2.6-mile, and two 1.5-mile courses. The routes are clearly marked, and free copies of maps are available at the Commando Fitness Center and the main fitness center.

○People walking on the main fitness center's jogging track should use the outside lanes.

For more information, call Master Sgt. John Lilly or Staff Sgt. Tamara Rosa at the Commando Fitness Center, at 884-4412.

Hurlburt Happenings

Military

Hurlburt Top 3 meeting

All senior NCOs and master sergeant selects are invited to join the Hurlburt Top 3 Jan. 8 at 3 p.m. at the Enlisted Hooch for their monthly meeting. For more information, call Senior Master Sgt. Dave Ceurvels at 884-2828 or Master Sgt. Mike Garrouette at 884-4161.

Promotion fact sheet

The 2004 fact sheet for individuals competing for promotion to staff sergeant through master sergeant is now available on the Air Force Personnel Center Web site at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/eprom. Any senior airman through technical sergeant who is eligible for promotion testing in 2004 should review this handout, as it provides detailed information concerning each testing cycle. Commanders and supervisors should also review the fact sheet, as it answers many frequently asked questions and explains the Weighted Airman Promotion System.

ACP program implementation

All rated officers who have completed their active duty service commitment for their initial aeronautical rating and meet fiscal year 2004 eligibility criteria may accept an Fiscal Year 2004 Aviator Continuation Pay Program agreement under terms defined on the ACP information Web site – <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/acp/>.

The window for applications is Oct. 1 until Sept. 30. Aviators should discuss ACP issues with commanders and review the ACP information Web site before referring questions to the Air Force Personnel Center. For more information, visit <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/cst> or call 1-800-616-3775 or DSN 665-6000.

Undergraduate flight training

The next undergraduate flight training board convenes at the Air Force Personnel Center March 2. This selection board will review applications for pilot and navigator only. Those officers with a date of birth after April 1, 1974, and a total federal commissioned service date after April 1, 1999, are eligible to apply. Applicants must send the completed application, postmarked by Jan. 16, to HQ AFPC/DPAOT3, 550 C Street, West Suite 31, Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4733.

Applicants should advise commanders/supervisors providing the AF Form 215 of the application deadline. All applicants competing for pilot training must also complete the Basic Attributes Test. For more information on application procedures, contact the 16th Mission Support Squadron, Military Personnel Flight, at 884-5251.

Asian-Pacific course

The Joint Special Operations University invites all Special Operations personnel to attend the Asian-Pacific Orientation Course Feb. 2-6. The course is designed for personnel preparing to live in or deploy to the Asian-Pacific region, personnel who work with individuals from this region and personnel with a professional or analytical interest in the Asian-Pacific region.

The course provides non-technical education on the cultural, historical, political, economical, social, religious and security dynamics of the region. For more information, call Joyce Weber at 884-4731 or Capt. Jae

Sim at 884-1858. Also, visit www.hurlburt.af.mil/milonly/tenantunits/jsou/.

Community

Medical clinic closures

The 16th Medical Group will be closed Thursday, Dec. 26 and Jan. 1-2 due to the holidays. Normal clinic hours will be in effect Wednesday and Dec. 31. The Eglin Air Force Base emergency room is available during clinic closures for any emergency needs.

Comptroller closures

The 16th Comptroller Squadron will close today at 3 p.m. and Dec. 31 at noon for official functions. For emergencies, call 803-3324.

Commissary closures

The commissary will be opened the following holiday hours:

Monday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Wednesday until 4 p.m.; and closed Thursday and Dec. 26. The commissary will resume normal hours Dec. 27. The commissary will also be open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Dec. 31 and closed Jan. 1.

Self Help store closures

The Hurlburt Field Self Help store will be close at noon Wednesday and Jan. 31 and be closed all day Thursday through Dec. 27 and Jan. 1-3. For more information, call Tech. Sgt. Cal Ramirez at 884-2378 or Staff Sgt. Jeff Anderson at 884-7130.

Pass and registration hours

The pass and registration office reminds individuals who need to update their Department of Defense sticker from 2003 to 2005 to do so as soon as possible. Individuals may do so during the following hours of operation:

Mondays from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Wednesdays from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Individuals may obtain visitor passes and vehicle decals at the visitor control center Mondays through Fridays from 6 a.m. to 11:59 p.m.

Tax advisors needed

Once again it's time to appoint unit tax advisors for the 2003 tax year. UTAs will be asked to work in the tax center for four hours per week from late January through April 16. It's important that the UTAs don't have extended TDYs or a PCS scheduled during this period.

The IRS tax course is scheduled Jan. 5 - 9, from 8 a.m. to noon each day. Training this year will be combined with, and held at Eglin Air Force Base. Official transportation is being arranged for all participants. There will be an additional four-hour computer-training course held Jan. 19 -23.

Chiefs' scholarships

Applications for the Hurlburt Field Chiefs Group Scholarship Program are available at the family support center here and through guidance counselors at area schools. Scholarships are awarded to any senior enlisted, active-duty, retired or deceased person. Applications must be postmarked no later than March 15, 2004.

Hurlburt Field Chapel holiday services

The following is a list of services to be held at the Hurlburt Field Chapel during the holiday:

Catholic services

Children's Mass – Wednesday, 5:30 p.m.

Music – Wednesday, 10:30 p.m.

Evening Mass – Wednesday, 11 p.m.

Christmas Day Mass – Thursday, 10 a.m.



Feast of Mary, Mother of God Mass – Dec. 31, 5:30 p.m.

Protestant service

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service – Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.

For more information, call the chapel at 884-7795.

Base members are invited to attend special holiday services at the Lighthouse of Faith Community Church, located at 755 Lovejoy Road, Sunday at 9:30 and 11:30 a.m., and Tuesday at 6 and 7 p.m. For more information, call 244-2003.

At the movies

Prices are \$3 for adults and \$1.50 for children. Movies start at 7 p.m. unless otherwise indicated.

Hurlburt Field 884-7648

Friday – (PG-13) "Scary Movie 3," starring Anna Faris and Charlie Sheen – Cindy has graduated from college and now works as a local television reporter. While investigating mysterious crop circles at the farm of Tom Logan, she learns that she is "The One" and helps the president prevent an alien invasion.

Saturday at 2 and 7 p.m. – (G) "Brother Bear," starring Joaquin Phoenix and Jeremy Suarez – The older brother of young Native American Kenai is killed by a bear. During the young man's attempt to avenge his death by killing the bear, the Great Spirits transform the young man into the thing he detests most – a bear.

Sunday – (R) "Mystic River," starring Sean Penn and Kevin Bacon – Jimmy, Dave and Sean find themselves thrust back together by the murder of Jimmy's 19-year-old daughter. As the investigation tightens around these three friends, an ominous story unfolds that revolves around friendship, family and innocence lost too soon.

Eglin 882-1066

Friday – (R) "The Matrix Revolutions," starring Keanu Reeves and Carrie-Anne Moss – The rebels long quest for freedom culminates in a final explosive battle. As the Machine Army wages devastation on Zion, its citizens mount an aggressive defense, but can they stave off the relentless swarm of Sentinels long enough for Neo to harness the full extent of his powers and end the war?

Saturday at 2 and 7 p.m. – (PG) "Elf," starring James Caan and Will Ferrell – Buddy, a human raised in the North Pole to be an elf, wreaks havoc in the elf community due to his size. Buddy heads to New York City to find his place in the world and track down his father. It's up to Buddy to win over his family and, ultimately, save Christmas.

Sunday – (PG-13) "Runaway Jury," starring John Cusack and Gene Hackman – A member of the jury for an explosive trial against a gun manufacturer joins forces with a beautiful woman to manipulate the panel. With millions of dollars at stake in the precedent-setting lawsuit, the mysterious jurist battles a jury "consultant" who will stop at nothing to secure a verdict.

(Editor's note: Movies are subject to change. Telephone numbers are provided for patrons to confirm scheduled playdates.)

One-way traffic on Cruz Ave

As of Monday, a contract is scheduled to begin the replacement of the water main and repair to Cruz Avenue. The construction will continue for approximately seven months. In the mean time, traffic on Cruz Avenue will be restricted to one lane, northbound traffic only (toward Red Horse Road). Access to parking lots on the west side of Cruz will be available but limited at times. Street parking at Building 90759, the Photo Lab, will be unavailable.

The contractor will have traffic direction signs and barricades placed from the intersection of Cody, Cruz and Bedel to the intersection of Cruz and Red Horse Road. For more information, call Gary Ross at 884-7524.

Legal office hours

The new Hurlburt Field Legal office hours are Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.; Thursday from 3 to 4 p.m. (for active-duty personnel only); and Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. for power of attorney services. All other legal assistance times will remain unchanged.

Crash claims

Anyone with claims for or against the crewmembers of the MH-53 PAVE LOW that crashed in Afghanistan

Nov. 23 should contact the following:

○For Tech. Sgt. William Kerwood contact 1st. Lt. Hobart McIntosh at 884-7664

○For Tech. Sgt. Howard Walters contact Capt. Benjamin Boyd at 881-2793

○For Staff Sgt. Thomas Walkup Jr. contact Maj. Mike Nelson at 884-3112

Equipment liaison office hours

Effective immediately, the Equipment Liaison Office hours are as follows:

Monday through Thursday, from 8 to 10 a.m. the office receives walk-ins and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. is reserved for appointments only. There'll be no walk-ins or appointments Fridays. For more information, call Staff Sgt. James Laudermilk at 884-5731.

ERAU spring registration

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's Spring 2004 Term Registration is held now through Jan. 2 in Building 90220 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and 8 a.m. to noon Fridays. Add/Drop dates are Jan. 5-9; class dates are Jan. 5 through March 6. For more information, call 581-2106.

Gift of Groceries

With the holidays fast approaching, one way friends,

family and the public can show support for military families is to give commissary gift certificates as gifts, or donate them directly to military charities that assist families. As part of the Gift of Groceries program, people can purchase commissary gift certificates at www.commissaries.com or by calling 1-800-770-GIFT.

SIU spring registration

Southern Illinois University is now enrolling new and previous students for the spring 2004 semester. Accelerated courses are offered on alternating week-ends from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. SIU offers a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology; prior college isn't necessary. For more information, call Tracy Deming at 581-9840 or e-mail ithurlburt@gulf.net.

Classes

FSC classes

For more information, call 884-5441.

Employment Orientation – Monday, 9 a.m.; reservations required

Sponsorship Training – Monday, 1 p.m.

Moms, Pops and Tots – Tuesday and Wednesday, 10 a.m.

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FEATURE

Training flight airlifts 'Christmas Wishes'

By 1st Lt. Gabe Johnson
Public Affairs

Some caught the flight hoping for a unique experience.

Some wanted to briefly visit another culture.

Some went because they volunteered last year and couldn't stay away this year.

But they all volunteered because children were counting on them.

A routine training flight over Central America Tuesday became the perfect platform for "Operation Christmas Wish" to complete its mission.

Thirty-seven Hurlburt Field airmen made the most of space-available travel aboard an MC-130 Combat Talon II, as they hopped a four-hour flight to deliver 9,500 pounds of supplies and toys to orphanages in Honduras.

The first stop was Goloson International Airport where Operation Christmas Wish was greeted by the Honduran Air Force. U.S. and Honduran airmen off-loaded 5,000 pounds of supplies.

Half of the supplies were donated to the families of Honduran Air Force members and the other half were loaded onto a truck for delivery to Aldea Infantil SOS La Ceiba, a local orphanage and home to 115 youth ages 2 to 19. The Hurlburt airmen loaded onto a bus to personally accompany the delivery.

"There's something about the hills here that reminds me of Jamaica," said Staff Sgt. Candacy Wint, 16th Security Forces Squadron personnel specialist. Born in Jamaica, she looked out the window of the bus and saw many parallels to her native country.

They passed miles of green pineapple fields that ran into steep hills that jutted through layers of hanging clouds.

"Last year I couldn't believe I was in Honduras and I had so much fun," said Sergeant Wint, a second-time volunteer. "The kids greet you like celebrities, and they know how to say words like 'hello' and 'thank you.' They played music and did a little show for us."

"I came this year because I'm the point of contact for the squadron. We sponsor 86 of the children at the orphanage," said the sergeant. "Sponsorship is when your unit gathers a list of things the kids need like hygienic products, educational supplies and we even include little toys. We package each kid's stuff in separate boxes for shipment."

Upon arrival, all 115 children were lined up to greet the entourage all smiling and unable to contain their excitement.

Staff Sgt. Juan Llantín, 16th Equipment Maintenance Squadron, came dressed as Santa Claus and was almost unable to walk through the front gate of the orphanage because children lined up to hug him.

Another little girl immediately grabbed the hand of 1st Lt. Drew Cunnar whom she recognized from the previous year's visit.

"I met Alma last year when we came down here," said Lieutenant Cunnar, 15th Special Operations Squadron navigator. "My wife and I have been sending clothes to her and her sister."

"Santa" began giving the prepared boxes to the children calling each one by name to come up and receive their gift.

"There's a lot of excitement around the orphanage for about a week before the airmen arrive," said David

Ashby, a volunteer from California now retired in Honduras. "They're all very anxious to see what's inside the box when their name is called."

"This is the only military unit that comes here, and they look forward to the visit every year."

Staff Sgt. Vanessa Hansen, 15th SOS aviation resources manager, has been to Honduras on various missions with her unit and was born in Boaco, Nicaragua.

"I love Honduras. The people are so humble and they really open their homes to strangers," Sergeant Hansen said. "I can really identify myself with them being from Central America."

"It's just great to see the kids. If you gave them a tiny toy from a happy meal they'd be so happy about it. They appreciate everything they get."

Operation Christmas Wish departed after two hours leaving the children playing with toys, eating candy, and shouting "Gracias!" from behind the walls of the orphanage playground.

On the way back to Hurlburt Field, the Talon II stopped at Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras, to deliver the remaining 4,500 pounds of toys and supplies. There, the 612th Air Base Squadron would make deliveries to orphanages in their surrounding areas.

With all cargo offloaded the crew and volunteers set their sights toward home, but they had one more delivery to make.

Senior Master Sgt. Michael Roberts, 612th Air Base Squadron civil engineer, came along for the ride to spend the holidays with his family living in Navarre, Fla.

"It's a great opportunity and it really shows how space-A travel can come through for people," said Sergeant Roberts, who has spent the last six months at Soto Cano on a remote tour.

"My wife and my 3, 5 and 8-year-old have no idea that I am coming home, they are going to be so surprised to see me. We thought I wasn't going to be able to come

home this year."

Before take off Chief Master Sgt. Dennis Desilet, 612th ABS chief enlisted advisor, boarded the aircraft to address Operation Christmas Wish.

"What you did tonight greatly impacted many lives in Honduras. Go back to Hurlburt and tell everyone what you saw in the children's faces at La Ceiba."



Photos by Staff Sgt. Greg Davis

'Santa Claus,' played by an NCO with 16th Equipment Maintenance Squadron, greets two children at the La Ceiba orphanage. He was picked for the role because of his fluency in Spanish.



U.S. and Honduran airmen off-load 5,000 pounds of supplies and toys at Goloson International Airport, Honduras. Wheelchairs, sporting goods, school supplies and toys were collected and paid for by various units at Hurlburt Field to help orphanages this holiday season.