



# FLIGHT LINES

SERVING HOMESTEAD AIR RESERVE BASE AND THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY

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482d Fighter Wing, Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla.

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June 2005



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## For the children

### 482d Fighter Wing returns from humanitarian mission in El Salvador



*Photo by Lt. Col. Tom Davis*

Maj William S. Riehl, 482d Civil Engineering Squadron, Homestead ARB, Fla., gives a tour of the Operation Para los Ninos base camp to U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador H. Douglas Barclay and Lt. Gen Randall Mark Schmidt, Commander of 12th Air Force and U.S. Southern Command Air Force. The 482d Fighter Wing Civil Engineering Squadron was the lead unit for the humanitarian operation, which saw the construction of two schools and three medical clinics near San Vicente.

# Staying put, job well done

By Col. Randall G. Falcon,  
482d Fighter Wing Commander

Many of our fellow Airmen and civilian Air Force team members received disappointing news May 13: their base or unit was listed on the Department of Defense 2005 Base Realignment and Closing (BRAC) list. And while it's difficult to imagine the struggles and life changes these families now face, we must also take a moment to be thankful. We were not on the list. In fact, Homestead Air Reserve Base is slated to grow!

But, please keep in mind that the 2005 BRAC process is far from over. The purpose of the BRAC process is to posture the nation for the most likely strategic defense for the future, while maintaining good stewardship of taxpayer dollars. Each military operation was evaluated using these criteria.

The BRAC 2005 Commission members will now visit affected communities to make sure that the criteria and evaluations were fair, accurate and complete. The Commission has the authority to make changes to the DoD recommendations before presenting their version to President Bush for approval. If the president approves

the Commission's recommendations, the proposal then goes to Congress, where several options determine how quickly final recommendations become law. Large-scale changes—in line with the final version of the law—will start to be implemented early next year.

In the meantime, units scheduled for deactivation, realignment, or relocation will surely try to alter the current plan. But they face an uphill battle. Eighty-five percent of DoD BRAC recommendations made in the past four rounds were adopted.

Short of a major change to the DoD plan, HARB is scheduled to gain nine F-16s: six from the 419<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, Hill AFB, Utah; and three from the Air National Guard's 192<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing, Richmond International Airport Air Guard Station, Va. Nine new fighters will probably also mean new full-time and reserve positions for the unit, making this an exciting time to be at Homestead! And, much of the credit goes to you!

The fact that HARB is gaining strength and increasing in value to the nation is a direct result of the dedication, hard work, and patriotism of each of you. Thank you for consistently stepping up to the plate

every time you've been tasked. As your wing leadership, together with our community partners, made the case for HARB, your efforts were pivotal to our success. I am grateful to each of you and I hope you will also join me in expressing our appreciation to our friends and neighbors in the surrounding communities who rallied support for the base.

But, BRAC is not all that's going on here—your continuing efforts, and the profound influence they have on others—continue to be the high points of my days. In my short time here I've come to realize that HARB people don't do their best just when there's an inspection, BRAC or somebody evaluating—they operate at the highest levels all the time.

I encourage you to read the story about the 482d Civil Engineer Squadron. Many of their members have just returned from El Salvador, where they built schools, clinics and provided leadership for all aspects of Operation New Horizons 2005. This has always been an operation spearheaded by the active duty—until this year. The reservists from HARB, the 482d CE folks, have broken ground on more than just new buildings; they've shown that they can be an integral part of "One Team," and that they can lead that team to greater heights!

Congratulations on a job well done and welcome home!

## 1st Sgt. selection board this weekend

By Chief Master Sgt. Charles Clunie  
482 Fighter Wing Command Chief

If you have what it takes to be among the finest to serve in the Air Force Reserve, we want you...to share your talents and experience as a First Sergeant in the 482d Fighter Wing.

The 1st Sgt. is a time honored and highly respected assignment, rich in custom and traditions. Those who aspire to become a 1st Sgt. must be fair, resourceful and above all, able to relate to the Air Force's most

valuable resource, its people.

There are currently two 1st Sgt. opportunities available for anyone who is at least eligible for Master Sgt., and who meets the basic requirements. A selection board will be conducted on Saturday, June 4 at 9:00 a.m.

To qualify, the following prerequisites must be met: 1) eligible or currently serving as a Master Sgt. or above; 2) possess a minimum aptitude score of Administrative 45 or General 58; 3) possess a seven or nine skill level and not be in a retraining

status.

Additionally, each applicant must provide the following: 4) Nomination questionnaire; 5) Statement of Assurance; 6) a functional resume (per AFH 33-337, Tongue and Quill); and 7) must achieve a fitness assessment of 75 or higher.

Completed nomination packages must be submitted to Master Sgt. Tina Davis in bldg 360, room 126, by close of business, Friday June 3.

For more information contact Master Sgt. Tina Davis, (305) 224-7359.

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# ESGR appreciation luncheon scheduled

By Lt. Col. Tom Davis

As members of the Air Force Reserve, we sacrifice, and our families also sacrifice, so that we can serve our country. But when we serve our one weekend a month and two weeks a year - or more - our civilian employers also sacrifice.

Our civilian employers lose key personnel for months at a time and must find a way to fill a critical void while they hold our jobs until we return from duty. In this way, our civilian employers are also serving our nation.

So when was the last time you showed your civilian employer how much you appreciate the support they give you as members of the Air Force Reserve? If you haven't done so lately, here's your chance; fill out the

nomination form enclosed with this issue of the newspaper and return it to the 482d Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office by July 1 and you'll be able to formally recognize your civilian employer for continued support of the Air Force Reserve mission.

Fax your form to (305) 224-7302, or call (305) 224-7263 for more information. Don't miss this opportunity to recognize your employer for their support!

## Action Line

([actionline@homestead.af.mil](mailto:actionline@homestead.af.mil))

### Wing commander answers your questions, concerns

**Q:** Unit members used to be able to bring in old uniforms and donate them to the Civil Air Patrol. Lt. Col. Meyer was the point of contact, and he is now gone. Who can we contact to donate old uniforms to the CAP.

**A:** Contact Tech. Sgt. Joseph Finn, 482 LRS, using base e-mail. Sergeant Finn works with the local CAP unit and will make sure local cadets put your old uniforms to good use. Sergeant Finn can also be contacted at (305) 224-7441.

**Q:** Homestead ARB isn't situated in the center of Miami-Dade county, but the local commuting area (for per diem and lodging) is defined as the Miami-Dade county line. This doesn't make any sense to me because a person living in northeastern Miami-Dade may be 55 miles away from the base but a person living in Miramar (Broward County) is 37 miles from the base and eligible for per diem and lodging. Will this boundary ever be reestablished since it's an unfair geographical way of defining the local commuting area?

**A:** Extensive research has been done to determine the best way to establish the local commuting area for Homestead ARB. At this time, the current commuting area is the Miami-Dade County line, as it is "in general," a 50-mile radius to Monroe and Broward Counties. We realize that some areas in Miami-Dade are actually further than areas in Broward and Monroe counties. This situation is eligible for review on a case by case basis. "Outside the commuting area" benefits are available if a waiver is approved. Submit a waiver request through your unit and group commanders, for FW/CC approval if you reside in Miami-Dade County but are more than 50 miles from HARB.

**Q:** Can we use a contest as an incentive to reduce base energy costs? I'm thinking of a monthly, by building or group, contest with a 59-minute early leave prize to the group that saves the base the most money.

**A:** The most significant drawback to such a worthy idea is the requirement

to accurately track energy savings. While all base power is metered for FPL billing purposes, each facility (or portions thereof for facilities occupied by a mixture of users) would require a power meter to track potential savings from month to month, quarter to quarter, etc. In many instances, several facilities share a single power meter, making it impossible to apportion energy consumption to a particular facility or operation. Another complicating factor is how to assess new facilities which begin operation and whose energy consumption would distort the energy savings computation. Additionally, current Air Force Instructions regarding civilian personnel management do not provide for a "59-minute early leave" for incentive reasons. Your idea certainly stems from a good thought, and while we cannot institute this contest for the above stated reasons, we should all do our part to conserve electricity by shutting off unnecessary lights and appliances during non-duty hours.

# Homestead Airmen complete humanitarian mission in El Salvador

Story and photos by Lt. Col. Tom Davis

Troops led by the 482d Fighter Wing Civil Engineer Squadron and representing all branches of the armed services have recently completed building schools and clinics in El Salvador.

The four month long Joint Task Force exercise, called Operation Para los Ninos (for the children), has seen the construction of two schools and three clinics in and around the town of San Vicente.

This humanitarian project is part of Southern Command's New Horizons where personnel from all branches of the military participate in construction projects in six countries throughout the Caribbean, Central and South America.

Normally headed by an active duty engineer unit, this year's effort in El

Salvador was headed by Major William Reihl, Civil Engineer Squadron, 482d Fighter Wing, stationed at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Florida.

"This is the first time a reserve unit has had the opportunity to lead this exercise, but we were ready" said Reihl. He went on to say that the services and military occupational specialties represented worked very effectively together.

"The 482d Fighter Wing CES took the lead and set the pace," said Lt. Gen. Randall Mark Schmidt Commander, 12<sup>th</sup> Air Force and U.S. Southern Command Air Force.

JTF Para Los Ninos employed 650 reservists during the 120 day operation. While in El Salvador the reservists, most completing their annual tour, worked on the five separate work sites, completing the construction jobs on time, under

budget and without major injury.

Additionally, thanks to the inspiration of Maj Reihl, all construction material was purchased locally in El Salvador. This decision resulted in excess of \$450,000 being injected into the local economy.

In addition to the construction project, Maj Reihl also oversaw medical treatment and veterinary services for the local El Salvador community. These services alone provided medical treatment for 41,000 citizens and veterinary care for 3,211 animals.

"Major Bill Reihl, the civil engineering squadron from Homestead Air Reserve Base and the 32 other organizations that came together to build these three clinics and two schools is nothing short of an absolute diplomatic success on

**An El Salvadorian Security Forces member speaks with Security Forces members from the 482d Fighter Wing, Homestead ARB, Fla. The 482d Fighter Wing Civil Engineering Squadron was the lead unit for the humanitarian operation, which saw the construction of two schools and three medical clinics near San Vicente.**



behalf of our country. It's absolutely superb," said Gen Schmidt.

Operation Para los Ninos is considered a resounding success by El Salvadorian and US officials alike. Manuel de Jesus Lopez Reyez, Vicente school principal, lauded the efforts of the US and Salvadorians saying that their work on the Vicente school and clinic will affect the lives of all the children in the community for many years.

"I can't say how proud we are of the 482d Fighter Wing and Homestead Air Reserve Base" said H. Douglas Barclay, US Ambassador to El Salvador. "They are fulfilling a great duty and I am thankful for it."



**Members of the 482d Fighter Wing, Homestead ARB, Fla., salute during the ribbon cutting ceremonies for Operation Para los Ninos in San Vicente, El Salvador.**



**An El Salvadorian military band performs during the ribbon cutting ceremonies for Operation Para los Ninos in San Vicente, El Salvador.**

# Every day is Memorial Day

## Honoring fallen heroes is a full-time job

Story and photos by Jake Shaw

Click...click...click...you can hear the crisp, unmistakable sound of heels tapping together simultaneously.

With precision movements, members of the Homestead Air Reserve Base Honor Guard unit march in unison to take their spot in the funeral procession. They are dressed in pristine Air Force dress uniforms and spit-shined shoes you can see your reflection in.

For most Americans, May 30 is Memorial Day; a day filled with parades and ceremonies; a day when many Americans pause to honor our military veterans. But for Air Force honor guard units every day is Memorial Day.

An Air Force bugler stands 50 paces from a flag-draped casket. Two Airmen stand perfectly still at

opposite ends of the fallen hero in a display of honor.

As the funeral director finishes reading the eulogy, the bugler plays Taps to signal the end of the duty day for the resting veteran. The first note of Taps is the cue for the two Airmen flanking the casket to slowly raise their right hand until they touch the bill of their hats, in a final salute to the veteran.

After the bugler plays the last note of Taps, the Airmen begin the ceremonial flag folding. An Airman kneels in front of the deceased veteran's next of kin, presents the American flag, and remarks, "On behalf of the president of the United States and a grateful nation, our country's flag is presented as a token of appreciation for many years of faithful and honorable service."

Staff Sgt. Ryan Ayers, a member of the 482nd Fighter Wing Base Honor Guard, said "The ceremony is enough to draw tears from even the most strong-willed spectator."

Like all Air Force honor guards, the Homestead ARB Honor Guard covers a large area. Its area of responsibility covers nearly all of South Florida – from West Palm Beach in the north to Monroe County in the south. Honor guard members work most weekends, drive hours through road raging traffic and stand perfectly still without flinching for hours during ceremonies.

"The sacrifices of the honor guard are nothing compared to the sacrifices made by those we pay tribute to," said Staff Sgt. Luis Pacheco, a 2-year veteran of the Homestead ARB Honor Guard. "We get to meet heroes every day,"



Members of the Homestead Air Reserve Base Honor Guard stand with an F-16 Mako from the 93d Fighter Squadron. From left to right: Staff Sgt. Natasha Jamass, Staff Sgt. Luis Pacheco, Staff Sgt. Ryan Ayers and Technical Sgt. Francisco Navarro.

adds Tech. Sgt. Francisco Navarro, another proud member of the Honor Guard.

In addition to providing solemn military funeral honors, Air Force honor guard units represent the Air Force at community events. The eight-member unit from Homestead ARB marched in 13 parades, presented the colors during the national anthem 15 times at large public events and honored 172 veterans at military funerals in 2004.

“We are sometimes called ambassadors in blue,” said Sergeant Navarro. “Our area of responsibility covers over 5,500 square miles – from West Palm Beach to Key West.”

Military funeral services are a time-honored custom that predates the Air Force. In January 2000 they became a mandated function. With the passing of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000, the military was required to provide at least basic funeral honors for all eligible veterans. The law ensures all eligible veterans receive a proper farewell from their country.

With the sheer number of ceremonies the ambassadors in blue perform each year, common sense would lead one to believe the honor guard members become immune to the emotions of a funeral.

Staff Sgt. Natasha Jamass, another member of the Homestead ARB Honor Guard, doesn't feel that way. “We do this every day, but no



**From front to rear, members of the Homestead Air Reserve Base Honor Guard: Capt. Paul Hubenthal, Staff Sgt. Leo Castellano and Staff Sgt. Ryan Ayers. The Homestead ARB Honor Guard performs military funeral honors for veterans throughout the South Florida region.**

matter how many funerals we attend, it's impossible to escape from the emotions involved,” she said.

That's because the military is one big family, according to Sergeant Ayers.

“When we attend a funeral, we're saying farewell to one of our

own family members with a professional ceremony,” he said. “Providing a final tribute and giving military families a sense of closure is not just a job – it's an honor.”

For the Homestead Air Reserve Base honor guard, Memorial Day is not a holiday – it's every day.

# Carrying the flag for the Air Force Reserve

**482nd Fighter Wing takes center stage in one of the world's largest aerial spectator events**

*Story and photos by*

*Senior Airman Sandra M. Bueno*

The final note of the national anthem was played as four Makos assigned to the 93d Fighter Squadron of the 482d Fighter Wing screamed across deep-blue skies over Ft. Lauderdale Beach to open Air & Sea Show 2005, April 30.

More than a million people attended the annual event, sponsored by McDonalds, which featured demonstrations from the Air Force, Marine Corps, Navy, Army, Coast Guard, and civilian attractions.

Dreams of one day flying an F-16 at 350 mph above a sun-drenched, fan-packed beach seemed to be inspirational to many people. A booth staffed by the 482d Reserve Recruiting office stayed busy from

open to close both days of the show as air power dominated the senses.

The new recruits may include future replacements for Maj. Joseph S. "Corky" Matchette, Maj. Pete "Stinky" Smith, Capt. Robert F. "Rutro" Lytle and Capt. Joseph A. "Sloppy" McGill. They are the Makos who dazzled the crowd for opening ceremonies.

482d Fighter Wing Commander Col. Randall G. Falcon joined Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, the Honorable Thomas Hall, and other dignitaries at the reviewing stand to watch the Makos and other military units perform for the crowd.

Col. Falcon was happy that the 482d participated in the event, but

viewed it in perspective, "We want to be synonymous with the Air & Sea Show because we are proud of our own contribution to the South Florida Community and as a reserve component," he said.

But Homestead ARB isn't all about air shows, "We are a fully functional base protecting the South East region of the U.S. with the F-15s from the Florida Air National Guard, Det. 1, 125 FW and our own 93d FS unit. Anything that goes past the Caribbean & South America, we are involved with," said Col. Falcon.

(more pictures next page)



Jennifer Corregan and daughter Jeanne attend their first Air & Sea Show and stop by the 482d FW Reserve Recruiter's booth for a bag of goodies. During the three day event, Senior Master Sgt. Kim Draper, Master Sgt. Helenka Sommers and the rest of the reserve recruiters handed out goodies to thousands of spectators.



# Air and Sea Show 2005

Photos by Senior Airman Sandra Bueno



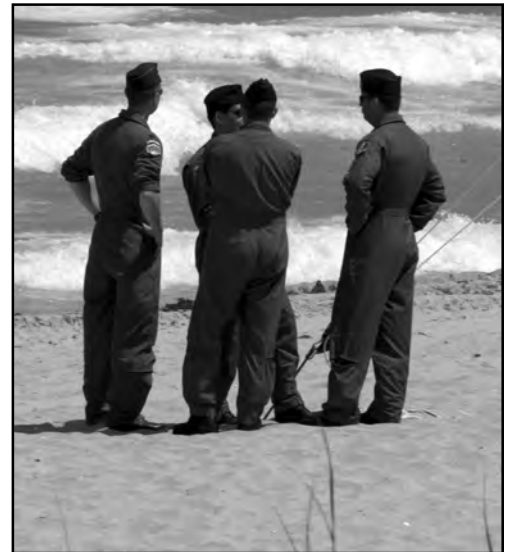
A Mako pilot signs an autograph for a fan.



F-15s from the 58th Fighter Squadron, Eglin Air Force Bases performed a flyover at this year's show.



The F-16 Makos performed the opening flyover both days during the 2005 Air and Sea Show.



Pilots from the 93d Fighter Squadron and 58th Fighter Squadron hang out on the beach in Ft. Lauderdale.



The Air Force Honor Guard and the Thunderbirds posed for photos during media day at Opa Locka on April 28.

# Services News

## New lunch options, improved storage spaces

By Jeff Carney,  
482d Services Marketing Director

May through July has shown to be a very productive time for Services with a Mothers' Day Buffet, Club meal changes, and Outdoor Recreation storage changes.

The Club hosted a Mothers' Day buffet on 8 May 2005 from 11 am till 2pm. More than 230 people attended and enjoyed a menu that included Prime Rib, Mahi-Mahi, Salmon, and Chicken with a dessert bar, salads, and side dishes.

"The turnout was outstanding, and the setup was truly elegant," said Mr. Jess Holcomb, 482 Services Chief. "You could tell by the looks on everyone's faces and the positive compliments we received that everyone who attended was really pleased. To say this was a success would be an understatement. Plan now to attend the next Holiday Buffet on Thanksgiving."

The Club has some coming changes that will benefit customers on a daily basis as well. In July, the Club is expanding its lunch buffet to be All-You-Can-Eat from Monday through Friday and also the takeout will no longer be at an additional charge.

"We've heard the requests from our customers, and we've done what we can to meet their demands," said Deborah Lippincott, Services Business Specialist. "Luckily, we only had to raise the price by a dollar to both our members and non-members, but the change will be a real benefit, allowing people to eat a full variety from the menu, and go back as much as they

want. This really enhances the value of our great buffets."

Many customers enjoy the freedom to pick up lunch from the Club and take it back to the office or wherever they may wish to go. In the past, takeout had an additional charge, but that will change in July as well.

"We're constantly striving to meet the needs of our customers," Ms. Lippincott said. "We're in the customer service business, and this is another change we're making in response to the feedback from our customers."

Outdoor Recreation's storage for recreation vehicles and boats has been recently improved. A new key system was implemented, allowing customers the convenience of around-the-clock admittance. The cost for this storage is \$25 for one month, \$150 for seven months, or for the best deal, \$300 for 14 months and a free key.

"Our customers have been asking for something like this for a long time," said Cori Arencibia, Outdoor Recreation Assistant Director. "With this new key system, the customer has the freedom to access their storage items at their convenience. That is a huge benefit for them."

With the new key system, customers will now have 24 hour access but will be required to have the special keys. Those who get the year plan get the special key for free; otherwise it costs \$100 for this benefit. For those who don't want the key, access will only be during business hours, Monday through Saturday 9 till 5, closed Sunday.

## CBT debut

Computer based testing (CBT) is now available at 482d Fighter Wing's training office. There are currently 35 computer stations installed with a database of 964 tests to choose from. Starting with the June UTA, anyone wishing to take a mandatory Career Development Course (CDC) or voluntary Professional Military Education (PME) must go through their unit training managers (UTM) to set up test dates. Walk-in customers cannot be accommodated under the new CBT system. Your UTM must first ensure that your test is available on CBT. If your test is not available for CBT, your UTM will order the paper copy of the test. Paper copy tests are administered on Sundays of the primary UTA at 12:30 p.m. CBT exams will be administered at 8:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. on the Sunday of primary UTAs, as well as every Wednesday at 8:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. For further information contact Mr. Tony Moreno at (305) 224-7595.

## CPR training

The Base Fire Department has qualified instructors and the tools and equipment necessary to provide quality CPR training to base employees. The fire department will support your request for CPR training if you follow this guidance: Requests for Base Fire Department personnel to teach CPR classes must be submitted through the fire department at least 2 weeks in advance. CPR classes are also available on UTAs if necessary, but are limited to one class at 8:00 a.m. on the Saturday of the primary UTA. All CPR classes must be scheduled through Deputy Fire Chief Willie Johnson, or Assistant Chief Joseph Myers. CPR classes are taught at the fire station, building 706. To schedule a class, call (305) 224-7102/7103.

### Action Line

The Wing Commander's Action line is now operational.  
Email your concern to: [actionline@homestead.af.mil](mailto:actionline@homestead.af.mil)

# Profiles of reserve members

The Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) profiles outstanding members of the 482d Fighter Wing as motivational success stories and to set an example for the Air Force Reserve community.

My name is Master Sgt. Darren L. Bryant. I am currently assigned to the 482d Civil Engineer Squadron as an Air Reserve Technician and Readiness Technician in the Full Spectrum Threat Response Flight.

I joined the Air Force on June 23, 1980, and served for 5 years as an Inventory Management Specialist and a Military Training Instructor (MTI).

I separated from active duty on September 6, 1985 and returned to Miami, Fla., where I got married and started a family. I've been married for 18 years to a wonderful woman named Kina, who is also in the military. I'm also the father to three beautiful daughters, Dominique, Dionne and Danielle.

I returned to the military in January, 1988, after a two year break in service to join the 482d Fighter Wing as a Disaster Preparedness Specialist. My tenure in the 482d Fighter Wing has been challenging and demanding; however, I wouldn't trade in my career for anything.

I was mobilized in support of both wars in Iraq. In support of Operation Iraqi freedom, I was deployed to Jordan, Qatar, and ultimately Kirkuk, Iraq. I was awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal for my duty and accomplishments in Southwest Asia.

I am currently in my twenty-third year of service in the Air Force, and I intend to serve at least three more years. My ultimate goal is to attain the rank of Chief Master Sergeant, and possibly work at the Major Command Level.

As I've advanced in age, my focus has shifted sharply in the direction of goal attainment. Goal attainment has

taken center stage in my life. After 12 years of putting it off, I've decided to go back to college to earn my Bachelors Degree in Business Administration, which I plan to complete by December, 2006. My ultimate academic goal is to earn my Masters Degree in Business Administration (MBA).

My Air Force career has given me the opportunity to learn valuable leadership, technical and administrative skills that I probably would not have received else where. My stints as an MTI, Inventory Management Specialist, and Disaster Preparedness Specialist have given me tremendous insight on how the Air Force operates.

The last stage of my career will be dedicated to mentoring and preparing personnel under my supervision to attain success in their Air Force and civilian careers. My goal is to help them maximize their potential, both professionally and academically.

I will also use my leadership position to assist my fellow Airmen in the accomplishment of their technical, administrative and leadership abilities. In my opinion these abilities are crucial if an individual wants to be successful in the Air Force in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Air Force has been good to me. It is now my turn to pass the knowledge and skills that I have attained to the next generation of enlisted Air Force leaders.



**Master Sgt. Darren Bryant teaches NBC refresher training.**

## — Promotions —

### Airman

Alexandra Martinez, 482 SVS

### Airman 1st Class

Sandi Thompson, 482 MDS

Khalid Bensitel, 482 MXS

Cherrell Brown, 482 SVS

Angel Munoz Jr, 482 SFS

### Senior Airman

Heather Skinner, 482 MDS

Tiffany Snow, 482 MDS

Ledaris Seymour, 482 MXG

Thomas Watson, 70 APS

Ralph Troutman, 70 APS

Ricardo Sinclair, 482 CES

Tanya Williams, 482 LRS

Brittany Stokes, 482 FW

Josue Mangual, 482 AMXS

Jessica Anthony, 482 AMXS

Daniel Lennon, 482 AMXS

Astor Forbes, 482 AMXS

### Staff Sgt.

Christopher Batten, 482 AMXS

Emory Everhart, 482 MDS

Maximillion Lewis, 482 AMXS

Renato Oliva, 482 MDS

Christopher Scala, 482 SFS

Roberto Molina, 482 MXS

### Tech. Sgt.

Barbara Hodges, 482 MDS

Octavio Ruiz, 482 MXS

Manuel Acosta, 482 MXS

Leonardo Caballero, 482 CES

Earlvine Fort, 482 MSS

### Master Sgt.

Robert Sierra, 482 MXS

Pedro Tirado, 70 APS

Tony Fuller, 70 APS

### Chief Master Sgt.

Charles Clunie, 482 FW

# Homestead Airmen volunteer for 7th annual Build Blitz

## Reservists help build nine homes in nine days

Story and photos by  
Senior Master Sgt. Donna Kotsay

I always wanted to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity but never had the opportunity until recently. Well that's not really an accurate statement, the opportunity was there, volunteers were always needed, but I didn't know how to get started and more importantly I wanted to do it as part of a group.

A few months ago while discussing this subject with Master Sgt. Maria Houle, first sergeant of the Maintenance Operations Flight, we decided to make it happen. I say we but honestly Maria did most of the work; she already had contacts through her civilian job and with a few phone calls and e-mails she had us set to participate in the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Build Blitz.

What's the Blitz? During the course of nine days, nine homes would be built with the help of sponsors, homeowners and volunteers. Could it be done?

A few months before the Blitz was scheduled to kick off the Habitat folks didn't think they would have enough volunteers. One month before the start date, they were worried that they might have too many. I signed up along with thirteen of my Maintenance Group co-workers to perform one or more days work.

We were fed a breakfast of doughnuts, fruit and bagels and lunch was catered. I have to say that herding 20+ people per home, (most of whom did not possess the required carpentry skills) through construction tasks would have had me pulling hair.

But the Habitat folks took it all in stride. They provided a safety briefing to all participants at the beginning of the work day and said a prayer to get us started and keep us safe. Training was given on the specific tasks and if you messed up it was no big deal; we had a laugh together and moved on.

I volunteered to shingle roofs; why I volunteered for that task is anybody's guess. However, that's where more than a dozen of us ended up, all precariously perched up there like ants on a sugar cube.

Amazingly, we did a good job. No one was mortally wounded, although I could barely move for twenty four hours after the work was done.

At the end of the day, the roof was almost complete. More important, we really made a difference; we helped bring real hope to nine families of low income, helped break the cycle of poverty and we had fun doing it.

For more information on Habitat for Humanity of Greater Miami visit: <http://www.miamihabitat.org/>



Left to right: Carlos Paz and Edmond Leger show off their expert roofing skills while Kim Sayer installs drywall. Other volunteers included Gregg Miller, Maria Houle, Donna Kotsay, Joe Stahl, John Parks, Alan Kean, Jose Rodriguez, Roberto Rodriguez, Fred Diaz and his son.