



FLIGHT LINES

SERVING HOMESTEAD AIR RESERVE BASE AND THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY

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Makos head to Hill



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Photo by Lisa Macias

Members of the 482d Fighter Wing board a KC-10 refueling aircraft at Homestead Air Reserve Base on July 6. The KC-10 transported 135 Air Force reservists to Hill Air Force Base, Utah, for a two week training exercise in preparation for their upcoming deployment to the Middle East.

This is what we train for

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

It's our turn now, and we're ready for what's ahead. Inspections, evaluations, training deployments and endless preparations have worked together to get us ready for this moment – deployment to the Iraqi theatre.

While there, we'll do our part supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom and the Global War on Terror. And I can tell you that from the perspective of almost 30 years of Air Force service, this wing is the best led and

trained I've ever seen.

Our recent deployment to Hill Air Force Base reinforced that observation. Compliments to all of you who deployed to Hill for a job well done.

Aggressive, dynamic and exhausting training like you've just completed is the final test before your deployment. It's the cornerstone for your success overseas. You passed the test with flying colors, exceeding every expectation.

The 482d Fighter Wing is the lead unit for the upcoming Air Expeditionary Force rotation. We'll



Air Force Reserve photo

be setting the example for operations, maintenance, leadership – everything. We've earned that right – YOU'VE earned that right.

Life insurance benefits increase

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Legislation signed into law by President Bush May 11 raises maximum SGLI coverage from \$250,000 to \$400,000 and provides payouts of up to \$100,000 for people with traumatic injuries.

In a new twist introduced through the legislation, troops with dependents must get their spouse's approval to purchase less than the full amount of SGLI coverage. In the case of people who are not married, the designated beneficiary will receive notice when the person purchases less than the maximum coverage.

Defense and Veteran Affairs officials are working on the details of the expanded benefits.

The increased SGLI coverage will start Sept. 1, and the so-called

“traumatic SGLI” benefit will begin Dec. 1. The legislation directs that both benefits will be retroactive to Oct. 7, 2001, said Stephen Wurtz, the VA's deputy assistant director for insurance.

Traumatic SGLI benefits will be retroactive for troops who have lost limbs, eyesight or speech or received other traumatic injuries as a direct result of injuries received during Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom. The benefit does not apply to people suffering from disease.

The retroactive coverage increase is payable as a result of deaths in either operation, or under other conditions prescribed by the secretary of defense, Mr. Wurtz said.

People enrolled in the SGLI program will notice an increase in their premiums when the increases take effect. The traumatic SGLI benefit will be rolled into the basic SGLI program

and will likely cost about \$1 a month, Mr. Wurtz said.

Troops opting for maximum SGLI coverage – \$400,000 vs. the current \$250,000 – will see their monthly premiums increase from \$16.25 to \$26, Mr. Wurtz said. This is based on the rate of 6.5 cents per \$1,000 of insurance coverage.

The new traumatic SGLI benefit is designed to provide “a quick infusion of cash” for cash-strapped families of troops recuperating from traumatic injuries received in the line of duty, Mr. Wurtz said.

Compensation will range from \$25,000 to \$100,000, and is designed to help families of severely wounded troops leave their homes and jobs to be with their loved one during recovery.

“These families incur a lot of expenses, and this is designed to help them financially,” Mr. Wurtz said.

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Air Force changes fitness test criteria

By Staff Sgt. C. Todd Lopez
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON — Air Force officials are making a few changes to the physical fitness test used to assess the fitness of Airmen.

In January 2004, the Air Force underwent a major change in the way it looked at fitness. As part of the Fit to Fight program, the service adopted a more stringent physical fitness assessment that measures aerobic fitness, physical strength/endurance and body composition.

Now, 18 months into the program, senior leaders are ready to tweak the assessment to make it even better, said Lt. Gen. (Dr.) George Peach Taylor Jr., Air Force surgeon general.

“We have gotten together a group of scientists and done surveys asking folks if they like the assessment and are there issues with it,” Dr. Taylor said. “

Updates will include a change in

how body composition is measured, a new table for the running portion of the test that takes into account the runner’s elevation, and a change in the number of days an Airman must wait before retesting after having scored in the marginal category.

Under the original fitness evaluation, body composition scores were based on abdominal circumference only. The updated AFI will now direct that body composition also be measured using body mass index.

BMI is calculated by dividing weight in pounds by height in inches squared, and multiplying the result by 703. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, those with a BMI between 18.5 and 24.9 are considered to be normal. Those with a BMI of 25 or above are considered overweight.

Under the updated AFI, Airmen with a BMI of less than 25 will earn the full 30 points for body composition.

For Airmen who score a BMI 25 and above, Dr. Taylor said the results of the waist measurement would be used to calculate their test score.

“That will still be an important measure of their health,” he said. “Waist measure is closely related to increased risk for metabolic syndrome, diabetes, hypertension and heart disease. Fat distribution is the critical indicator, as opposed to weight.”

For those who score marginal, between 70 and 74.9 points, the Air Force plans to correct the time to retest at 90 days; currently, retest for marginal category is 180 days.

The Air Force continues to look at ways to improve the fitness evaluation and remains committed to the Fit to Fight program, Dr. Taylor said.

“Participation at fitness centers is up 30 percent now,” he said. “And if you go to the field, like in Iraq or Afghanistan, you will find a continued focus on health.”

Florida to help Reserve families in need

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. — If a reservist’s family in Florida has an emergency its budget can’t handle while he or she is on active duty and deployed, the state wants to help.

Starting July 1, financial assistance is available to eligible residents of Florida who are dependents of military people in the reserve components.

“This shows real support for our troops from the good people of Florida,” said Maj. Gen. David E. Tanzi, vice commander of Air Force Reserve Command. “We are very thankful that the Florida State Legislature appropriated money specifically to take care of our

Reserve families who may need help while a reservist is off serving our country.”

Air Force Reserve Command is working closely with the Florida National Guard to iron out the details of applying for this aid. Some examples of what this money could be used for are health care, reasonable living expenses, housing, vehicles, or renovations to meet disability needs.

“The Florida National Guard State Family Readiness office will evaluate each application on a case-by-case basis,” said Betty Schuster, chief of the family readiness program at Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, Robins AFB. “Those eligible for this aid include dependents

of reservists who are federally deployed, fighting the global war on terrorism or participating in state operations for homeland security.”

To apply for this aid, a reservist or family member can contact the Air Force Reserve family support offices at Duke Field, Homestead Air Reserve Base or Patrick AFB in Florida. After July 1, applicants can find instructions online at www.dmaa.state.fl.us/family under the “Florida Family Readiness Program” heading. (AFRC News Service)

action.line@homestead.af.mil

Your direct link to the Wing Commander for questions, concerns and issues affecting Homestead ARB and its employees

Driving, packing, shipping, receiving

Transportation operations does it all and much more

*Story and photos by Roger Edwards,
939 ARW/PA
Special to the Flight Lines*

Danny Hare is the Homestead Air Reserve Base Chief of Transportation.

It's a lot of responsibility.

As the Chief of Transportation, he controls the activities of 14 full time civilian employees, an Air Reserve Technician, 33 traditional Reservists and 187 ground vehicles of various types worth more than \$8.8 million.

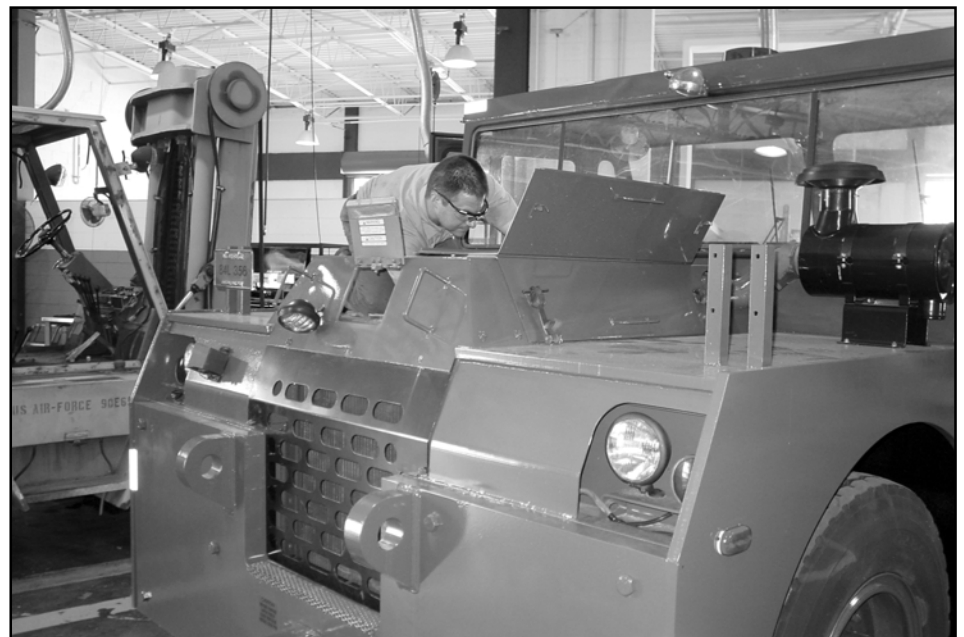
"I'm proud of my people and what we do," he said. "My team is responsible for maintaining vehicles, hauling freight and providing passenger service for all of Homestead and for anyone in uniform passing through. I have three drivers, seven mechanics, a woodworker and two transportation specialists in the Traffic Management Office to do the job."

He said that most of the vehicles in the Homestead fleet are normal, everyday cars and trucks. But he is responsible for some unusual machines. The inventory includes such things as two aircraft staircase trucks, seven 6,000 gallon aircraft refuelers, three fire trucks, a road grader, two farm tractors used primarily to mow grass, and an ambulance that can only be used for training since there are no medical personnel to man it. One of his vehicles is a large, blocky, multi-ton beast on wheels used to tow the largest aircraft in the Air Force inventory.

It takes all 14 civilian employees to make three to five trips a week to the Miami airport; pack, ship, receive and deliver military cargo – which can include hazardous materials such as live ammunition and corrosive



Danny Hare is the Homestead Air Reserve Base Chief of Transportation Operations.



Brent Morton, a Homestead Air Reserve Base Transportation Operations mechanic, works on the big aircraft mover. The multi-ton vehicle is used to tow larger aircraft such as the C-5 and C-17.

chemicals; support deployments and fix mechanical problems. "It's tough, but with teamwork we make it happen," he said

"The thing about it is, even though we're not in uniform, we're part of the team and we're here to help those in uniform do what they have to do."

Danny said that he has a good team and hired most of the daily workers himself over the years. "We're friends as well as co-workers."

The biggest problems he faces – aside from the pace of operations with too few people – is the Dade County traffic and the excessive and severe corrosion caused by the south Florida weather.

A 1985 Air Force retiree, Danny moved to the Homestead area and went to work for the base 26 years ago. He said he and his wife, Yvonne, raised their three children here and made south Florida their home.

Danny is looking forward to retiring soon and will be moving away from the Homestead area. "Things are just building too fast and getting too expensive," he said.

When he retires, he and Yvonne will move to Lake Wales, Fla. Until then, however, he'll keep things moving at Homestead.

**"It's tough, but
with teamwork
we make
it happen."
Danny Hare,
482 LRS
Chief of
Transportation**

Lots of moving parts

The current inventory of 187 vehicles at Homestead Air Reserve Base includes:

- Seven 6,000 gallon aircraft refuelers
- Five 18-wheel rigs
- Eleven 5K forklifts
- Three 10K forklifts
- Six 6K forklifts
- Two 4 K forklifts
- Three runway sweepers
- Two staircase trucks
- Three school busses
- Twelve sedans
- 30 pickup trucks
- Four four-wheel drive pickup trucks
- Fifteen six-passenger pickup trucks
- Twenty-one Aircraft Ground Equipment vehicles
- Two five-cubic yard dump trucks
- Eleven step vans
- Two 15 passenger vans
- Five one-and-a-half ton flatbed trucks
- Two 25-foot semi-trailers
- Four 40-foot semi-trailers
- One bulldozer
- Two farm tractors
- One backhoe
- One front loader
- One road grader
- One 2,000 gallon water distribution truck
- One road roller
- One 25-ton aircraft loader
- Three P-19 fire trucks
- One medium rescue vehicle
- One ambulance



Dennis Roldan, a supply technician with Homestead Air Reserve Base Transportation Operations, is an important person in the organization. One of his tasks is to keep the "On Demand" supply system running since the unit no longer stocks spare parts on base.

Makos deploy to Hill AFB, Utah

Training hones combat skills for upcoming deployment to Middle East

By Jake Shaw

More than 135 members of the 482d Fighter Wing departed Homestead Air Reserve Base on July 6 to participate in a two-week combat training exercise at Hill Air Force Base, Utah. According to 482d Fighter Wing Commander, Col. Randall Falcon, "This training will update our night combat capability and hone our war fighting skills, while setting our frame of mind to fight the Global War on Terror."

For the 482d Fighter Wing, this is the last realistic scenario that our Airmen will encounter before they head to the Middle East this fall to support the Global War on Terror.

In wartime, experienced personnel are the backbone of a successful combat operation. And there is no lack of experience in the 482d Fighter Wing. Our average experience level is 15 years. But perhaps the most important part of the abundant experience is time spent on deployments.

As I approached a group of eight crew chiefs who were part of the deploying group, I asked for a show of hands of how many have deployed to the Middle East before. Not surprisingly, five out of eight raised their hands. Tech. Sgt. Adolfo Gonzales, 482d AMXS, said "We've been there and done that."

Sgt. Gonzales is right; he and many of his fellow Airmen have been

will take this deployment lightly. In fact, over the last two training weekends, people have been intensely focused about the upcoming rotation overseas.

Just ask Senior Master Sgt. Honey Lane, First Sgt. at the 93d Fighter Squadron. According to Sgt. Lane; many deployments allow reservists to work normal hours, enjoying our weekends, but this time it's different.

"This deployment will be a challenge for us because it's the last chance to get ready before we deploy with the Air Expeditionary Force."

Sgt. Lane continued, "This is a realistic test for us. We'll work two weeks straight with no days off, in burning summer heat, to give us a small taste of what it will be like overseas."

Sgt. Lane and the other deploying personnel will also use

this opportunity to refresh their self-aid and buddy care skills, as well as their chemical warfare protective measures.

For many of the personnel who

"It's a revolving cycle, but the cycle of deploying somewhere and coming back prepares us for the real thing."

Senior Master Sgt. Larry Washington,
482d Logistics Readiness Squadron

there, done that and got the t-shirt to prove it. In fact, every one of our seventeen F-16 fighter jets are combat experienced. But that doesn't mean the folks from the 482d Fighter Wing



Photo by Lisa Macias

Members of the 482d Fighter Wing board a KC-10 refueling aircraft en route to Hill Air Force Base, Utah, for a two week training exercise in preparation for their upcoming deployment to the Middle East.

remain at the base during this deployment, things will slow down for a couple of weeks, but for some the operational tempo gets a boost. Senior Master Sgt. Larry Washington is a logistician who works in the combat plans shop for the 482d Logistics Readiness Squadron.

Sgt. Washington said, "As soon as the planes take off, we start preparing for them to return. It's a revolving cycle, but the cycle of deploying somewhere and coming back prepares us for the real thing."

And let's not forget about the family members who stay behind and take care of the home front while our members are deployed. With hurricane season in full swing, spouses have extra duties during this deployment.

But according to Tech. Sgt. Adolfo Gonzales, everyone is ready for this season. "We've been living here and experiencing the weather and deployments simultaneously for a long time, and our spouses know what to do. We do what we can to prepare before we deploy, and we trust our spouses will be safe."

Like Sgt. Gonzales said, "We've been there and done that." The experience level of the 482d Fighter Wing will pay big dividends in the upcoming months.



Photo by Lisa Macias



Photo by Jake Shaw

Above: An F-16 Mako from the 93d Fighter Squadron takes off from Homestead Air Reserve Base en route to Hill Air Force Base, Utah. The Makos will spend two weeks in Utah, flying two missions per day to prepare for their upcoming deployment to the Middle East.

Left: This C-5 cargo aircraft departed Homestead Air Reserve Base transporting over 96,000 pounds of combat gear and aircraft maintenance support equipment for the two week training exercise at Hill Air Force Base, Utah.

Hug a tree...save the world

Homestead ARB provides environmental model for all

By Ellen Hatfield-Wilt, 622 RSG/PA
Special to the Flight Lines

Larry Ventura is a stake-holder in a unique investment: the earth. He is a man with no children of his own, yet he is passionate about leaving a better world for all children.

He is the environmental flight chief for Homestead Air Reserve Base environmental engineering. He also is the sustainability program manager, a job he has taken to heart, embracing new technologies as well as trees.

“Sustainability is the ability to live your life without affecting the ability of future generations to live theirs,” he said. “This means using resources without using them up. An example is solar energy. There is never any less, no matter how much we use.”

The environmental sustainability initiative began here in May of 2000, powered by Air Force Reserve Command leaders and some high environmental stakes.

The base is cradled between Everglades National Park and Biscayne National Park, two jewels in Florida’s nature crown. In addition to the base, the command, and the two parks, other stake-holders are the Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Miami-Dade County Department of Environmental Resources Management and the Homestead

Vision Council, a community planning group.

“We have a roadmap to get there with a goal of completion by 2020,” said Ventura. The operational categories the base will address are transportation, energy, building systems, water resources, procurement operations (supply/purchasing), solid waste and hazardous materials, natural resources, air emissions, and ecological efficiency

monitoring.

After an analysis of what made sense, what they could reasonably accomplish, and what would give them the most value, he and his committee selected 24 projects from a possible 121 to help improve the environment.

More environmentally friendly buildings are one project, and the standard for excellence in buildings is

set by Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), established by the U.S. Green Building Council. When Mr. Ventura arrived at Homestead, the base was already constructing a new fire department using LEED standards – recycled carpeting, flooring tiles and wall coverings, natural lighting, and water-based paints – to name a few. All subsequent

“You’ve got to get people to see it, touch it, feel it and like it.”

Larry Ventura, Chief of Environmental Flight



Photo by Lisa Macias

Mike “The Beastmaster” Andrejko, 482d Environmental Flight, saves a baby alligator from a location near the runway. The gator was released in a safe location.

building projects on base will incorporate these standards. Already in the planning is a green recycling center and a new Special Operations Command South headquarters building.

One of Mr. Ventura's first successes was installing solar lighting on the pedestrian spine, which includes a walking/golf cart sidewalk and curved jogging path. Deriving its power from 17 solar-powered units of eight lights each, the panels are almost twice as efficient and half the size of the original panels. The sun supplies energy to the panels, which charge the batteries, and in turn, power the lights, which are nearly maintenance-free. Their batteries have a five-day storage capacity. The panels last about 25 years.

One of his sustainability efforts already has captured a coveted award, and included a trip to the White House for its presentation. A concept known as affirmative procurement involves acquiring

products made from recycled content. He explained the three sides of the small recycling symbol represent the materials to be recycled, the new products they produce, and the entry of the recyclables back into the market, completing the triangle, closing the recycling circle.

An Executive Order governs what is on the list, what the base must buy, and the percentage of recycled content required to meet an acceptable level for purchase. He researched a huge list of products to find those meeting the criteria, and created a section in base supply for them to be sold. Appropriately, a green sign proclaiming it the Environmentally Friendly Products Section, hangs over the shelves.

Before he knew it, the section grew to three times its original size and now occupies half of a large storage room. The project won a prestigious honor, the 2004 White House Closing the Circle Award in one of five categories, green purchasing. The award was presented at the White House last year.

"I believe in living this way. It's the

responsible thing to do," he said. You know he's not just hugging trees. He would like to be able to "break ground" on twenty-five percent of the base projects in the next five years, so the benefits create an ongoing ripple effect.

"I would like this base to be a show piece for the community," he said. He is proud Homestead is rated one of the Air Force's cleanest facilities. He should know. He used to sit on the other side of the gate in his previous job when he inspected the base to make sure it met stringent standards, established not only by the Air Force, but federal, state and county governments.

"We're so much better off for doing this," he said, addressing sustainability. To him, an obvious advantage for the military is less dependence on traditional methods of fuel, energy and power. "You've got to get people to see it, touch it, feel it and like it," he said of the environmental alternatives. "The stickler always is proving it."



Photo by Ellen Hatfield Wilt

Larry Ventura stands beside a solar golf cart, the first alternative energy vehicle the base has purchased.

The dangers of drinking and driving

By Staff Sgt Harry M. Hook
Ground Safety Specialist

With summer in full swing, a lot of us will be going on vacation. At some point we will be driving, whether it's to the airport or to our vacation destination. We may even drive to weekend vacation spots. During this time of the year, we may even have a few "brews" as we are relaxing and

enjoying our much deserved time off. Before going on vacation, here's a reminder about drinking and driving.

In 2004, during the 101 Days of Summer, the Air Force experienced a total of 32 fatalities, 23 of those were traffic related fatalities. Seven of those were alcohol related. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in 2003 there

were 3,169 traffic fatalities in Florida. FORTY PERCENT of those were alcohol related. Nationwide there were 42,642 traffic fatalities. Again forty percent of those were alcohol related.

So remember, if you are going to drink, don't drive. Drive defensively and be safe.

1st Quarter Award Winners



Photo by Jake Shaw

Quarterly award winners from Jan. 1 to March 30, from left to right: NCO of the Quarter Staff Sgt. Mark Old, 70th Aerial Port Squadron, Civilian of the Quarter Anthony Cedeno, 482d CEV, Airman of the Quarter Senior Airman Randal Black, 482d LRS, Junior Officer of the Quarter Capt. Carl Strombom, 482d LRS and Senior NCO of the Quarter Senior Master Sgt. Thresa Sola, 482d LRS.

Air Force Club membership card has new look

By Jeff Carney
482d Services Marketing Director

In conjunction with the merger of Bank One with Chase Bank, the Air Force club membership card is being redesigned. The current card was deployed in 1999, and no changes have been made to it since that time. Due to the merger, Chase Bank is “re-branding” all previous Bank One cards, including Air Force club membership cards.

“Club members shouldn’t be concerned with this change whatsoever,” said Mr. Jess Holcomb, 482 Services Chief. “The card is simply getting a new look now that Chase Bank has merged with Bank One. As far as fees, rates, and benefits are concerned, they won’t be

altered in any capacity.”

Over the last several months, the Club Division at Air Force Services Agency has been working with Chase Bank and developed several possible card designs. Those designs were worked and re-worked and a selection was made and reported back to Chase Bank for them to put into production. The new design depicts the Thunderbirds, and incorporates the Chase logo and the Services logo. The result is a completely fresh, new look.

“Chase Bank seems to want to jump on board and show its pride as a new partner,” Mr. Holcomb said. “The new look they’re bringing to the card is very appealing and reflects their commitment to maintaining a quality relationship with club members and



their banking services.”

The new cards are scheduled to be “mass reissued” in the August to September time frame. The new cards retain the same membership benefits, rate and terms. All MasterCard club membership cards will be issued in August. Club members will receive the new cards, along with an invitation to enroll in the Military Free Cash program if not already enrolled.

Sexual assault, prevention and response

By Lt. Col. Leo Bonfadini
482d Medical Squadron

Sexual assault is criminal misconduct. It falls well short of the standards the Air Force expects of its men and women in uniform. Sexual Assault is the most under reported crime in our society and in the military.

Sexual Assault is defined as intentional sexual contact, characterized by the use of force, physical threat or abuse of authority or when the victim does not or cannot consent. Sexual assault includes rape, nonconsensual sodomy, and indecent assault or attempts to commit these acts. Sexual assault can occur without regard to gender, or spousal relationship or age of victim.

Sexual assault is a violation of the Air Force core values. Inherent in these core values of Integrity, Service

and Excellence, is the concept of respect; respect for ourselves, respect for others, and respect for the Air Force as an institution.

The DoD believes its first priority is for victims of sexual assault to be protected, treated with dignity and respect, and to receive the medical treatment, care and counseling that they deserve.

In response to the realities of sexual assault in the military, the DoD recently mandated a new policy establishing guidelines for confidential, restricted reporting for victims of sexual assault. DoD’s policy permits victims of sexual assault to report the crime to specified individuals who can then ensure the victim receives medical care, treatment and counseling without notifying command or law enforcement officials.

The Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, or SARC, is responsible

for assisting victims of sexual assault. All major Air Force installations are mandated to have a SARC in place to assist victims, oversee community outreach, conduct training, and to work at various prevention initiatives. The SARC is responsible for developing installation wide sexual assault prevention programs, ensuring victim support, and recruiting, screening and training of Victim Advocates.

Homestead ARB presently has two trained SARCs: Lt. Col. Leo Bonfadini and Maj. William Moore. Eventually there will be a full time SARC on base.

In the event that you must report a sexual assault, we encourage you to contact the SARC through the Command Post at extension 7023. For additional information on Sexual Assault, you may go to the following website: www.sapr.mil.

The sound of freedom

Flyovers celebrate and memorialize our triumphs and sacrifices

By Senior Airman Sandra Bueno

The sound of freedom; it's what you hear each time an F-16 flies above you in the skies. Sometimes you hear it, and sometimes you don't. Most of the time you're not supposed to hear it; but once in a while the Makos want you to know they're looking down on you.

The military flyover is one way the "Makos" of Homestead Air Reserve Base's 93d Fighter Squadron show dedication to citizens of the surrounding community. Flyovers normally take place during military celebrations and federal holidays, such as Memorial Day, Independence Day and Veterans Day. This year's July 4th flyovers took place at Key Biscayne and Whispering Pines, both in Miami.

Words can't describe the feeling you get when you're holding your hand over your heart, humming the national anthem and suddenly you see four fighter jets fly past. It will make your hair stand on end and give you goosebumps. But to enjoy those patriotic feelings, it takes a lot of effort from a few Airmen who work behind the scenes at Homestead ARB.

Generating multiple flyovers to commemorate these holidays and events each year takes more than professionalism and experience. Aside from skill and dedication, it takes the selfless desire of service members ready to give of themselves and their time to accomplish the task.

This July 4th during the celebration of the 229th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the Airmen of the 482d Fighter Wing rose to the task. More than twenty Air Force Reservists are needed to

prepare four jets for an F-16 flyover.

The Homestead Airmen contributed time and skills on a day when most Americans were freely enjoying backyard picnics and neighborhood gatherings with family members and friends. F-16 mechanics, pilots, and crew chiefs, avionics and electrical specialists, as well as supply and tool experts from Homestead ARB ensured the four F-16s were prepared to take to the skies.

Though the duties involving preparation for flyovers is voluntary,

Airmen oftentimes miss activities and irreplaceable experiences most civilians enjoy outside of the military. "My family is used to it; my being gone on a holiday, birthday, and anniversary," said crew chief Master Sgt. Wayne M. Ketter, 482d AMXS. For Sgt. Ketter, working the holiday means the public will know we are here.

Each year, someone has to take the responsibility, said Master Sgt. Adolph Crawford, 482d AMXM expediter.

Crawford's job as an F-16 expediter is to coordinate maintenance efforts on the ground to make sure the planes takeoff on schedule. "This is my turn in the barrel, my contribution to my country and troops; my way of supporting."

The willingness to sacrifice without regret is what the signers of the Declaration of Independence represented when America claimed its rights for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. At Homestead ARB, getting the job done is the priority, even on a holiday.

Next time you see the jets fly overhead and you get that tingling feeling running through your veins, remember that the sound of freedom is made possible by the volunteer efforts of many Airmen working behind the scenes, and a few in the spotlight.



Photo by Lt. Col. Thomas B. Davis

Capt. Robert "Rutro" Lytle conducts pre-flight checks of his jet with his F-16 crew chief prior to participating in July 4th flyovers.



Photo by Lt. Col. Thomas B. Davis

An F-16 "Mako" from Homestead ARB's 93d Fighter Squadron taxis to the runway prior to take-off for July 4th flyovers. The Makos flew two back-to-back flyovers, which required careful planning to make the timing perfect for each event.

\$\$\$ Scholarship \$\$\$

Applications are being accepted for the 2005 Gumby/Dago Memorial Scholarship. Applications are due by Aug 27, and can be found on the Homestead public folders. Contact Maj. Dave Chaney at (305) 224-7465/7514 for more info.