



FLIGHT LINES

SERVING HOMESTEAD AIR RESERVE BASE AND THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY

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Hometown Salute



Photo by Dan Galindo

Senior Airman Julian DeJesus III, 482nd Security Forces, was one of 50 reservists of Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla. to take part in a tribute to military members during opening ceremonies of the Dolphins first home-game of the season Sep. 17. The Airmen joined about 150 soldiers and sailors from South Florida unfurling an enormous field-size American Flag at the event. Turn to page 4 for the full story.

The best unit in the Air Force Reserve is here



Courtesy photo

By Col. Randy Falcon
482nd Fighter Wing Commander

This month I'm going to use this column to do a bit of bragging – about all of you who work for the 482nd Fighter Wing.

Our unit was recently given a prestigious award, which I received during a reception at in Washington, D.C. on Sept 25. The award was presented by the Air Force Association, which is an independent, non-profit, civilian education organization promoting public understanding of aerospace power and the pivotal role it plays in the security of our nation.

The award, called the 2006 Outstanding Reserve Unit Award, recognizes a specific Air Force Reserve unit that demonstrates superior performance and achievement.

To translate that into English, it means that the 482nd Fighter Wing is the best unit in the entire Air Force Reserve, which has 37 different units!

Lt. Gen. John Bradley, right, commander of Air Force Reserve Command and chief of the Air Force Reserve congratulates 482nd Fighter Wing Commander Col. Randy Falcon Sep. 25 in Washinton DC. The 482d won the AFA 2006 Outstanding Reserve Unit Award.

While the award is an important achievement, to me it is evidence of the great work all of you do on a daily basis, and it emphasizes the many outstanding achievements you all made last year.

Your many accomplishments last year are too numerous to list on this page, but here are a few of the important achievements that helped you win this award:

- Various units volunteered to deploy in support of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations such as Operation New Horizons and Joint Task Force Katrina; you spread goodwill and hope around the world.
- About 25 percent of you deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, where you supported the Global War on Terror and spread freedom and democracy around the world.
- Your heroic efforts resulted in our base re-opening the airfield just hours

after Hurricane Wilma passed by and then you set up an air bridge bringing 1.5 million tons of relief supplies to South Florida.

· As individuals, many of you received recognition from the highest level for performing your duties at a level of excellence that far surpasses your peers at other reserve units.

Again, these are just a few examples of how you proved to the world last year that the 482nd Fighter Wing is a world-class organization that deserves respect. And you did all this as the largest stand-alone reserve base in AFRC, with a budget much smaller than that of active duty bases.

With all these accomplishments to brag about, we could easily become complacent. But we must all remember that there is never a time when we can let our guard down. There are many challenges ahead for us, and we will have to prove ourselves again and again, through operations, deployments and inspections.

In the very near future we will be tested by the Unit Compliance Inspection, but I am confident you will show the inspectors what you have shown me since my arrival here two years ago; you are the best and you can handle any task at any time.

Thank you for your hard work of the past, present and future; I am proud to be your commander.

What quality of life improvements would you like to see at Homestead ARB?

Send your responses to:

actionline@homestead.af.mil

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Homestead, AFRC recruiters reach milestone

By Dan Galindo

482nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Air Force Reserve Command and Homestead Air Reserve base, Fla. recruiters both exceeded their recruiting goals for the 2006 recruiting year.

On Aug. 31, AFRC Recruiting Service surpassed its target for the sixth year in a row with its 8,001st recruit, while Homestead ARB recruiters earned their best year with 124 percent of their goal since the base reactivated in 1994.

Early in the recruiting year, Homestead recruiters were behind and did not reach their goal for the first quarter, yet the turnaround was more than successful.

“The busy hurricane season last year did have an adverse impact,” said Senior Master Sgt. Alexander Vazquez, Homestead senior recruiter. “But it really says something about our team that they can face that challenge and return such an impressive number of recruits.”

Sergeant Vazquez manages four recruiters with offices in Doral and Lauder Hill, Fla., and notes that in his more than 16 years as a recruiter across the U.S. and overseas the overall recruiting challenges in South Florida are some of the toughest he has seen.

“Every recruiting unit is impacted by things like the state of the economy and the media’s depiction of world events, but there are also challenges specific to location,” said Sergeant Vazquez. “While applicants may qualify for service in the Air Force, the trick is to find people who meet the requirements for the specific mission. If the unit’s primary mission revolves around deployments, the recruits

must be deployable, as in our case.”

The Homestead team as a whole credits much of its success to a solid outreach strategy, setting high personal goals at 150 percent and an on-the-level, personal approach when meeting prospective applicants.

“I truly believe in putting the wants and needs of the applicant first,” said Master Sgt. Helenka Sommers, who reached her recruiting goal more than two months before the end of the recruiting year. “It’s very important to build a strong rapport with people.”

“This is about informing people about what the Air Force Reserve can offer,” Tech. Sgt. Travis Newkirk said. “We’re not here to pressure anyone to join. Ultimately it’s about what the person wants and whether or not we meet their needs.”

Senior Airman Alex Asencio joined the Homestead team in May. As a new recruiter with just a few months before the end of the recruiting year, his goal was one recruit. However, he started out his career on an excellent note; he got three.

“It feels really good,” said Airman Asencio. “It just makes you want to get out there more. Since I’m new, I know I have to work harder to make myself known in the community, but that feeling is a great motivation.”

Sergeant Vazquez says that each of his recruiters also have specific strengths on which to capitalize.

“Most of our recruits come from recruiter-generated leads,” he said. “That means we get out there to do our

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New Healthcare Professions Recruiter comes to Homestead

Story and photo by

Master Sgt. Ray Sarracino

482nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The Homestead Air Reserve Base recruiting office is welcoming a new face to a new job. Master Sgt. Mike Edwards is Homestead’s latest addition to the recruiting office. He fills the newly-created role of Healthcare Professions Recruiter and will work out of the Doral office in Miami.

This position is responsible for officer accessions in the health care professions. These include jobs such as: Nurses, physicians, dentists and other medical professionals.

According to Sergeant Edwards,

the challenges he faces are: “Trying to find the right fit, for the right person.” He added that his favorite aspect to the job is: “Starting new careers [for recruits]. That’s the most fulfilling part.”

The 16-year veteran and New York City native brings a wealth of experience to the position. He entered the service in Dover, Del. and has served as a recruiter in his hometown of NYC, in Atlanta, Georgia. He now brings his expertise here.

For more information about Healthcare Professions in the Air Force Reserve, you can call Master Sgt. Edwards at (305) 471-0429.



Health Professions Recruiter Master Sgt. Mike Edwards at work in the Homestead Air Reserve Base Recruiting Office.

Homestead Airmen honored at Miami Dolphins football game

By Jake Shaw

482nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Fifty Airmen from the 482nd Fighter Wing participated in a military appreciation event during the Miami Dolphins football game at Dolphin Stadium on Sept 17.

For the reservists, it presented a unique opportunity.

"I thought it was a great way to get out in the community to represent our base and the entire military," said Tech. Sgt. Martin Leon, 482nd Security Forces assistant shift supervisor.

The day started early with the 482nd reservists and other military units meeting at Dolphin Stadium hours before game time. Soon after arriving the group marched to the football field for a rehearsal of the pre-game show, which included the unfurling of a gigantic American flag on the football field.

"There were at least 300 military there, including Air Force Reserve, Army, Navy, Marines and the Coast Guard," said Sgt. Leon.

The rehearsal lasted a few minutes, and then in true military fashion, the waiting game began. But the reservists from the 482nd took advantage of the down time.

"We were just waiting around for about an hour so I

“**Now I know what football players feel like when they're on the field.**

-Tech Sgt. Jose Collazo
482nd Maintenance Squadron engine mechanic”



Photo by Dan Galindo

Military members from around South Florida received deafening applause from a packed stadium during opening ceremonies of the Dolphin's first home game Sep. 17. As they left the field, Buffalo Bills long snapper Mike Schneck stepped off the sidelines to thank the troops, such as Staff Sgt. Stuart Garner, 482nd Security Forces.

walked around the field, checked out the football players and watched them practice. Those guys are as big as buildings when you see them in person," said Tech. Sgt. Jose Collazo, 482nd Maintenance Squadron engine mechanic.

About 30 minutes before kickoff, the 482nd reservists and other soldiers and sailors lined up on the field to wait for the pre-game show to begin. First there was a tribute to 9-11 and then the military formation ran across the field, unfurling a gigantic American flag.

The crowd erupted in applause seconds later as four F-16s from the 93rd Fighter Squadron performed a flyover



Photo by Jake Shaw

(Left to right in camouflage) Staff Sgt. Armstrong Gil, Senior Airman David Dey and Tech. Sgt. Terry Troup were some of the 50 reservists from Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla. to represent the Air Force Reserve during opening ceremonies of the Dolphins first home game on Sep. 17. The reservists joined about 300 soldiers and sailors in a tribute to the US Armed Forces, unfurling a field-size American flag.

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during the national anthem.

“The adrenaline was incredible, holding the flag, seeing the jets fly above us and hearing all of those fans cheering for us,” said Sgt. Collazo. “Now I know what football players feel like when they’re on the field” he said.

But that wasn’t the last time that the 482nd reservists would be recognized that day.

“I went to the ATM machine to get some cash and one of the concession stand managers told me to grab whatever food and drinks I wanted, and it was on the house,” said Sgt. Leon.

For the reservists who participated in the event, there was an obvious sense of pride in their unit, their country and in what they have volunteered to do for both.

“This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and I think everyone should take part if we get this chance again in the future,” said Sgt. Collazo, who brought his son Israel to the game with him.

Free football, free food and the chance to be recognized for your service seem like good reasons to participate, but one reason stood above all for one 482nd reservist.

“I’m really proud that my son was able to witness me on the field carrying the flag and representing the military; he got a big rush out of that,” said Sgt. Collazo.

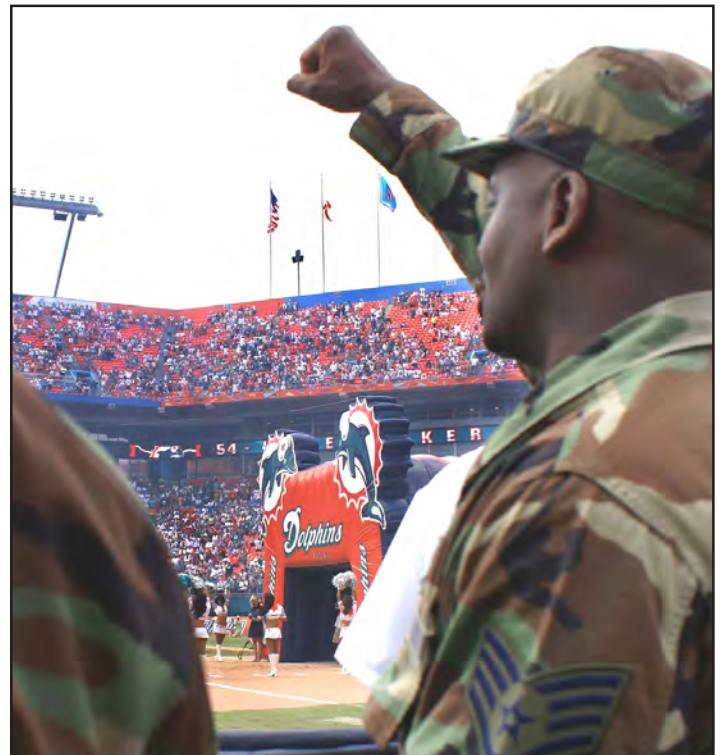


Photo by Dan Galindo

Staff Sgt. Michael Collins, 482nd Security Forces, cheers for the Dolphins players as they enter the field during opening ceremonies Sep. 17.

RECRUITING, from pg. 3

own prospecting, create awareness and meet people face-to-face.”

Airman Asencio’s recruits are a case in point. His first recruit gave him the name of a friend who might be interested, which led to another prior-service recruit. He did the ‘footwork’ himself.

There are several other factors that both AFRC and Homestead recruiters credit in helping make last year a success. The AFRC Recruiting Service has a strong national advertising campaign, Internet sites and a strong event presence, as the Homestead recruiters proved at the Ft. Lauderdale Air and Sea Show in May.

Another method of finding potential enlistees comes from the base’s own reservists through the national Get One Now program. The program has been very successful for AFRC, and Homestead recruiters are eager to expand its value here.

“The best recruiters are the reservists themselves,” Sergeant

Newkirk said. “They know personally whether someone would be qualified and whether someone would find what they’re looking for with us.”

Tech. Sgt. Newkirk emphasizes that while the high recruiting numbers are great, looking to the future, remaining flexible and anticipating the needs of the 482nd Fighter Wing are tremendously important.

“This base is going to grow due to the 2005 BRAC decision and we’ll have demands for certain positions, like in aircraft maintenance,” he said. “When we know that information, we can focus our efforts. We can reach the right people.”

Sergeant Newkirk explains that the ‘right people’ often includes prior-service enlistees or students in applicable trade schools with training and skills the base needs.

Also, the environment of the Air Force Reserve is attractive on its own merits. At a time when deployments are high, the Air Expeditionary Force

concept keeps deployment times relatively low.

While there are many sources, events and methods recruiters have at their disposal, Sergeant Vazquez points out that successes comes from a team effort.

“We’ve definitely had help all the way around,” he said. “The 482nd Fighter Wing leadership has been incredible. Every organization on base, you name it, has stepped-up when we needed them.”

As Sergeant Vazquez and his team head into the new recruiting year, he plans on keeping a strong recruiting strategy, not only maximizing efforts in some locations, but continuing to move into untapped areas.

The AFRC Recruiting Service will recognize the efforts of the Homestead recruiter team with a Recruiting Excellence Award for rising above the 110-percent threshold. (Master Sgt. Gary Johnson contributed to this report)

New chaplain shares approach to UCI

By Chaplain (Capt) Vince Cummings
Deputy Wing Chaplain

To those I have not met...Greetings!
Allow me to introduce myself.

I am Chaplain, Capt. Vince Cummings, one of two new additions to the already outstanding chapel team at Homestead Air Reserve Base. Before transferring to the 482nd Fighter Wing, I was a chaplain with the 932nd Airlift Wing, an AFRC organization located at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. I reside in the beautiful rolling hills of Nashville, Tennessee with my wife Jennifer, where I am employed by the Metropolitan Nashville Public School District. In addition to the Air Force Reserve, and my civilian job, I have recently been elected as the National Chaplain for the Reserve Officers Association. In a unique opportunity I am able to serve

my fellow 482nd FW members and the best interest of reserve personnel from all branches of service.

From what I have seen so far, the 'Florida Makos' are as sharp as the teeth of the sharks they claim. To know this makes it a pleasure to serve in beautiful South Florida at Homestead ARB. In the next month, we have an upcoming UCI, and I am confident our base will stand above the rest. Having a great deal of experience with SAV inspections and UCI inspections, I understand the kind of stress and fatigue all members of the Air Force Reserve go through, both civilian and military. Even though it is stressful we have had the benefit of a SAV to let us know what we need to do in preparation for the task at hand. I would like to encourage all members to review and correct their SAV



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Paul Dean

findings in addition to reviewing their UCI checklists. This will ensure that your sections, and our wing, will bring home high marks from the inspectors. Excellence does not happen overnight, it takes practice and refinement.

With the UCI on the horizon, it reminds me of an article I read that described the rise of Tiger Woods, the well known golf professional. In the article, Tiger discusses the countless hours he put into refining his craft. While none of us can match Wood's golfing prowess, we do possess the ability of exhibiting our own technical skills, when we meet the evaluators next month. I know for a fact each person on this base has worked countless hours to refine their craft. The remarkable efforts are important for each one of us to achieve superior proficiency. Even though we were named the Outstanding Reserve Unit of the year, we can not let our guard down and must continue to refine our skills, so we will be up to the task next month. In doing so, each and every one of us can be a 'Tiger' of the workplace, and continue the 482nd Fighter Wing's reputation for excellence throughout the Air Force and the Air Force Reserve.

Good luck and Godspeed!



Photo by Master Sgt. Ray Sarracino

A wealth of experience

(Left to right) Senior Master Sergeants Edward Ray Shiflett and Freddie Harris, and Chief Master Sgt. James Jennings take a moment to reflect on their collective years of leadership experience in the 482nd Fighter Wing. The trio were enjoying their last TDY in Hawaii prior to retirement from the Air Force Reserve. All three plan to retire by the end of 2006.

Combined Federal Campaign efforts underway on base

By Dan Galindo

482nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

482nd Fighter Wing unit representatives have started their fundraising efforts for the 2006-2007 Combined Federal Campaign here at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla. This year's goal for the wing is \$29,500, which is about three percent higher than last year.

Program organizers point out that while people may donate directly to a charitable organization, contributing through the CFC helps charities make better use of donations.

"Charities will certainly be grateful to those who donate directly," said Mr. Edward Kiess, director of the CFC program for Monroe, Miami-Dade and Broward Counties. "However, when you donate through the CFC, we notify organizations of guaranteed funds early next year, and they can do their program planning.

That allows them to be more efficient, and donations have a bigger impact for those in need."

Federal civilian employees on base and military members in active-status may make contributions through payroll deduction, which will begin the first pay period in January. Traditional reservists can make donations with cash or check, made payable to "CFC".

This year, people can choose from among 2,009 different organizations, or donate to a federation of organizations. Federations are groups of charities of similar purpose who combine their efforts to reduce operating costs.

Contact your unit CFC representative or Ms. Josie Aviles, base CFC coordinator, for specific details on charities and how to contribute. The CFC website is www.opm.gov/cfc.

The campaign runs until Dec. 15.

CFC Key Workers for Homestead ARB

Contact	Organization	Phone
Josie Aviles	Base Coordinator	(305) 224-7029
1Lt Christy Shaw	MXG	(305) 224-7999
April Meeks	OG	(305) 224-7875
MSgt Sabrina Ura	MSG	(305) 224-7306
Mary Sarazen	MSS	(305) 224-7415
Loretta Greenberg	FM	(305) 224-6079
Lt Sherbert Williams	SFS	(305) 224-6773
Carol Makin	93 FS	(305) 224-7465
Jeff Halasz	CS	(305) 224-7044
SMSgt Gregg Miller	AMXS	(305) 224-7589
Henry Burgains	LGC	(305) 224-7406
SMSgt Cynthia Addison	SVS	(305) 224-7845
MSgt Ana Zeinieh	SVS	(305) 224-7845
MSgt Lavard Wright	LRS	(305) 224-7204
MSgt Ryan Kaono	LRS	(305) 224-7033
SrA Pablo Navarrete	70 APS	(305) 224-7505
Loyce Dennett	BCE	(305) 224-7102
Ramon Rendon	LRS	(305) 224-7424
Estrella Hills	SUPS	(305) 224-7086
Jeff Carney	SVS	(305) 224-7016
TSgt Carlos Huete	MDS	(305) 224-7611
Yanic Derys	SE	(305) 224-7333



Why is giving to the Combined Federal Campaign important to you?

You help important causes that affect people in need through various organizations.



Master Sgt. Sheila Smith-Robinson
Maintenance Supply Liason

I'd like to help others starting out in universities who can not afford it otherwise.



Tech. Sgt. James Dahne Jr.
F-16 Crew Chief

It's another way to help the troops in Iraq and families back home.



Senior Airman Barry Clark
Aerial Port Transporter

Anything we can do to help people and make their lives easier is a worthy cause.



Master Sgt. Guy Pajor
Security Forces First Sergeant

Zero Tolerance for drug abuse means exactly that

*By Maj. Derek Phillips
Staff Judge Advocate*

Department of Defense and Air Force policy on drug abuse by our personnel has been plain and simple for 25 years; we have absolutely no tolerance for it. Drug abuse is incompatible with military service. Anyone found to have used illegal drugs – including steroids – will be subjected to disciplinary action. That action will range anywhere from a letter of reprimand to a court-martial, depending on the severity of the offense and all the surrounding circumstances.

It saddens me to have to repeat this policy, but it is necessary because we continue to have members who test positive for drug abuse during our monthly random urinalysis program. In May 06, we had three members test positive for illegal drugs. They are in the process of being discharged from the Reserves. In all likelihood, they will be separated with an Under Other

Than Honorable Conditions service characterization. This means they will receive no credit for their time in reserve status, and they will be ineligible for re-enlistment in any of our sister services.

Some people might consider this result to be harsh – especially as applied to members of the Reserves. I don't. Reserve duty is not a part-time job. It is regularly recurring military service designed to ensure we are ready, at any time, to be mobilized as part of the Total Force concept this nation has adopted to fight and win our wars. What this means for a Reservist is this: while we might out of uniform, we are never off duty, because we are subject to recall at any moment. When that happens, we must be immediately ready to assume our military obligation and perform our assigned duties on the same footing – and subject to the same standards of conduct – as our active duty counterparts.

We are entrusted with the same equipment, honored with the same responsibilities, and charged with producing the same results as the active duty force. Bitter, and sometimes tragic, experience has shown that these things are simply impossible when the personnel who are supposed to be making them happen are under the influence of drugs. Therefore, the 482d, like every active duty, Reserve, and guard component within the Department of Defense, has a random urinalysis program in force to (1) deter our personnel from the temptation of using drugs and (2) catch those few who try to beat the system.

Anyone in the 482nd who uses drugs will eventually be caught in one of our monthly random urinalysis sweeps. When caught, the offender will be subjected to the disciplinary action appropriate for the offense. Our zero tolerance policy on drug abuse by our personnel demands nothing less.

Federal employee insurance options expanding soon OPM selects vendors for Supplemental Dental and Vision Benefits Program

Office of Personnel Management

WASHINGTON, DC - The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has awarded contracts to insurance carriers that will offer supplemental dental and vision benefits under the new Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program. Following an extensive review, OPM has selected the Aetna Life Insurance Company, Government Employees Hospital Association, Inc. (GEHA), MetLife Inc., United Concordia Companies, Inc., Group Health, Inc., CompBenefits, and Triple-S, Inc. to offer dental benefits and BlueCross BlueShield Association, Spectera, Inc., and Vision Service Plan (VSP) to offer vision benefits.

“This new program, which becomes effective on December 31,

gives federal employees additional healthcare choices,” said OPM Director Linda M. Springer. “Employees may elect to enroll for dental benefits, vision benefits or both.”

The program allows employees to use pre-tax dollars to pay for their vision and dental premiums. However, as specified by law, there is no federal government contribution.

The Federal Employees Dental and Vision Benefits Enhancement Act of 2004 was signed into law by President Bush on December 23, 2004. The Act requires OPM to establish arrangements under which supplemental dental and vision benefits will be made available to federal employees, retirees, and their dependents, and it gives OPM broad contracting authority to leverage the purchasing power of

federal enrollees.

The new supplemental dental and vision program will be offered during this year's Open Season which begins November 13 and ends December 11.

According to the OPM website, federal employees who are eligible for the Federal Employees Health Benefits program, whether enrolled or not, will be able to enroll in dental and/or vision insurance. Enrollment will take place through the BENEFEDS Portal at www.benefeds.com.

More information on the developing program is available on the FEDVIP website at www.opm.gov/insure/DentalVision/index.asp. You can also view premium rates on the same page. Specific benefits coverage is not yet defined. OPM will update information as it becomes available.

ESGR Bosslift scheduled for January

The Florida Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve has scheduled a Bosslift for Jan. 11-13, 2007. Bosslifts transport employers and supervisors to military training sites where they observe National Guard and Reserve members on duty as part of the Total Force. This provides the employer a better understanding of what their Reservists do when they are away from their civilian occupation for duty with their military units. Employers see firsthand the type and quality of military training and leadership instruction National Guard and Reserve members receive.

Bosslifts provide employers the opportunity to share their insights on the challenges and benefits of having employees that serve in the Reserve components. Bosslift

participants are asked about their concerns regarding their Reserve employees. Employers are encouraged to offer recommendations and ideas for improving the employer/employee relationship with respect to the consequences of military service. Lastly, employers are asked about their overall assessment of employer support programs and services. In addition to open discussion, their completed questionnaires are compiled in a written evaluation.

To nominate your boss for this exciting opportunity, fill out the form below. Reservists may also contact Public Affairs at (305) 224-7303 for a nomination form. All forms must be received no later than Dec. 10 for consideration.

FLORIDA ESGR BOSSLIFT TO KEY WEST, FL — JANUARY 11-13 2007

The Florida ESGR Bosslift to Key West, FL. is scheduled for 11 - 13 January 2007. The BOQ's have been reserved and the aircraft, and a backup, have been scheduled.

We are limited to 30 Employers and 5 ESGR members. It will be first come, first serve, with a backup list of 10 in case of cancellations, (there always are). Employers must have Guardsmen or Reservists in their firm or they will be rejected.

Highlights will include a tour of Homestead Air Reserve Base and Naval Air Station Key West. Reservists are encouraged to nominate their bosses.

Applications (below) should be e-mailed to Lt. Col. Thomas Davis at thomas.davis@homestead.af.mil or faxed to (305) 224-7302. We look forward to hosting you on this Bosslift, but remember to sign up early. Please complete the form below and return no later than Dec. 10, 2006.

ALL FIELDS MUST BE COMPLETED, PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Employer Name _____ SS# _____

Email Address (Very Important) _____

Home Address _____ City _____ ST ____ Zip _____

Company Name _____ Your Position _____

Cell Phone# (Must Have) _____ Business Phone# _____

Home Phone# _____ Fax # _____

Name and Rank of Military Member making the nomination _____

For more information, contact the 482nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs Officer,
Lt. Col. Thomas B. Davis at (305) 224-7303

More downtime for deployed reservists

The Air Force Reserve Command vice commander has outlined a new post-deployment downtime policy for people gained by the command. Deployed personnel now receive two and a half days of downtime for every 30 days deployed, up to a maximum of 14 days. The new policy more than doubles the number of “free gratis” time given under the old policy, which limited AFRC-gained people to one day for every 30 days deployed. According to the memo, the new downtime policy also applies to military people assigned to AFRC headquarters. AFRC members gained by other major commands will follow their respective command’s downtime policy. (AFRC News Service)

ARPC contact center available on UTA

The Air Reserve Personnel Center’s Reserve Personnel Contact Center in Denver is open during every primary unit training assembly from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. (MST). The Contact Center number is DSN 926-6528 or toll-free 1-800-525-0102. “Our team looks forward to providing world-class support to our Citizen Airmen,” said Col. Ann C. Shippy, ARPC commander. She encourages all reservists to establish a virtual Personnel Center-Guard & Reserve (vPC-GR) account so that future support can be provided.

Time off awards for ARTs limited in use

Air reserve technicians still can’t use time-off award hours to cover absences from their civilian position when performing military duty or travel. In a Sept. 12 memorandum, Maj. Gen. Allan R. Poulin, vice commander of Air Force Reserve Command, reaffirmed the policy that has been in effect since December 1992. The command has received approval from the Air Force to reinstate for six months any time-off award hours employees would otherwise have lost during a period of extended active duty because the policy prevented them from using those hours while on extended active duty.

Accountability procedures now online

If a national emergency occurs, Air Force Reserve Command has improved procedures in place for keeping track of its military people and their families. The command developed the procedures to prepare for future disasters after hurricanes devastated the Gulf Coast last year. Reporting instructions are available on the command Web site, <https://www.mil.afrc.af.mil>. People can link to the instructions by selecting the “Hot & New Items” icon, going to the drop-down menu and selecting “Personnel Accountability.”

Program helps with family separation

Our Military Kids is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to ensure the children (kindergarten to 12th grade) of deployed and severely injured Guard and Reserve personnel can afford to participate in activities such as youth sports, fine arts and

tutoring programs. For an application and program details, visit their website at www.ourmilitarykids.org. For more information, read the Air Force Print News story at www.af.mil and search “Our Military Kids”.

Retirement application process online

All eligible members of the Air Force Reserve can now submit retirement applications electronically via the virtual Personnel Center Guard and Reserve, a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week customer service Web portal operated by the Air Reserve Personnel Center. This service is available any time from anywhere and will give Airmen the ability to monitor the status of their application. Reservists can log on to the vPC-GR at <http://arpc.afrc.af.mil/support/default.asp> to begin the process. For more information, read the Air Force Print News story at www.af.mil and search “retirements application”.

Reserve income replacement available

The Reserve Income Replacement Program became effective Aug. 1, and the first RIRP payments for eligible service members start Sept. 1. The RIRP was developed to provide specific payments to eligible members of the National Guard and Reserve who are involuntarily serving on active duty and who are experiencing a monthly active duty income differential of more than \$50, as determined by the member’s service secretary. RIRP payments will be made to an eligible member on a monthly basis. For more information, contact the Reserve Personnel Contact Center at 800-525-0102 or read the Air Force Print News story at www.af.mil and search “income replacement”.



Courtesy photo

Membership Pays

Congratulations to Master Sgt. Bennard Entrekin (Center), 482nd Maintenance Squadron, for winning the Bose sound system in the AFRC Club Membership Drive. Also, Lt. Col. Mark Wolfe, 482nd Civil Engineering Commander, won a color television at the club’s Member Appreciation lunch.

AFRC patch wear date changes

Due to unforeseen circumstances regarding availability of the AFRC patch, the mandatory wear date of the patch has been extended to May 1, 2007. To date, approximately one fourth of the needed number of patches has been made available to the field. As patches are issued, members are expected to wear them on their uniforms as soon as possible. Extending the wear date will allow additional time for remaining ordered patches to be delivered to the distribution point and disseminated to the field for issue.

Open house at supply store

The Base Supply Store is hosting an open-house event on Oct. 23 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. to promote awareness of National Disability Employment Aware-

ness month. Stop by to enjoy free refreshments and to learn why it is important to support JWOD, NIB and other federally-aided programs. JWOD and NIB create jobs and training opportunities for people who are blind or who have other severe disabilities, empowering them economically and allowing them to lead more independent lives.

Retiree Activities Office changes hours / seeks volunteers

Retiree Activities Office has changed its office hours. The RAO is now open from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The RAO is recruiting volunteers to augment the current staff. The office is seeking retirees from all branches the military, especially those who may have been in a First Sergeant-type position and can

dedicate at least two and a half hours, two or more times a month. Interested individuals should contact the RAO at (305) 224-7580 during normal duty hours.

Member Only events at the club

The Falcon's Nest Club is hosting two members-only events in October and December. "Oktoberfest" will be on Oct. 13, when one lucky member will win a free color television. No one under 18 permitted. The club will host another members-only event Dec. 1, featuring free food and prizes. Both events are free for members, and one guest is allowed for a \$10 fee.

Finance relocated to Bldg. 360

The Financial Management Office has returned to the Wing Headquarters building, bldg. 360, room 106.



Photo by Master Sgt. Ray Sarracino

SrA Frederick Villanueva of the 482d LRS Transportation Department discusses voting options with Mr. Emmett Moss of the Miami-Dade Elections Department. Mr. Moss was on Homestead Air Reserve Base conducting a voter registration and education campaign on Sat., Sept. 9, 2006.

Voter Registration Drive

The Miami Dade Elections Department will have an Election Outreach Specialist available during the October primary unit training assemblies. The election specialist will help military, civilian or retired individuals register to vote for upcoming elections at the following dates, times and locations:

Oct. 14-15 at the BX Mart from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Oct. 14-15 at the Falcon's Nest Club from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

For more information contact the Wing Voting Assistance Officers:

Lt. Col. Thomas Davis at
(305) 224-7303 or

Lt. Col. Robert Delgado at
(305) 224-7821.

AFPC offers guidance to civilians nearing retirement

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — The Air Force Personnel Center's Benefits and Entitlement Service Team here encourages civilians who want to retire in the next few years to plan ahead and seek counseling early.

Potential retirees should contact BEST at least one year before retirement to receive one-on-one counseling over the phone, and to request a counselor-prepared estimate. Employee information is available to benefits counselors who are able to cover issues that are so important to retirees.

"Planning ahead cannot be overstressed," said Ms. Janet Thomas, an AFPC Human Resources Specialist. "Many individuals retire, only to discover their retirement pay is insufficient to live on. In addition, many are not prepared to meet financial commitments occurring between date of retirement and receipt of the first retirement check, which can sometimes take up to two or more months."

Many employees believe all the service in their service computation date for leave is creditable towards retirement. For many, this simply isn't true, according to Ms. Thomas.

"Employees who previously took a

refund of their retirement contributions, or owe a deposit for temporary service or military service, may discover this service is not creditable for retirement," said Ms. Thomas. "Individuals who are retired military might need to know whether it would be advantageous to combine their military and civilian service."

In planning for retirement, there are many factors to consider, such as whether to provide a survivor benefit for the spouse in the event of the employee's death after retirement; whether they are eligible to take health and life insurance into retirement; sick leave credit; Thrift Savings Plan withdrawal options and direct deposit. In addition, it's important not to change the mailing address or bank account for direct deposit during the few months before and after retirement.

A wealth of information is available on the BEST Web page at <http://ask.afpc.randolph.af.mil/best/>. Simply click on any option and then click the "Retirement" link that appears on the far left side of the page and select from the many available items, including Retirement Eligibility, Military Deposit, Plan/Prepare for Retirement, and How to Apply for Retirement.

Those ready to retire should submit

their retirement applications to BEST 90 to 120 days prior to the effective date of retirement. During the process, three letters are sent to update the potential retiree on the status of his/her application.

The first letter acknowledges receipt of the application; the second verifies he/she is eligible to retire; and the third is notification that the retirement application package has been sent to the servicing payroll office.

The final stop for the retirement application is the Office of Personnel Management, where the final authority for approval of the retirement resides. OPM also starts the retirement payments.

Air Force-serviced civilian appropriated fund employees serviced by BEST may reach BEST benefits counselors weekdays from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. CDT. Employees located in the United States can call toll-free 1-800-616-3775 (press 2, then 2 again, and follow the prompts). More detailed instructions on reaching a counselor are available at http://ask.afpc.randolph.af.mil/docs/best/docs/BEST_Telephone_Menu.pdf.

Hearing impaired employees may reach a benefits counselor by calling toll-free TDD 1-800-382-0893.

(AFPC News Service)

New strategic communication tool online

9/20/2006 - WASHINGTON (AFPN) — A recently released publication aims to help Airmen and commanders become better strategic communicators when talking about the Air Force to the public.

The Air Force Story, available now on this site, is a high-level summary of information about the Air Force, with topics ranging from heritage to missions, vision and people.

The publication is meant to help Airmen understand and talk about the Air Force.

"*The Air Force Story* provides talking points to get you started talking about the Air Force," said Brig. Gen. Erwin F. Lessel III, Air Force director of Communication, "and help you explain to a variety of audiences who you are as an Airman and what America's Air Force does for the nation."

The talking points are bulleted, and divided into many appropriate topics. General Lessel said it is important for Airmen to understand the messages in the publication.

"We are responsible for telling the Air Force Story credibly and accurately," he said. "Our Air Force needs every Airman to be a communicator and tell our story and this document is the right tool to get started. We want to communicate 'one message with many voices.'"

Airmen can download a PDF copy of *The Air Force Story* through Air Force Link at www.af.mil/library/afstory.asp. Search "strategic communication" at www.af.mil for further details on the subject.