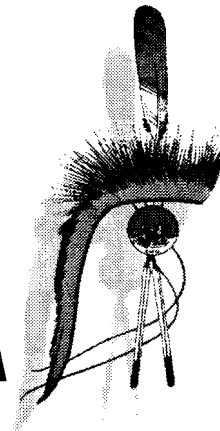


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SPIRIT 931ST AIR REFUELING GROUP

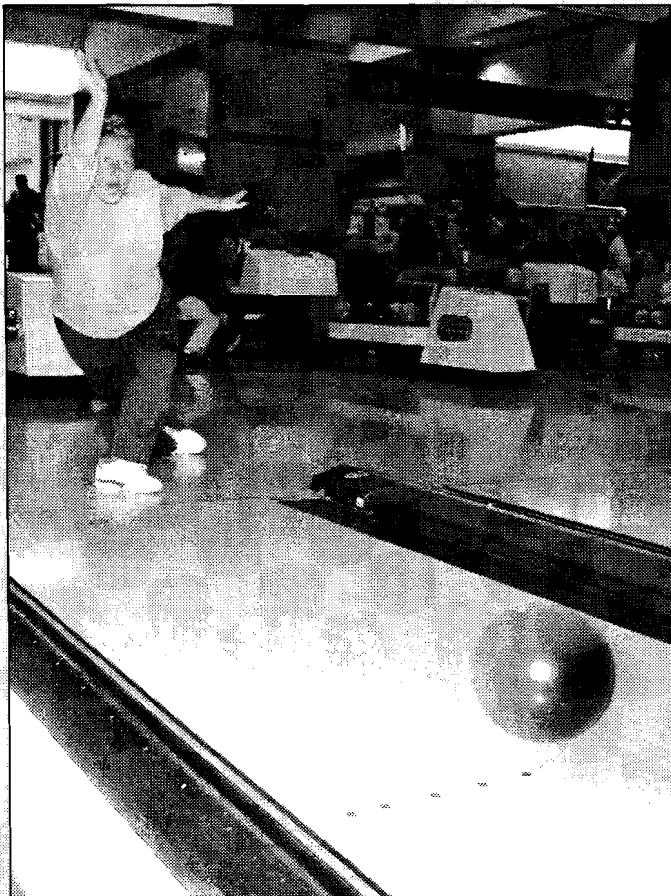


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Christmas pullout
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McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas

December 2000



Staff Sgt. Jason Whited

High roller

Master Sgt. Alma Fewlass, 931st Information Systems Flight Chief, takes her best shot during the 931st Air Refueling Group Bowling Tournament held Nov. 13 at Tornado Alley.

Fewlass was one of more than 30 reservists and civilians who turned out for the contest. Who won? Turn to Page 11 to find out!

Three Kanza NCOs to join officer corps

By Staff Sgt. Jason Whited
Kanza Spirit Editor

Three Kansas reservists are getting the chance to trade in their stripes for gold bars. Staff Sgt. Russ Hunt, Tech. Sgt. Angela Chatmon and Staff Sgt. Doug Crow are just the latest in a line of 931st Air Refueling Group NCOs to make the jump from the enlisted ranks to the officer corps.

Hunt, the first to get his commission, is leaving the 931st Intel Office to become a health care administrator with the Army Reserve 89th Regional Support Command. Before pinning on his "butter bars," Hunt served about eight years both on active duty and in the Air Force Reserve. He now heads to San Antonio for two weeks of so-called indoctrination training followed by a nine-week training course (also in Texas) to prepare him for his new military job.

Chatmon, the current first sergeant for McConnell's 18th Air Refueling Squadron, is staying with the 931st ARG after her commission. Chatmon has been

with the unit for a couple of years and in her time here has worked a variety of jobs.

Although she's still waiting for a class date at the Academy of Military Science (the military school in Tennessee where reservists and Guardsmen like her train to become officers), Chatmon is already gearing up for the five and half-week course. "I'm very excited," she said.

Crow, who will join Maj. Sue Lovas in the Military Equal Opportunity Office after his commissioning, has been with the unit since July 1997 said his AMS class starts in March.

Crow said he's honored to have been chosen for a commission and added he believes his work ethic, professionalism and integrity will help him in this new stage of his military career.

Col. James Bouska, 931st ARG Commander, said all three NCOs have shown through their hard work, professionalism and dedication that they are prepared to assume their new leadership roles. "I wish them all the success in the world," he said.

Holiday wishes, AEF update, warm thanks from commander

By Col. James Bouska
931st ARG Commander

Greetings! As we move into the holiday season I want to wish you all the best. This is a time for families and friends, and that is where our emphasis needs to be. So enjoy this time, and as always in whatever we are doing let's do it smartly and safely.

After attending two commander's conferences recently, the recurring theme in AFRC is, "we must support our AEF commitments first and foremost." What does this mean for us in the 931st? We have been assigned a primary AEF and cycle in which we are expected to support to the max extent possible, especially our support people. Outside of this primary zone, we can volunteer to help other units in their AEF requirements (and this is also the time we try to schedule our EORIs, SAVs and UCIs). Still, even with all this advanced planning our plate is full to overflowing. The latest word

from the AEF cell at AFRC is that our primary zone for AEF support is in AEF's 3 and 4 during Cycle 4 -- this works out to be September, October and November 2003. So mark those months on your calendar as a time when we will be deploying a lot of people and our reserve participation will surge.

Looking closer in on our windscreen is our EORI preparation. We are going to have a lot of folks being evaluated in IGX 01-02 in May. We all need to help and be prepared to support these events to our fullest. After we complete this exercise, the 931st will be about 75 percent complete in our ORI requirements, which is a great place to be.

As I mentioned earlier, our plate is very full, and we are going to be heavily tasked through December 2001. Then, I see a respite from most higher headquarter taskings till our primary AEF cycle in Sep-Nov 2003. This doesn't mean we won't be busy -- we will -- but if



Col. James Bouska

we are all pulling together there is nothing they can throw at us that we can't handle, but it takes ALL of US working together. Which, if I've learned nothing else here at the 931st, is that this is our strong point.

Thanks for all your support and what you do for the unit and our country. Now that you have heard my state union pitch and our five year outlook, go out and enjoy the holiday season to the fullest. Best Wishes and God Bless.

Reservists have right to use IG

By Lt. Col. Ralph Rissmiller
931st ARG Inspector General

Every member of the group has the right to use the Inspector General complaints system to seek resolutions to problems. As the IG, I will do everything I can to help resolve any problems you bring me. I will, however, always ask you to go through your chain-of-command first. Your immediate supervisor, first sergeant or squadron

commander deserves the opportunity to work your problem, if possible. The group commander and the command chief master sergeant also stand ready to help, if necessary.

If none of these individuals are able to resolve the issue to your satisfaction, the IG process may be your next course of action. Any time you desire to talk to me about an IG issue, or any other matter, please feel free to call Ext. 3684, make an

appointment, simply stop by the office, or send an e-mail to me. If an IG issue arises and I am not available, you may contact Lt. Col. Steve Kett, the 931st Chief of the Intel Flight at Ext. 5853, who is the alternate IG. You can find both of our names and numbers on IG posters around the group. Other numbers: Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline -- Ext. 3192 or DSN 743.3192; DOD Hotline -- 703.693.5080/800.424.9098 or DSN 223.5080

KANZA
SPIRIT 931ST AIR REFUELING GROUP

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John Levitow dead at 55

'Living legend' loses fight with cancer

By Senior Airman
Oshawn Jefferson

Air Force Print News

SAN ANTONIO -- America lost a hero Nov. 8 when John Levitow, enlisted recipient of the Air Force Medal of Honor, died at his home in Connecticut after a lengthy battle with cancer.

"This was a sad day for our Air Force," said Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Jim Finch. "John Levitow for years has been woven into the fabric of enlisted heritage. Through his heroic efforts he was the embodiment of our core value 'service before self.' His name has become synonymous with excellence, and his legacy will continue to live in the hearts and minds of all Air Force members today and well into the future."

Levitow received the Medal of Honor after an incident on Feb. 24, 1969. At that time, he served as a loadmaster aboard a severely damaged AC-47 gunship over Long Binh, South Vietnam. Suffering from more than 40 shrapnel wounds in his back and legs from a mortar blast, he saw a smoking magnesium flare amid a jumble of spilled ammunition canisters.

Despite loss of blood and partial loss of feeling in his right leg, Levitow threw himself on the flare, hugged it close, dragged himself to an open cargo door and hurled the flare out. Almost simultaneously, the flare ignited harmlessly outside the door and away from the munitions.

"Sergeant Levitow served

during a war in which heroic acts were commonplace, but by any standard, his courage that night was extraordinary," said Secretary of the Air Force Whit Peters. "His selfless actions saved not only his own life but the lives of seven others. For three decades he has been an inspiration to all of our airmen -- enlisted, officers and civilians."



A military caisson, carrying the body of Medal of Honor recipient John Levitow makes the solemn journey through Arlington National Cemetery as the funeral procession follows. Levitow died Nov. 8 at his home in Connecticut after a lengthy battle with cancer.

In recounting the event, Levitow said he remembered the pilot yelling back to the crew, but didn't remember anything after that. All members in the cargo compartment were wounded, according to history reports. The aircraft sustained more than 3,500 fragment holes in the fuselage and a two-foot wide hole through the right wing.

"What I did was a conditioned

response," Levitow said about the incident in 1998. "I just did it. The next thing I remembered was seeing the landing strip."

President Richard M. Nixon presented the Medal of Honor to Levitow on Armed Forces Day, May 14, 1970, at the White House.

After his Air Force service Levitow continued a close relationship with the military. He spent 22 years devoted to veterans affairs, and later worked in Connecticut developing and designing veteran programs.

Tech. Sgt. Mark Suban

Since his heroics in 1969, the Air Force has honored him in many different ways. He has been a part of the Air Force Professional Fitness Exam booklet and as any NCO who has pored over the promotion books knows, Levitow was the lowest ranking airman in history to earn the Medal of Honor.

See LEVITOW, Page 13

Medal of Honor's roots begin with George Washington

SAN ANTONIO -- The first formal system for rewarding acts of individual gallantry by the nation's fighting men was established by Gen. George Washington on Aug. 7, 1782.

Designed to recognize "any singularly meritorious action," the award consisted of a purple cloth heart. Records show that only three persons received this Badge of Military Merit -- all of them sergeants in Washington's army.

Although the honor fell into disuse after the Revolutionary War, the idea of recognition for individual gallantry remained through the 1800s. In 1847, after the outbreak of the Mexican-American War, a "Certificate of Merit" was established for any soldier who distinguished himself in action. No medal went with the honor. After the war, however, the award was discontinued.

Early in the Civil War, a medal for individual valor was proposed to General-in-Chief of the Army Winfield Scott. But Scott felt medals smacked of European affectation and killed the idea.

Shortly after the Navy began awarding its own Medal of Valor in 1861, a similar resolution was again introduced in the Army. Signed into law July 12, 1862, the measure provided for awarding a Medal of Honor to NCOs and privates "as shall most distinguish themselves by their gallantry in action, and other soldierlike qualities..."

Although created for the Civil War, Congress made the Medal of Honor a permanent decoration in 1863. Courtesy of American Forces Information Service

Authorization paves way for military participation in savings plan

Active duty, reservists can soon use program for retirement 'nest egg'

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON -- Military members will be able to create their own retirement nest egg by using the Federal Employees Thrift Savings Plan beginning next year, according to Department of Defense officials. A portion of the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal 2001 that President Clinton signed Oct. 30 allows service members to participate in the civilian retirement plan, said Navy Capt. Elliott Bloxom, Defense Department director of military compensation.

The Thrift Savings Plan offers federal civilian employees the same type of savings and tax benefits that many private corporations offer their employees under so-called "401(k)" plans. Money invested in the TSP comes from pre-tax dollars and reduces taxable income; investments and earnings are not taxed until they are withdrawn by the employee.

The plan has been in place since 1986.

The authorization act would allow active-duty and Ready Reserve service members to invest up to 5 percent of their basic pay in the plan and all of any special and incentive pays they may receive -- including bonuses -- up to an annual limit

of \$10,500 per employee.

Civilians in the current Federal Employees Retirement System receive matching government funds in the TSP program. The investment benefit for the bulk of the military force, however, will resemble that of workers in the old Civil Service Retirement System. Those employees also have a 5 percent ceiling and do not receive any matching funds.

Service members may be eligible for matching funds in limited instances. Under the Special Retention Incentive portion of the legislation, members in certain critical specialties may receive matching funds based on their contributions from basic pay. In return, the member would have to agree to spend at least six years in their chosen specialty.

For more info

Surf on over to www.tsp.gov for more info on TSP and how you can participate.

"The match is discretionary by the service secretaries," Bloxom said. "We will be meeting with the services to determine how the services want to implement this. I would envision at this point that the services would offer the match similar to the way

they offer the selective re-enlistment bonus."

Bloxom said the services might offer TSP matches instead of a selective re-enlistment bonus, but nothing in the law says service members cannot receive both incentives.

The legislation calls for the plan to be implemented within 360 days of the signing of the legislation. "Of course, the critical date will be determined by when the (Federal Retirement) Thrift Investment Board is able to provide timely and accurate services to our members," Bloxom said.

"Accommodating DOD will double the number of individuals who are eligible to participate in the TSP. Right now, we envision that members will be able to enroll in the TSP beginning in October 2001. That will mark the start of a special 60-day open season."

Participation is optional and not automatic. Service members who want to sign up or change their investment levels generally would do so during designated "open seasons" -- the same as civilian employees. "Actual cash contributions would not start until after that open season," Bloxom said. He estimated service members would actually begin investing by January 2002.

Defense officials are working with Defense Finance and Accounting Service and the thrift investment board on how to get the whole program up and running. Forms and educational materials will go out to all service members so they can make an informed choice during the



Staff Sgt. Jason Whited and Staff Sgt. Vernon Sheaffer, 931st Civil Engineering Squadron, is one of hundreds of unit members who will be able to create a retirement nest egg with the Federal Employees Thrift Savings Plan beginning late next year.

upcoming open season.

The TSP program currently allows employees to invest in any or all of three mutual funds: a government bond fund, a corporate bond fund and a stock fund. TSP administrators estimate that May 1, will be the stand-up of two new mutual fund options: international stocks and small-business stocks.

For more information on how the program works, visit the TSP Web site at www.tsp.gov. The site includes a range of forms, frequently asked questions and investment calculators, and it offers online account access.

Information on TSP for servicemembers should also be available soon.

'Smart' cards to replace standard IDs

WASHINGTON -- Three Air Force bases and an Air National Guard unit are now testing the software used to produce a new Department of Defense common access card. The new card will eventually replace the standard military identification card for about 4 million active-duty people, members of the Selected Reserve, civilian employees and eligible contractors.

Langley Air Force Base, Va.; Osan Air Base, Korea; Ramstein AB, Germany; and the 203rd Rapid Engineer Deployable-Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineer in Virginia Beach, Va., were selected to conduct the test. The card has been dubbed a "smart" card because of its embedded microchip, magnetic stripe and two bar codes.

More than an ID card

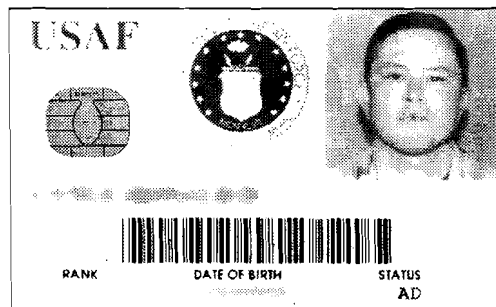
More than just an identification card, it will eventually allow physical access to secure areas, permit entry into computer networks and serve as the authentication token for the public key infrastructure.

The common access card uses cutting-edge technology to reform business processes, eliminate paper-based activities, ensure network security and enhance military readiness.

According to Col. William

Nelson, Air Force director of architecture and interoperability, the new card can store up to 32 kilobytes of information, of which a portion is reserved for service applications.

"The Air Force will initially allocate its space by migrating existing smart card applications to the common access card," he said.



File photo

A look at the new Defense Department common access card. With a 32 kilobyte embedded computer chip, magnetic stripe and two bar codes, the "smart" card will eventually replace the standard military identification card.

Existing applications include the Falcon card issued to cadets at the Air Force Academy, Colo.; the recruit card, issued to trainees at Lackland AFB, Texas; a Standard Asset Tracking System in use at 21 bases, but soon to be implemented Air Force-wide; and the Deployment Personnel Accountability Readiness Tool.

The common access card will

be phased in over three stages. The first phase is the testing at Langley, Osan, Ramstein and the 203rd. The second phase, which will begin in January, will add Hurlburt Field, Fla., and will test the SATS application. The third phase will involve issuing the new cards to about one-third of the Air Force target population in February 2001, with the

remaining two-thirds getting their cards by September 2002.

"The phase-in will be accomplished base by base, probably through normal attrition, but the DOD is still working out details," Nelson said.

The new ID is based on "smart card" technology

that stores and processes information on an integrated microprocessor chip. Embedded within the card, this chip is a small computer without a monitor or power supply. It has the capability to read, write and perform various operations on several thousand bytes of information.

The common access card is about the size of an average

credit card and will incorporate linear and two-dimensional bar codes and a magnetic stripe in order to enable the card to support other functions, either on a department-wide or individual command basis.

Hand-held personal almanac

Among the applications being considered are processing food charges in mess halls and updating manifest and deployment data. Also being evaluated are placing individual medical and dental information on the card, as well as student status, armory and property accountability, training and firing range performance.

While the card will not include a personal handwritten signature, it will store certificates to enable cardholders to digitally sign documents such as e-mail, encrypt information, and establish secure Web sessions to access and update information via the Internet.

These provisions are intended to enhance individual privacy as computerized systems replace paper-based systems.

Although McConnell is not one of the test bases for the card, 931st personnel officials said Kansas reservists can expect to receive their new card within a couple of years. **Courtesy of Air Force Print News**

Reserve changes rules for overseas IDTs

By Staff Sgt. Jason Whited
Kanza Spirit Editor

Effective immediately, reservists who want to perform Inactive Duty Training overseas will only be allowed to do so if they're assigned or attached to an overseas unit. The policy

change, which was issued by Air Force Reserve Command officials just before Thanksgiving, also states that all other personnel are prohibited from performing IDTs overseas.

According to the new AFRC policy letter, officials also decided to extend IDT periods

from six hours to up to 12 hours, depending on when reservists report in for duty and will cover the entire period reservists are overseas (including times when troops are not actually training). The report goes on to state the reason for the time extension is to provide UCMJ coverage

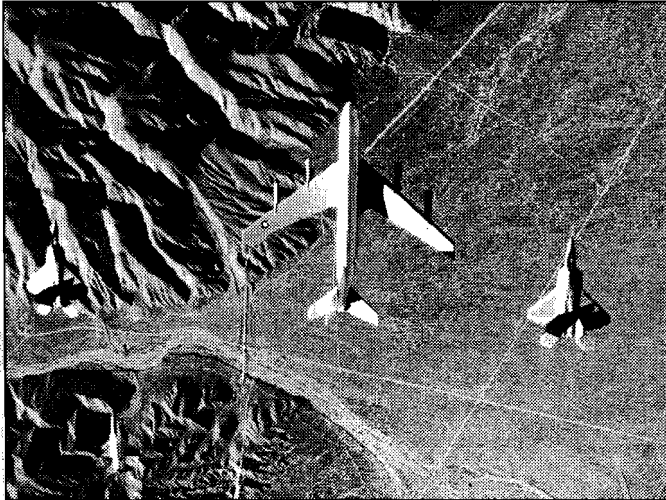
during the entire period.

In addition, the memorandum states that reservists will not be allowed to perform IDTs in so-called "hostile fire" areas.

For more information on the changes for IDTs, contact the 931st Military Personnel Flight at Ext. 3458.



Around the Air Force



U. S. Air Force photo

Raptors on the prowl

Two F-22 Raptors flank a KC-135 tanker from the 452nd Flight Test Squadron, Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., during a recent test mission. Staying close behind is an chase F-16 Fighting Falcon.

Air Force medical team travels with president

LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE, Texas -- No matter who turns out to be the 43rd President of the United States -- whether it's Gov. George W. Bush or Vice President Albert Gore -- a small group of people from Wilford Hall Medical Center will always play a part in preserving the presidency in case of a medical crisis. These people of the 59th Medical Wing play an important part in making sure the person on top of the chain of command is never too far from emergency medical care and, if need be, providing quick aeromedical evacuation when traveling in foreign countries.

"We've had some of our people on three of the president's recent trips since March," said Lt. Col. (Dr.) William Beninati, flight commander of the pulmonary medicine flight here. "The White House realized that when the President traveled to more remote areas, there would not always be adequate medical facilities in case of an emergency or crisis. They went to the Air Force Surgeon General, Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Paul Carlton, who offered our services. We go on the trips if the country's infrastructure does not support a fully-capable emergency surgery and aerovac mission."

In recent months, WHMC team members have accompanied the president to such varied

locations as Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Tanzania.

The WHMC staff augments the White House medical staff, and acts as the expert in trauma and surgical care. They bring enough gear to equip a Mobile Field Surgical Team and a Critical Care Air Transport Team, about 14 bags weighing in about 1,000 pounds ... and that doesn't include their personal gear. Nine people make up the team, including one flight commander, three critical care air transport people, and five mobile field surgery team members.

"We usually bring more stuff than what we'll actually need," Beninati said. "Our first priority is to the President, in essence, to preserve the presidency. We do have the capacity to treat other civilian and military members of the presidential delegation should an emergency or crisis occur."

"Once the president is in the country, we have to be available around the clock," said Lt. Col. (Dr.) James A. King, emergency medical flight commander. "And it's usually a lot of waiting around...It is interesting, however, to see how the whole presidential operation works. You don't realize how big a production it is, and what goes into all the (planning)."

Operation Dear Abby holiday mail program open to all

WASHINGTON -- Anyone interested in participating in a special holiday mail mission to spread goodwill and cheer to

military men and women around the world can do so through Operation Dear Abby, according to the Military Postal Service Agency officials.

The operation, started 16 years ago by Abigail Van Buren - known through her nationally syndicated column as "Dear Abby" -- encourages Americans to send holiday cards and letters to overseas service members.

To ensure the mail is received within the required time frame and adheres to Defense Department security guidelines, MPSA officials said the mail must be limited to first-class letter mail weighing 13 ounces or less.

When sending mail to a specific area, people are asked to address it to the closest geographic hub, which will distribute the mail to all services in the area that it supports. In order for the system to cover the widest possible area, the addresses must remain generic. Addresses other than those listed below will not determine the distribution.

The following are this year's addresses where you can send your letters to our men and women in uniform:

•Europe and Southwest Asia: Any Service Member, Operation Dear Abby, APO AE 09135

•Mediterranean Basin: Any Service Member, Operation Dear Abby, FPO AE 09646

•Far East: Any Service Member, Operation Dear Abby, APO AP 96285

•Pacific Basin: Any Service Member, Operation Dear Abby, FPO AP 96385. **Courtesy of Air Force News Service**



Kanza Spirit Christmas Pullout

Don't fight the
crowds this season --
knock out your
Christmas list online!
Page 8

Holidays got you
stressed out?
Learn how to chill out
and enjoy the
season!
Page 9

Boost your family's
spirits
with these
holiday treats
Page 9

Bring some holiday
cheer to those less
fortunate
Page 10

Kanza Spirit Christmas Pullout

Christmas shopping got you down? Tired of the crowds, the traffic and the hassle? With a few clicks of your mouse, you can beat the holiday rush and avoid the headaches as you...

Shop while you surf

By Staff Sgt. Jason Whited
Kanza Spirit Editor

Unless you've been living in a cave the last few years, you know that more and more Americans are staying away from malls and shops and doing a large portion of their shopping online. As Internet use has increased dramatically over the past few years, so has the number of people who would rather browse virtual shopping aisles on their computer screen than real ones in neighborhood

Numbers tell the story

•Fifty percent of people who didn't shop online last year said they plan on doing at least some of their holiday shopping on the Web this year.

•During all of 1995, online shoppers spent only about \$1 million. This year, Americans are expected to shell out more than \$12 billion -- in online sales alone.

•Worldwide, online shopping revenue will surpass \$19 billion this holiday season.

Source: AT&T,
The Gartner Group

stores. According to official government reports, from 1995 to 1999, the number of shoppers who bought gifts online jumped from just over 1 million to more than 50 million.

At no time of the year is this cybershopping trend more apparent than during the holiday shopping season. Whether because of convenience, value or just plain curiosity, an increasing number of Americans are using the Web each year to do the dirty work of Christmas shopping from the convenience of home instead of braving both the yuletide traffic and the tempers from rushed shoppers.

This holiday season, more Americans will shop online than ever before -- more than 55 million people according to Nielsen Media Research. Commerce and technology researchers disagree somewhat as to exactly how much online shoppers in this country will shell out this holiday season, but most studies estimate that these "surfers turned shoppers" will spend somewhere in the neighborhood of \$12 billion.

Americans can now buy everything from steaks to socks with their home computers and are most definitely taking advantage of both the variety and sales that are available to the online savvy shopper.

Dee Thornton, a military pay technician with the 931st Finance



Staff Sgt. Jason Whited

Almost 100 percent of people who shopped online last year said they plan on surfing for presents again this year.

Office, said she's shopped online for years and plans to do the same this year.

"I like the convenience," said Thornton. "I like it because you don't have to go out in all that traffic."

Staff Sgt. Alison Dabney, a reservist and education and training specialist with the 349th Mission Support Squadron at Travis Air Force Base, Calif., agreed with Thornton and said she also shops online because of the convenience. "I've shopped online for three years," she said. "It's quick, easy and you don't have to drive anywhere -- you can do it from home."

Neither woman said online security was a major concern for them. And neither shopper said

See SHOP, Page 13

Online 'elves'

Make no mistake, online retailing is big business. Web sites compete to no end for your Christmas dollar, offering everything from free shipping to huge discounts just to win your business.

If you plan on doing any Christmas shopping online this year, chances are you'll hit one of these top seven online retailers:

Amazon.com
BarnesandNoble.com
eBay.com
ToysRUs.com
JCPenney.com
CDNow.com
eToys.com

Source: NPJ Group

Kanza Spirit Christmas Pallot

Holidays stressing you out? Maybe you need to 'chill out' and enjoy the season

By Staff Sgt. Jason Whited
Kanza Spirit Editor

For most, the holidays are a time for relaxing with friends and family, enjoying the spirit of the season, and just sort of lying around stuffing oneself with all manner of goodies. From about mid-November to just after the start of the new year, millions of people try to spend as little time as possible working and as much time as they can going to holiday parties, shopping for the perfect gift and just sloughing off in general. It's practically an American tradition.

However, some have real problems with just "chilling out" and enjoying all the holidays have to offer. They become stressed (or even obsessed) with finding the perfect gift, upset over the loss of a friend or family member or freaked out at the fact that they've gained so much weight from scarfing down a

zillion holiday treats (even though they've been trying their level best to eat their way through to January).

Holiday stress -- a real humbug

Holiday stress, no matter the cause, can be a real obstacle for people -- an obstacle not easily dealt with.

In a report released this fall, the Xylo corporation, a organization which helps people balance the demands of work and home and whose clients include the Boeing Company, Hewlett-Packard and Microsoft, found that more than half of the Americans they interviewed cited one factor or another as causing them stress or anxiety during the holidays. Twenty-two percent cited shopping as the most stressful aspect of the season, while others said either not having enough time to get things done or not having enough money stressed them

out. Whatever the cause, stress can stifle what should be a time of joy, warmth and excitement.

Stop the stress

In fact, so many health care professionals believe holiday stress to be a problem that psychiatrists and other caregivers are specially trained in how to help patients overcome it. The world-renowned Mayo Clinic even issues holiday stress alerts and guidance for the public in dealing with the holiday blues. So, what to do if one finds himself feeling more like Scrooge than Santa? Experts from the Mayo Clinic and the National Mental Health Association have some ideas on what might just might be the right dose of holiday cheer:

- Acknowledge stress. People should realize that the holidays are an emotional time of the year and that a certain amount of stress is normal, according to an official Mayo Clinic report. It's

Don't obsess over holiday stress

Experts say people under holiday stress can do a few simple things to brighten their outlook and enjoy the season more.

Health care professionals suggest this four-step process:

- Acknowledge stress
- Seek support
- Take one thing at a time
- Avoid the "superman/superwoman" urge

Sources: The Mayo Clinic, National Mental Health Association

okay, say experts, to take time to express feelings of anxiety, grief or frustration. Repressing them only makes them last longer.

See STRESS, Page 10

Satisfy your family's sweet tooth this season

By Staff Sgt. Jason Whited
Kanza Spirit Editor

The holidays are a time for presents, happiness and giving thanks -- oh yeah, and a time for stuffing your face!

No one would argue that eating an entire batch of Christmas cookies or holiday fudge would be good for your well-being or for your waistline, but at this time of year, so many

friends, family and coworkers whip up a batch of this or dozen of that it's hard to resist the lure of all the cookies, candy and other goodies.

So go ahead, give in to a little temptation and cook up your own batch of tasty treats.

To help you along, we're providing a couple of our favorite recipes to try at home.

Thanks to Master Sgt. Donna Lorenz for these delights.

Sweet Potato Puffs

You'll need:

- One large can of sweet potatoes
- One quarter cup of brown sugar
- One quarter cup of walnuts or pecans
- One tablespoon of butter or margarine
- One quarter teaspoon of cinnamon
- One and a half cups of mini

marshmallows (half mixed in, half on top)

How to make it:

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees. Coat a glass dish with a non-stick cooking spray.

Drain the liquid from sweet potatoes and mix potatoes along with all other ingredients.

Blend the mixture until smooth, adding sweet potato liquid if needed.

See RECIPES, Page 10

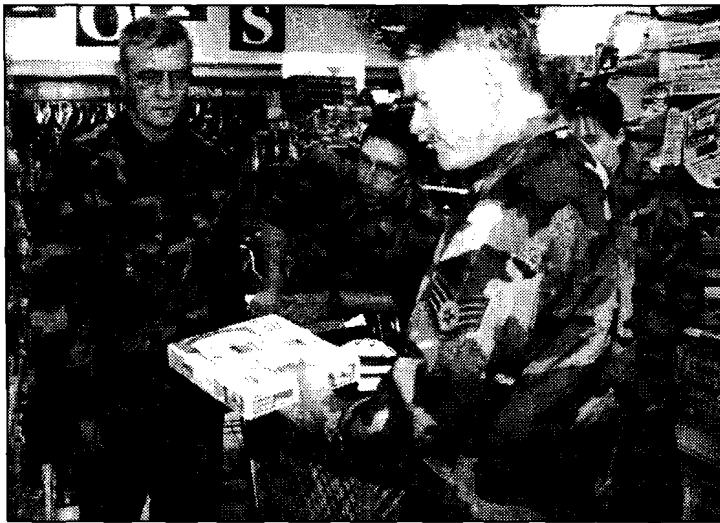
Kanza Spirit Christmas Pullout

Operation Santa helps less fortunate 931st families

By Staff Sgt. Jason Whited
Kanza Spirit Editor

The Christmas season is now in full swing and so is Operation Santa. The program, designed to help needy 931st Air Refueling Group families through food and gifts, has been an annual event for the past few years.

Master Sgt. Cody Smith (Ext. 3683) and 1st Lt. Martha Kuder (Ext. 3546) are the operation's honchos this year; people interested in helping their fellow reservists should contact either of them. Any help is appreciated, say group officials -- cash donations are also welcome.



Staff Sgt. Jason Whited

Senior Master Sgt. Larry Shippy, Tech. Sgt. Steve Swiercinsky, Staff Sgt. Bill Niemietz and Staff Sgt. Paula Hearn, all 931st Aircraft Generation Squadron troops, shop for toys at McConnell's base exchange. Programs like Operation Santa allow Kansas reservists to "dig deep" and help their fellow airmen during the holiday season.

Give from the heart

Giving to Operation Santa directly benefits needy 931st ARG families.

If you decide to donate children's gifts, please buy them for the following ages: boys (ages 5, 6, 9 (two), 13, 14, 15 and 18; girls (ages 7 months, 2 (two), 3 (three), 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12 and 16.

In addition, many non-perishable food items are needed. For a complete list and for more info on how you can help this Christmas, call Ext. 3683 or 3546.

STRESS,

Continued from Page 9

•Seek support. Take advantage of social support like friends and family if feelings of isolation or anxiety are a problem. However, don't hesitate to seek out church, community or social services if the situation doesn't improve.

•Take one thing at a time. NMHA gurus say that for people under stress, ordinary workloads can seem unbearable. By prioritizing things that must be done and sticking to a game plan, stress can virtually disappear.

•Avoid the "superman/superwoman" urge. No one is

perfect, so perfection shouldn't be expected from oneself, according to the NMHA. Those under stress should step back, take a breath and ask themselves "what really needs to be done?" "how much can I do?" or "what adjustments can I make?"

Remember, the season comes around only once a year. Don't let this one slip by just because of stress.

Enjoy the time spent with friends and family. Don't worry about finding just the right present when it's really the thought that counts. And if holiday cakes and cookies tend to settle on the hips, so be it -- keep on snacking.

RECIPES,

Continued from Page 9

Pour the mixture in the glass dish and spread the remaining half cup of mini marshmallows on top.

Bake uncovered for 30 minutes or until the marshmallows are lightly browned on top. Serve hot.

Pumpkin Marble Cheesecake

You'll need:

- One and a half cups of ginger snap crumbs
- One half cup of finely chopped pecans
- One third cup of melted butter or margarine
- Sixteen ounces of softened cream cheese
- Three quarters cup of sugar
- One teaspoon of vanilla extract
- Three eggs
- One cup of canned pumpkin
- Three quarters cup of

cinnamon

•One quarter teaspoon of ground nutmeg

How to make it:

Combine crumbs, pecans and margarine; press the mixture onto the bottom of a nine-inch spring form pan. Make sure the mixture is at least one and a half inches high.

Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes.

Combine cream cheese, one half cup sugar, vanilla, until well blended. Add eggs one at a time, mixing well after adding each one.

Reserve one cup of the batter; chill it.

Add remaining sugar, pumpkin and spices to batter; mix well. Alternately layer pumpkin and cream cheese batters over crust. Cut through batters with a knife several times for marble effect.

Bake at 350 degrees for 55 minutes. Loosen cake from rim of the pan; cool before removing rim of the pan. Chill.

Kingpins

Reservists, civilians hit the lanes at 931st ARG Bowling Tournament

By Staff Sgt. Jason Whited
Kanza Spirit Editor

More than 30 members of the 931st Air Refueling Group turned out Nov. 13 to compete in the

annual group bowling tournament. Nine teams hit the lanes for a few hours competing for the top spot.

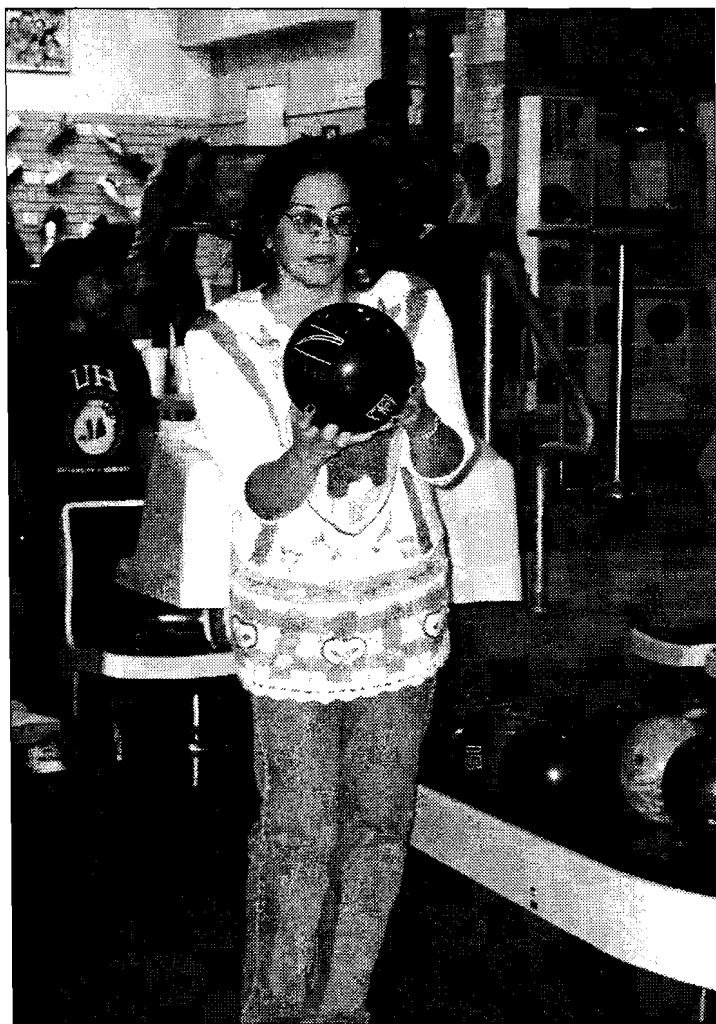
Team members' skill levels ranged from expert to novice; all

participant interviewed said they had a great time.

"It was a good time," said Tech. Sgt. Bob Lorenz, a member of the winning team. Lorenz, who's bowled since he was a kid growing up in Wisconsin, was teamed with Master Sgt. Charlie Smith, Tech. Sgt. John

Wattenburger and Col. Ron Johnston. Winning team members received gift certificates and coupons from a local restaurant.

The tournament was held at McConnell's Tornado Alley, so named for a tornado which struck the base in the early 1990s.



Master Sgt. Corrina Seitz, 931st Mission Support Squadron, lines up for a shot.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Jason Whited
First Lt. Suzanne Lushbaugh, 18th Air Refueling Squadron, tries to pick up a spare at the 931st Air Refueling Group Bowling Tournament.



Valerie Hood, Master Sgt. Val Adkins, Master Sgt. Charles Smith and Tech. Sgt. John Wattenburger celebrate a strike by Tech. Sgt. Bob Lorenz.

Don't let your holidays go up in smoke -- make sure your home is protected

By Staff Sgt. Tim Calhoun
931st Aircraft Generation
Squadron

This Christmas season, most of us will light trees, burn candles and have our stoves and ovens working overtime as we enjoy the holiday spirit. With all this yuletide heat in our houses, it's a good idea to make sure our families and our belongings are protected against fire.

As a volunteer firefighter, I know the value of good fire protection and have seen the tragic consequences of a home not properly protected.

With proper placement, maintenance and cleaning, a smoke detector can be an early warning device -- a way to give you and your family the needed time to get out of a burning house.

Most fatal house fires happen at night when most people are

asleep. Poisonous gases and smoke from the fire in your house can dull the senses and incapacitate you in a very short time.

Fires can burn a house to the ground very quickly; it's important to have a device that can wake up you and your family in a hurry.

Choosing a smoke detector

There are dozens of reputable brands of smoke detectors available. No matter where you buy your detector, and no matter the brand, make sure they have the seal of approval from an organization that tests and evaluates products.

Any labeled smoke detector will offer protection whether it's powered batteries or hard wired in your house. However, if you do use a hard wired detector, make sure it has a battery back up.



Courtesy photo

A house can burn to the ground in minutes from small kitchen fires, a lit cigarette or candle or an electrical short. Make sure your house is protected with smoke detectors this holiday season to avoid a tragedy like this.

How many do I need?

According to experts, families should have a detector outside each bedroom and on each additional story of the house, including the basement.

Don't let tragedy strike your family this Christmas season -- protect your loved ones and your property.

For more information on protecting your home and family, contact the McConnell Fire Prevention Office at Ext. 3904.

Reserve posts job openings online with state agency

TINKER AFB, Okla. -- A unique partnership between the 507th Air Refueling Wing and the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission began in November as Air Force Reserve job opportunities were posted on the Oklahoma Job Net, a Web site designed to help Oklahomans find employment opportunities within the state.

Oklahoma Job Net lists available jobs statewide and may be used by both job seekers and employers seeking workers.

"We believe that using the Oklahoma Job Net will provide our Reserve recruiters with an

extra tool that was previously unavailable to them," said Major Rich Curry, 507th ARW public affairs officer. "We can now let people know, 24-hours-a-day, that we have jobs available right here in the state and exactly what they are."

The wing's partnership with the commission seemed a "natural fit," said Curry. "A majority of our unit members are Oklahomans who live and work in their civilian jobs here in the state," he said. "We know that developing a successful career often means having specialized skills. That's exactly what we

need as well. Our technical training schools are some of the finest in the world. So what we're offering is a way for young high school graduates to develop leadership and technical skills while serving their country as members of the Air Force Reserve. At the same time, those skills stay with our members and benefit them and the state in their civilian jobs."

According to analysis statistics provided by OESC, 22,283 users accessed the Web site Oct. 8-14. Fifty-five percent viewed multiple job listings available on Oklahoma Job Net.

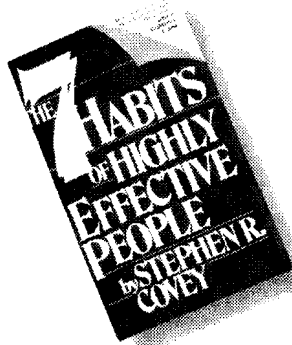
In addition to announcing Reserve job vacancies statewide, job listings are shared nationwide through a cooperative venture with America's Job Bank. America's Job Bank is a partnership between the U.S. Department of Labor and the state-operated Public Employment Service.

"With 205,425 total weekly hits to the job listings maintained here by the OESC, this made the Web site a perfect opportunity for us to let people know about the great part-time jobs...with the Air Force Reserve," Curry said. **Courtesy of AFRC News Service**

THE 7 HABITS

OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE

WORKSHOP



Maybe you've heard about the "7 Habits of Highly Effective People." Now, you have a chance to learn how to implement these 7 habits in your life by attending a workshop based on the famous book.

The 7 Habits workshop is a dynamic training session for personal and professional effectiveness. You'll learn about how to transform your life, becoming more productive, learning how to really develop and nurture key relationships, develop strong team unity and balance your life.

The workshop will consist of interactive exercises, case studies and video segments designed to help you learn from the experience of other participants.

Your seat is reserved.

Call Master Sgt. Pam Summers at Ext. 5423 to RSVP.

For example, earlier this year, Internet travel agency Expedia.com revealed computer criminals had milked them for about \$6 million when thieves made reservations with phony credit card numbers.

Of course, say government officials, consumers should still use common sense and not provide credit card numbers to just any online retailer. The Federal Trade Commission has repeatedly urged online shoppers to check privacy and encryption practices of so-called "e-tailers."

Providing personal financial information to e-tailers who don't take consumer security seriously and employ the latest encryption technology is just asking for trouble, according to official FTC reports. Additionally, VISA, the credit card giant, is refusing to do business with many smaller online retailers who don't use proper security measures.

Bottom line: use common sense, do your homework and use your head, say experts, and you can while away the hours in virtual shopping aisles in comfort and security rather than having to brave holiday crowds (and traffic) as you trudge from store to store in the cold Kansas winter.

Story ideas?

If you have a "nose for news" or think you have your finger on the pulse of your unit, give us a call.

We're always on the lookout for story ideas, and we'd be happy to hear you out.

To submit story ideas (or stories of your own) call Jason Whited, Kanza Spirit Editor, at Ext. 3616.

Jan. 6,7
Saturday and Sunday
8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Location TBD

Jan. 22-26
Monday-Thursday
8 a.m. to noon
Location TBD

LEVITOW.
Continued from Page 3

The Levitow Honor Graduate Award is presented to the top professional military education graduate from Air Force Airman Leadership Schools.

The 737th Training Group Headquarters building at Lackland AFB was named in his honor.

Air Mobility Command named a C-17 Globemaster III after the Air Force's most well known enlisted Medal of Honor recipient in 1998. "The Spirit of Sgt. John L. Levitow" is the first to be named for an enlisted person.

Hurlburt Field, Fla., honored

Levitow in 1998 by making him part of their Walk of Fame, which honors Medal of Honor recipients.

"John Levitow was a living legend, a true hero to the Air Force family," said Gen. Michael E. Ryan, Air Force chief of staff. "His courageous, selfless combat actions demonstrate the essence of our core values and will forever serve as a standard for individual sacrifices and service. We will miss him. Our thoughts and prayers of comfort and peace are with the Levitow family."

Levitow's burial, with military honors, took place Nov. 17 at Arlington National Cemetery. He was 55.

SHOP.
Continued from Page 8

they had experienced any problems with giving out credit card numbers to online shops.

Official numbers seem to agree with them. Since the vast majority of online retailers have moved to more modern encryption systems in the past couple of years, cyberthieves have had a harder time stealing credit card numbers. In fact, according to online retailers themselves, most credit card fraud involves thieves providing phony card numbers generated by special programs, not from stolen credit card numbers themselves.

Spirit Shorts

Big brains

The following reservists recently completed Professional Military Education or formal training: **Senior Airman Craig Steier**, 931st Civil Engineering Squadron, completed Airman Leadership School course no. 1; **Capt. Tony Brusca**, 18th Air Refueling Squadron, completed Initial Pilot Training; **Master Sgt. Ken Girty**, 18th ARS, completed boom instructor training; **Senior Airman Johnny Yelverton**, 931st Operations Support Flight, completed the intelligence 3-level course.

Military Personnel Flight hours

The core hours of operation for the MPF are as follows: Mondays – Fridays: 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.; UTA Saturdays: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; UTA Sundays: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Need to outprocess?

If you, or someone you know needs to out process for TDY, reassignment or retirement, please keep in mind that on UTA weekends, the Finance Office (Traci or Dec) is only open on UTA Saturdays from 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Thinking ahead can ensure you do not have to come out during the week to finish your out-processing. For further information contact Tech. Sgt. Anick Wallace in at Ext. 3665.

Fill out that Form No. 93

Reservists should check their Emergency Data Card (DD Form No. 93) and their Serviceman's Group Life Insurance form at least

once a year.

The Form No. 93 is used to notify your next of kin if anything happens to you. The SGLI form is a legal document used to pay your beneficiaries in the event of your death.

For more information, call Customer Service at Ext. 3458.

MPF in-house training

The MPF is closed each UTA Sunday from 7:30 to 10 a.m. for in-house training. Classes are held in the TNET room (Room No. 217), and all administrative personnel (3A0X1 & 3S0X1) are welcome to attend.

NCO Leadership Development Program

We have received class dates from both Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., and Ft. Worth Joint Reserve Base, Texas. Interested staff and tech sergeants may contact Group Training at Ext. 5423 for specifics.

NCO Academy in residence

Only two slots are left at the Tyndall AFB, Fla., NCO Academy. Classes will be held August 6 to Sept. 13 and Sept. 24 to Nov. 1. Staff sergeants with eight years time in service and all tech sergeants may apply.

Senior NCO Leadership Development Program

Fiscal 2001 dates for the SNCOLDP are as follows:

March 24, 25; June 23, 24; Sept. 22, 23 and Dec. 15, 16.

The locations for the classes have not yet been determined.

Spirit Spotlight

Tech. Sgt.

Debroada Cornelius

931st Mission Support Flight

This month's Spotlight selectee has only been with the unit a couple of months, but she's already make a big splash. This hard-charging NCO is a Macon, Ga., native and has been in the military for 15 years.

Job title:

Customer assistance technician

Civilian job: Student at Friends University and mom

What I'm reading now:

"Do What You Love, the Money will Follow" by Marsha Sinetar and "Who Moved My Cheese?" by Spencer Johnson

What I'm listening to now:

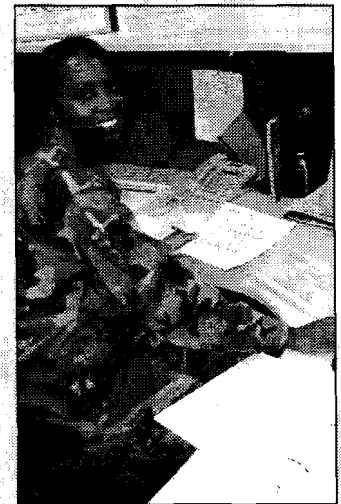
My heart and following its direction

Favorite way to relax: Reading, writing and laughing

Easiest way to annoy me: Be negative and not accept personal responsibility for you are in your life

Most influential person in my life: My 8-year-old son, Cameron.

If I won \$1 million, I would: Scream, jump up and down, scream some more, call my mom, cry, thank God and wait until I came back to my practical senses before I spent a penny of it.



Group training closure

Group Training will be closed the week before the December UTA to attend a 4th Air Force training conference.

The office will be open during the December UTA.

No hats in gazebo!

The headquarters building gazebo is now a no-hat area. Salutes should still be rendered (and hats worn) in the uncovered area between the south entrance of Building No. 850 and the gazebo itself.

Spirit Shorts

Santa's Mailbag

Eielson AFB, Alaska, is once again hosting Santa's Mailbag, a holiday program which provides children around the world with a letter from jolly old St. Nicholas.

For more information, surf on over to www.eielson.af.mil/NEWS/.

931st holiday party

The 931st ARG holiday party is scheduled to be held on the UTA Sunday (Dec. 10) from 2 to 4 p.m.

The 18th ARS will be providing free child care for attendees. Children's activities will include arts and crafts, face painting, rides in a Humvee, airplane tours and a visit from Santa Claus. Parents can eat with their kids before the party from 12:30 to 2 p.m.

For more information, contact Tech. Sgt. Tonya Halenka at Ext. 3736 or Maj. Jim Winningham at Ext. 4372 for all the details.

Deer crossing

The 931st Safety Office wants to remind reservists that deer often pose driving hazards this time of year.

Last year, the Kansas Department of Transportation reported more than 10,000 drivers ran into deer, resulting in more than 400 injuries.

Safety officials suggest using these tips to avoid hitting deer:

- Scan roadsides and roadways for deer continually
- Slow down in deer crossing areas

•If you see a deer in front of you, slow down -- they often travel in groups.

Air Force Admissions Liaison Officer Program wants you

By Maj. Dolores Bubier
Liaison Officer Director

The Kansas Admissions Liaison Officer Program is looking for motivated officers (active, guard, Reserve or retired) interested in providing information about Air Force educational opportunities to high school counselors and administrators and informing, counseling, and evaluating prospective applicants for careers in the US Air Force.

ALOs discuss the benefits, requirements and obligations of the Air Force Academy and Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps commissioning programs and strive to provide the Air Force with the best-qualified and most highly motivated students available. Most work is

performed at the convenience of the ALO, but school contacts obviously must be made while school is in session. ALOs also represent the Air Force at college nights, science fairs, service clubs and other similar activities.

They sponsor cadets in public speaking appearances and counseling sessions when the cadets are home on Grassroots assignments from the Academy and AFROTC. In order to accomplish these duties, the average ALO spends approximately three days per month working in a points-only status (Category E for Primary Duty IMA Reservists).

This program is also considered an Additional Duty for active duty officers and drilling reservists. Since the program is comprised of

volunteers with limited manday support, and no travel or per diem, an ALO can expect to expend some personal funds. The limited manday support includes on average three to five active duty days per year (subject to availability). These days are paid time for which salary and benefits are received commensurate with rank and time in service. ALOs are active members of the Air Force Reserve and are eligible for promotion to higher grades at appropriate times in their careers.

If you have any questions or are interested, call Maj. Dolores Bubier, Kansas Liaison Officer Director at 689.0846, or Maj. Jay Selanders, Deputy Liaison Officer Director at 913.901.0323 or e-mail him at selanders@danielsandkaplan.com

Servicemen's Group Life Insurance accelerated benefits

WASHINGTON -- The SGLI and VGLI programs is now offering an accelerated benefits option to terminally ill clients. An client is considered to be terminally ill if he or she has a written medical prognosis of nine months or less to live.

All terminally ill clients will be

eligible to take up to 50 percent of their SGLI or VGLI coverage in a lump sum. Many commercial life insurance companies offer accelerated benefits in their policies. Accelerated benefits, paid prior to death, are of course, not available for payment to survivors. A client must submit

the Servicemember/Veteran Accelerated Benefit Option Form No. SGLV 8284 8/99.

For further info, about SGLI go to www.insurance.va.gov or call 800.419.1473 or call the 931st MPF Customer Service Section at Ext. 3458.

Refer a friend!

With the Air Force Reserve's new "Get One" program, reservists can earn a variety of awards and incentives for 'recruiting' friends and coworkers. Watch for the January Kanza Spirit for details on this program or contact the 931st Recruiting Office at Ext. 4350.

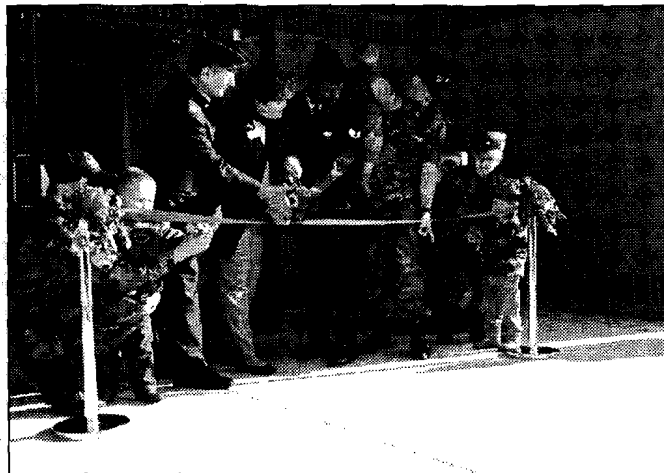
Wichita Weekend

Coats 4 Kids Country Christmas Concert

December 9, Hutchinson Memorial Hall, Hutchinson, 7p.m. Benefit concert by recording artist Shane Minor with Craig Morgan. Donate a coat or show a military/student ID and get \$5 off admission. All ages welcome. No alcohol. Call 316.683.6201.

Wichita Symphony Classics

December 9, Century II Concert Hall, 225 West Douglas. 267.7658, Wichita Symphony Orchestra, 8 to 10 p.m., also held Sunday 3 to 5pm, Tickets cost \$11-\$24.



Staff Sgt. Jason Whited

Gala grand opening

Lt. Col. Steve Kett, 1-year-old son Sean, Maj. Terri Kett and 2 1/2-year-old daughter Molly (all on the right), both from the 931st ARG, help cut the ribbon at the grand opening of McConnell's new Child Development Center. The CDC has space for more than 200 children.

Flick picks



No information about on-base movies during the December UTA was available at press time. For movie info and show times, call Ext. 4181.

Other area theaters:

Cinemas East 6: 684.2805
Towne East 4: 685.1121
Towne East 2: 681.2717
Cinemas West: 729.5665
Towne West 5: 945.5093
Northrock 14: 636.5432
Northrock 6: 636.5431
Palace: 721.7949
Premier Palace: 691.9700
Warren Theater: 721.9545

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McConnell AFB, KS 67221-3767

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WICHITA, KS 67210-5102