



# FLIGHT LINES

SERVING HOMESTEAD AIR RESERVE BASE AND THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY

Vol. 24 No. 12

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

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December 2005

## Hometown Heroes



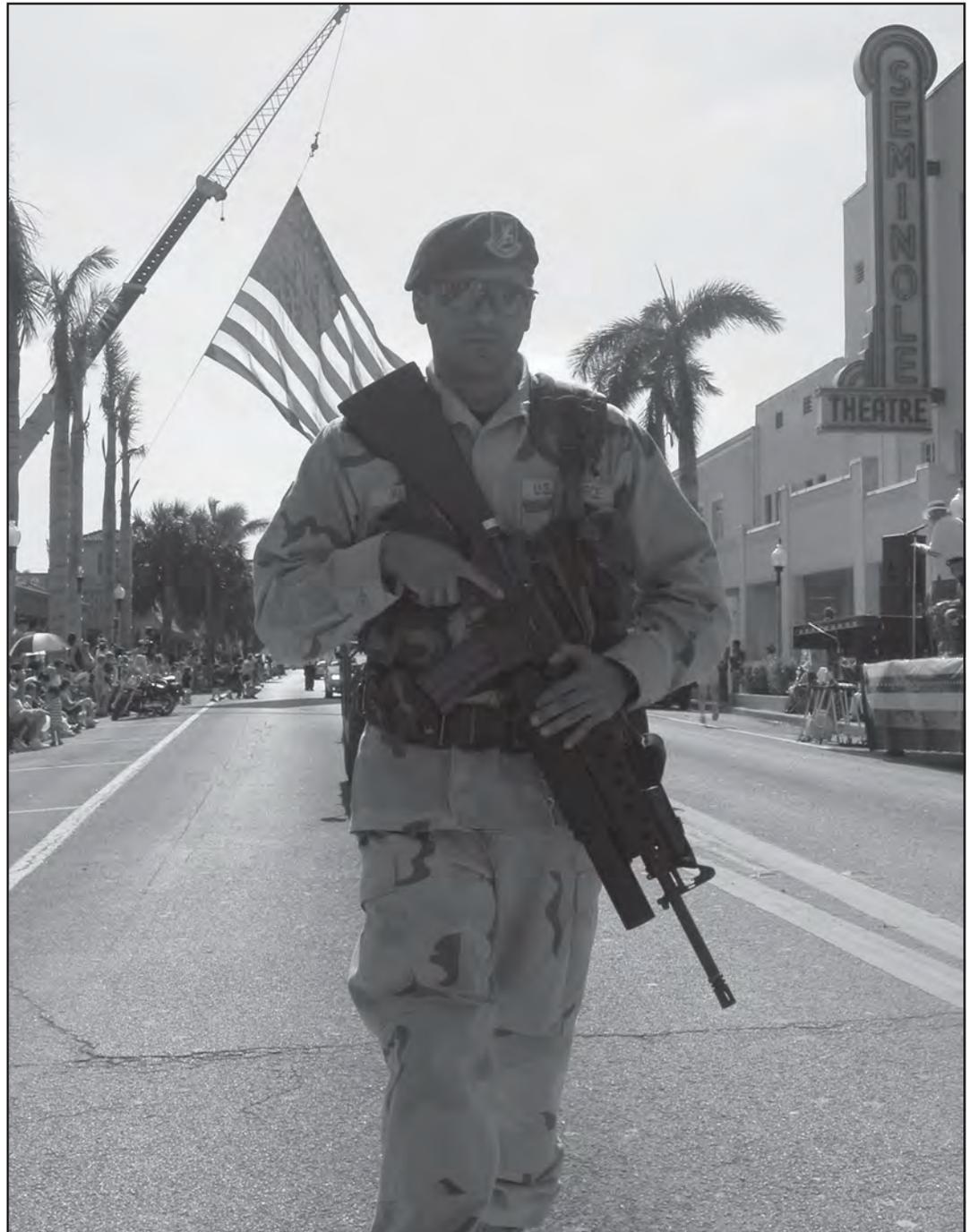
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*Photo by Jake Shaw*

Senior Airman Erick Pacheco, 482nd SFS, marches in the City of Homestead's Veterans Day parade Nov. 11. Many troops from the 482nd Fighter Wing have returned from deployments, and have been visible in their communities since returning home. More pictures on pages 8-9.

# A Time To Reflect

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



Air Force Reserve photo

Reservists today, very much like the citizen soldiers of the American Revolutionary War, face a very difficult task of balancing the needs of family, civilian work and military duty. I think we can all agree that the work tempo of Homestead Air Reserve Base makes

that balancing act a challenge.

Like those early patriots, our families provide us the motivation, inspiration and support we all need to successfully complete our missions and serve our country. We cannot do what we do without them.

Today's message remembers all our families; the people who remain behind as the reservist go forward. They give us love, patience and balance. At a minimum, they sacrifice one weekend a month plus 15 days a year while we don our Air Force uniform for unit training assembly. But we all know it is much more than that. Our families sacrifice anniversaries, birthdays and kids sporting events as we reservists participate in long-term overseas

deployments, hurricane relief and ORI's.

It is this caring devotion to us and our mission we need to recognize and celebrate. The holiday season is the perfect opportunity to reflect on the value of our families and the empowerment we receive from them. Parents, siblings, neighbors, friends and our extended 482d Fighter Wing family at HARB; they all impact and greatly enrich our lives.

This holiday season, Paula and I ask that you take some extra time to count the blessings of family. Paula and I do. We have so much to be thankful for. We have our families, we have our friends and we have this wonderful nation to live in.

Happy Holidays to all.

## CENTAF releases airpower summary report

SOUTHWEST ASIA (AFPN) — U.S. Central Command Air Forces officials released today's airpower summary.

Coalition aircraft flew 46 close-air support missions Nov. 27 for Operation Iraqi Freedom. They supported coalition troops, infrastructure protection, reconstruction activities, and operations to deter and disrupt terrorist activities.

Coalition aircraft also supported Iraqi and coalition ground forces operations to create a secure environment for upcoming December parliamentary elections.

Fifteen Air Force and Navy intelligence, surveillance and

reconnaissance aircraft flew missions in support of operations in Iraq.

An Air Force fighter aircraft performed in a non-traditional ISR role with its electro-optical and infrared sensors.

In Afghanistan, coalition aircraft flew 15 close-air support missions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. These missions included support to coalition and Afghan troops, reconstruction activities, and the conduct of presence route patrols.

In addition, three Air Force ISR aircraft flew missions in support of operations in Afghanistan. Air Force C-130 Hercules and C-17 Globemaster IIIs provided intra-theater heavy airlift support, helping

sustain operations throughout Afghanistan, Iraq and the Horn of Africa. They flew about 145 airlift sorties, delivered about 205 tons of cargo and transported more than 2,200 passengers. This included approximately 48,000 pounds of troop re-supply airdropped in central Afghanistan.

Coalition C-130 from Canada and the Republic of Korea flew in support of either OIF or OEF.

On Nov. 26, Air Force and Royal Air Force tankers flew 34 sorties and off-loaded nearly 2.3 million pounds of fuel.

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# Air Force Portal: more than a link

By Senior Airman Sandra Bueno

By now, all military, civilian, and contractor employees with access to the Air Force network (af.mil) should have registered and be using the Air Force Portal account.

The AF Portal links official and military resources, for personal and professional needs, through one site. It simplifies access to multiple tasks and organizations and eliminates the need for having and remembering multiple passwords and usernames, said Ed P. Charbonneau, 482<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing Chief of Information Systems Flight.

The AF Portal Program began in early 2000 through the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, Dr. James G. Roche (2001-2005) in an effort to exploit emerging technologies. As stated on the AF Portal Management Guide, the reasoning was "to provide the war fighter with secure, timely, accurate decisional information

anywhere in the world." Accessibility to selective information is specific to mission objectives based on predefined criteria to the user.

With web based applications such as myPay, my virtual MPF, IT E-learning and SkillPort are "moving forward into the internet environment." In career fields such as Supply, Acquisitions, Contracting and Avionics, service members must enter the Portal to access information needed for the job, said Charles E. Madigan, AF Portal Combat Support Systems Helpdesk.

The AF Portal site can be used for personal development, skill enhancement, and military compliance, and it also provides a channel for consistent on-time access to command information. Additionally, the ability to access military e-mail accounts through the site allows members to stay informed of individual and unit requirements before arriving to their

Unit Training Assemblies, he said.

At Homestead Air Reserve Base there are currently 1,310 traditional reservists assigned, but 311 reservists have either lost their e-mail accounts or no longer maintain them, cited Charbonneau. "Sometimes pertinent information is not retrieved by e-mail until Sunday at 3 p.m.," he added. Having accessibility to e-mail anytime will help members retrieve information easily, without wasting time.

Per Air Force Directive 33-115V1-2, all Local Area Network (LAN) accounts not maintained will be disabled after 60 days. If not used, they will be deleted after 90 days.

## AF Portal

<https://www.my.af.mil>  
1-877-596-5771 option 7  
DSN: 596-5771 option 7

# Falcon's Nest Club membership drive & dues

By Jeff Carney

482<sup>nd</sup> Services Marketing Manager

Effective January 1, club dues will increase to \$10 per month for all local members and \$5 per month for those that live more than 50 miles from a club. To offset the increase in dues income, the club will give its members a coupon for a free lunch, a \$6.50 value every month. In addition to this coupon, the club pledges to provide a "Membership Event" at least once each quarter.

"We've accomplished some really great things in the club within the last year, but with rising costs across the board, the dues have to be raised as well to maintain our high standards of quality," said Mr. Scott Ibarra, Falcon's Nest club manager. "It's

always our intention to provide the best, and that will remain our goal."

Reviewing the past dues shows there hasn't been an increase since 1994. During these 11 years, the cost index has increased an average of 3% per year.

"These increases for food, beverages, and labor make it impossible for the club to maintain the same standards without increasing the dues income," said Mr. Jess Holcomb, 482<sup>nd</sup> Services Chief. "We greatly appreciate the loyalty and support of every club member and we wish you the very best in 2006.

Since October, the Falcon's Nest club has provided monthly events for members only, in hopes of proving the value of membership. At these events, the food and entertainment has been

free. Plus, a lucky club member has won a special prize, a 27 inch television and then a surround sound system. In addition to this, at each event a ticket is pulled to be placed into the finale drawing for the Grand Prize of a 42 inch plasma television.

The Falcon's Nest will host its final membership night on Dec. 2, with food beginning at 6 p.m. This will be the grand finale party, with the members only prize being a digital camera. This will also be the last time a ticket is drawn to go into the drawing for the grand prize. Club members are free, \$10 for one significant other, non-members and anyone under 18 not permitted. The Grand Prize, 42 inch plasma television will be drawn for on Family Day, Dec. 4.

# An Operational Security Success Story

By Lt. Col. Bernard Flowers

In the Operational Security business, we have a tendency to focus on the negative. As long as I can remember I have heard OPSEC practitioners say, “Don’t do this, Don’t do that, Don’t talk about xxx, blah, blah, blah”. That kind of negative message might present the impression that OPSEC professionals are stifling and uncreative. OPSECers present lots of relevant information but what does it all mean to the average “ground-pounder”?

Since the holidays are upon us, I thought it would be appropriate to mention some positive aspects of OPSEC. As OPSEC practitioners, what are we thankful for? How about some OPSEC successes for a change? What’s the best example of OPSEC that you can recall? Personally, I’ve seen and read about quite a few good operations. But the best one in recent memory happened in 2003 when President Bush was able to travel to Baghdad and have Thanksgiving dinner with the troops.

Let’s analyze this operation. The task was to get the President safely to Baghdad, allow him to celebrate with his troops and safely return him to CONUS without anyone finding out until the President was safely enroute back to the US. The interagency team that protects him, led by the Secret Service, attempted the first trip ever by an American President to Iraq, right in the middle of a war. This would be a mission tense with concerns about the President’s safety. Huge amounts of coordination were needed to pull this off. In case you don’t remember



White House photo by Tina Hager

**President George W. Bush meets with troops and serves Thanksgiving Dinner at the Bob Hope Dining Facility, Baghdad International Airport, Iraq, Thursday, November 27, 2003.**

the details, here are the cliff notes of the operation. Shall we review the highlights?

- Efforts were made to make things seem normal.
- Within the White House only a few of senior aides were “read-in” on the operation.
- The White House told the press that the President would spend Thanksgiving with his family at his ranch in Crawford, Texas.
- Plans called for the trip to be abandoned if the operation word leaked out in advance.
- President Bush slipped away from his home unnoticed Wednesday evening before Thanksgiving and flew to Washington to pick up aides and a small cadre of press members, sworn to secrecy.
- The plane landed and departed under cover of darkness.
- The president flew in on the plane he most often uses in CONUS
- Mr. Bush spent only a few hours on the ground, limiting his visit to a fortified airport hangar where he celebrated Thanksgiving with U.S. forces.
- News of Mr. Bush’s trip was not released until he was safely in the air on the return trip back to the United States.
- The operation was considered a great success.

Some OPSEC practitioners might say that this was the best example of OPSEC support of Military Deception seen in recent years. You can imagine how the OPSEC five-step process was applied during planning: ID Critical Information, Analyze the Threat, Analyze Vulnerabilities, Assess Risks, and Apply Countermeasures.

It doesn’t take much effort to see the five step process in action here. I can guarantee the Secret Service planners who executed this operation took great pains to implement OPSEC principles in support of their attempt to prevent the release of critical information related to the operation.

This is a true OPSEC success story. This operation should serve as a case study in the proper application of OPSEC

# 'Cop pilots' fly their own kind of plane

By Tech. Sgt. Paul Dean  
407th Air Expeditionary Group PA

**11/17/2005 - ALI BASE, Iraq (AFP)** — The glamour of their “piloting” job may not match that of F-15 Eagle or F-16 Fighting Falcon “fighter jocks.”

But a group of enlisted Airmen here are using their wings to do a job both kinds of pilots do — provide base security through air superiority.

The half-dozen Airmen — 407th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron troops — pilot tiny unmanned aerial reconnaissance vehicles that provide low-cost, low-risk video of any terrain over which they fly.

To these force protection airborne surveillance system team “cop-pilots,” flying the MQ-1 Predator’s “Mini Me” counterpart is no hobby.

The tiny planes transmit real-time data — day or night — to a ground based operator (the pilot) for analysis and risk assessment. The second operator (the copilot) does the pre-launch checks and provides launch assistance.

A portable computer controls the UAV’s flight controls and flight paths until the pilot spots trouble and switches to “U-drive,” and takes control from the computer.

“This isn’t what people think it is. It isn’t a toy and it’s not just a remote controlled plane,” said Senior Airman Shawn Fernandez, a team pilot.

Team members are hand-picked for the job at their home stations and attend specialized training to operate the UAVs before deploying.

The teams can cover a lot of ground with their UAVs. Plus using them costs less and is less risky than using manned ground patrols.

“This is a really great system,” team member Senior Airman JoAnn

Bonzi said. “It allows us to cover a lot of territory that would be hard, if not impossible, to keep an eye on properly any other way.”

After a team parks their vehicle at pre-assigned locations, they launch the UAV for the mission. How long the UAV is in the air depends on the assigned flight path and environmental conditions.

The UAV is almost silent as it goes about its business. And like a U-2 reconnaissance aircraft flying many thousands of feet higher, this mini-UAV’s imagery allows a trained operator to spot any kind of potentially aggressive situations, setups or enemy.

“Every [Airman] here plays a part in base defense — especially security forces. This (UAV operations) is just one part of it. But it’s a great part to be involved in,” said Airman 1st Class Eric Vaughn, another team member.

The UAV operators are called pilots and copilots in part because of shared responsibilities they have with traditional flyers. Just like a manned flight, UAV pilots and copilots have to notify the air control tower

about their location, get clearance to launch and check the flying weather forecast before a mission.

Staff Sgt. Chenoa Abbott is the noncommissioned officer in charge of the FPASS team. She said flying the UAVs is “really a different role for a person from security forces to take on.”

But she said, “It has really opened my eyes and given me a chance to see what the skies of the Air Force are really like.”



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Paul Dean

**ALI BASE, Iraq — Senior Airman JoAnn Bonzi releases a miniature unmanned aerial vehicle. The UAV is tied to a bungee cord stretched between the mission “pilot” and “copilot” during a slingshot takeoff. The motor starts automatically when it reaches a predetermined speed. Airman Bonzi was a copilot for this mission.**

# Free exercise of religion in the Air Force

By Lt. Col. Robert Delgado,  
482<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing MEO Officer

One of the responsibilities of the Military Equal Opportunity office is to communicate the importance of the Air Force policy concerning the free exercise of religion with all members of the 482 Fighter Wing.

Most of us are aware that due to recent allegations of religious improprieties the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force ordered an in-depth investigation. The results of the investigation corroborated the initial allegations sufficiently to such a degree that the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff ordered senior leaders to thoroughly review and develop new guidelines. These are the following new guidelines

We will accommodate free exercise of religion and other personal beliefs, as well as freedom of expression, except as must be limited by military necessity. We will not officially endorse or establish religion either one specific religion, or the idea of religion over non-religion. We must commit to a climate in which individuals of diverse beliefs form an effective team which is essential to achieving excellence.

Abuse or disrespect of our fellow Air Force people, including disrespect based on religious beliefs or the absence of religious beliefs, is unacceptable. We will recognize and value the many heritages, cultures and beliefs represented among us, and build a team by stressing our common heritage.

These guidelines address the following key areas: Religious Accommodation. It is Air Force Policy that

requests for accommodation should be approved except when precluded by military necessity. Request should normally be approved unless approval would have an adverse impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, standards, or discipline.

**Public Prayer Outside Of Voluntary Worship Settings.** Public prayer should not usually be included in official settings such as staff meetings, office meetings, classes, or officially sanctioned activities such as sports events or practice sessions. Common sense and mutual respect should always be applied and extraordinary circumstances may drive exceptions.

**Individual Sharing of Religious Faith.** In official circumstances, particularly situations where superior subordinate relationships are involved, individuals need to be sensitive to the potential that personal expressions may appear to be official expressions.

**The Chaplain Service.** Air Force Commanders have an obligation to ensure that the people under their authority have opportunity to obtain spiritual care. Chaplains assist Commanders in meeting this responsibility.

**Email and Similar Communications.** General rules for use of government computers applies to religious matters as they do for other matters. It is important to avoid the reasonable perception that any official e-mail or computer posting implies that the Air Force supports any one religion over other religions, or the idea of religion over the choice of no religious affiliation.

**Good Order and Discipline.** Nothing in these guidelines relieves Commanders of the responsibility to maintain good order and discipline in their command.

## Holiday fire safety tips

By Shawn P. Sullivan,  
482<sup>nd</sup> CE Fire Inspector

The Homestead ARB Fire Department would like to remind you that fire safety is even more important during the holiday season because of extra responsibility that special occasions bring. Celebrate the holidays while practicing the following fire safety tips:

- Start holiday cooking with a clean stove and oven
- Keep kitchen clutter and loose clothing away from the heat sources
- Turn pot handles in, away from a child's reach
- Use pot holders to prevent burns
- Keep all appliances in good working order
- Never overload electrical outlets

- Unplug appliances when not in use
- Never leave your cooking unattended
- Keep holiday decorations away from heat sources
- Keep matches, lighters, and candles out of children's reach
- Visiting family members need to know exit plans and two ways out of each room
- Make sure your fire extinguisher is charged and everyone knows how to use it
- Make sure you know your local emergency number
- If you experience a grease fire on your stove, turn your stove off, put a cover on it or use a fire extinguisher to extinguish the fire. Never use water, salt, or flour.
- If you experience a grease fire inside your oven, simply turn your oven off and leave the door closed.

# Coping When a Family Member Has Been Deployed

By Senior Master Sgt Honey Lane,  
93rd Fighter Squadron 1st Sgt

When a family member is deployed, the impact upon those left at home can be daunting. There is often tremendous uncertainty about the dangers that exist—where the loved one is being deployed and about when he or she will return. Concerns may be intensified as television news programs emphasize threats, such as chemical or biological warfare, scud missile attacks, and environmental destruction. In addition to having to adjust to the loved one's absence, the families of those who have been deployed may live in constant fear of harm to their loved one.

When a loved one is deployed, fluctuating emotions such as pride, anger, fear, and bitterness can add to the distress of uncertainty. Various emotions continue during the person's deployment, based upon changes the family encounters as they adjust to the departure and absence of their family member. Deployment will be a challenging time for family members who are left behind.

In addition to patriotism and pride, feelings of fear and anger are also common. The mixture of these feelings may be confusing, particularly for children. If a family already has difficulty communicating

with one another, such problems may worsen during times of stress, and add strain to the family. Those deployed may downplay the potential for danger in order to protect the family from excessive worry, which can make family members feel their feelings of fear are being invalidated.

Emotions can run high during the deployment, and people can turn fear, anger, and other emotions against those they care for the most. When certain family members, particularly children, do express their fear or anger, families should not view these feelings as too sensitive or as an annoyance. Instead, realize that those feelings may be emotions that everyone shares, but perhaps not everyone has acknowledged those feelings yet.

Reservists have added concerns pertaining to the families and jobs left behind. In some cases, military deployment can create financial hardships due to a loss of income. Sometimes the household financial manager is the one who is deployed and the remaining head of the household is left to manage the finances, perhaps without much practice.

Take time to listen to each other; know that deployment will be a painful and frightening time, particularly for

children. Spend time listening to family members without judging or criticizing what they say. Families should minimize exposure to anxiety-arousing media related to the war. News programs often emphasize fearful content and frightening images to create a "story."

Find ways to keep a symbolic representation of the deployed member visible to the family. Keep photographs of your loved one in prominent locations. Emotions such as fear, anger, and feeling "numb" are normal and common reactions to stress. Family members need to make sure these emotions aren't turned against one another in frustration. Coping with stressful events is easier when in the company of caring friends. Ask for support from your family, friends, church, or other community group. When stress becomes overwhelming, don't be afraid to seek professional help.

War brings about difficult stressors for families of deployed service members. Mixed feelings about the deployment are common, and emotions tend to fluctuate over the course of the deployment. It is most important to take added steps during this time to take care of yourself and your family.

## Recruiters seek volunteers

Unit members interested in volunteering to assist recruiting with job fairs, school visits and other community events please contact the 482 Recruiting office at (305) 224-7127. Names and contact information will be placed on a secured list and volunteers will be contacted when events become available within their local area.

## Trespass notice

The 482<sup>nd</sup> Security Forces Squadron Combat Arms section, located adjacent to U.S. Customs Service at 29380 Customs Road Building 203, is off limits to trespassers and those who are not conducting official business. Trespassing is not only illegal but also dangerous because of gunfire. Trespassers will be reported to 482<sup>nd</sup> Security Forces for prosecution. For valid entry please contact Master Sgt. Horne, NCOIC, Combat Arms at 305 224-6709 or Senior Master Sgt. Vargas, Chief, Security Forces Training and Resources at 305 224-7539.

## Leadership seminar

The 482<sup>nd</sup> FW will be conducting a leadership seminar on February 3, at 12:30 p.m., in building 360, room 131. This training is for NCO's that have or will have leadership positions in the future. All interested Master Sgts, Tech Sgts and Staff Sgts, including current or prospective supervisors from any squadron may participate. Contact your First Sgt with your intent to participate and with your Commanders approval, you will be on your way to improving your leadership abilities. The class will fill up quickly with accommodations for only 24 members.

# Members of the 482nd Fighter Wing return from deployments...



Photo by Lisa Macias

Members of the 482nd Security Forces Squadron return from Lackland Air Force Base on Nov. 15. The Airmen were deployed on a humanitarian aid operation to assist victims of Hurricane Katrina.

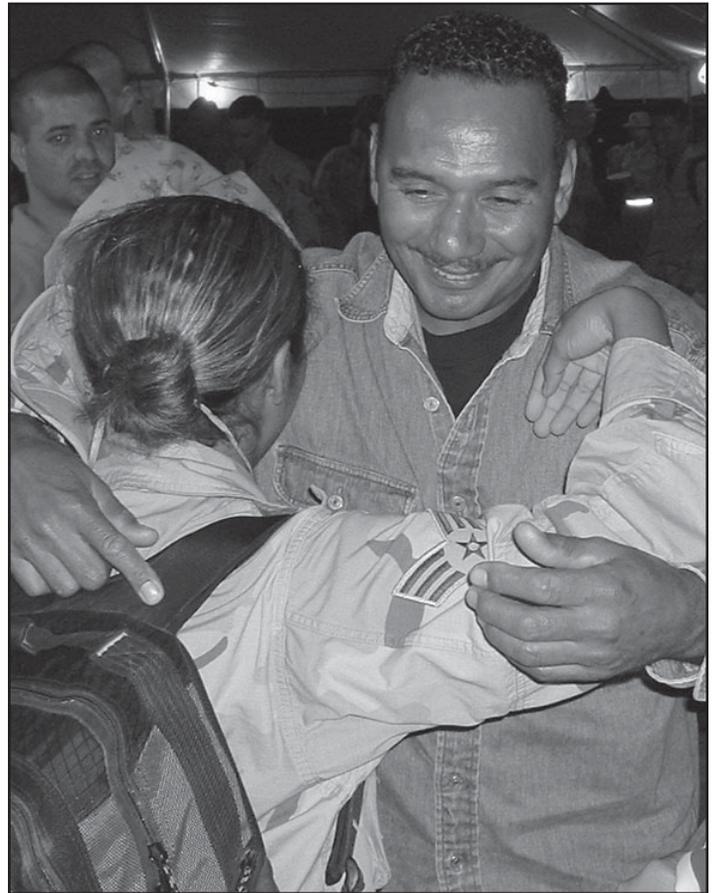


Photo by Leo Castellano

Senior Airman Carmen Martinez gets a hug from her father, Tech. Sgt. Roberto Rodriguez as she returns from a deployment to Balad Air Base, Iraq.

A special thanks to everyone who provided the Flight Lines staff with photographs this month. It was particularly difficult to decide which photos to use in this issue.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Bucky Parrish

Left: some members of the 482nd FW are still deployed to Iraq supporting the Air Expeditionary Force .

# and quickly get involved in community activities



Photo by Jake Shaw

Above: Troops from Homestead ARB were honored at the NASCAR Nextel Cup championship race on Nov. 20. The troops were recognized one by one in the winners circle just minutes before the race began.

Right: Security Forces Squadron represented Homestead ARB in the Veterans Day parade in Homestead on Nov. 11.

Below: Lt. Col. Rob Pumbo, 93rd Fighter Squadron commander, presents a flag to his son at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish School. Pumbo carried the flags with him as he flew combat missions in Iraq.



Photo by Jake Shaw



Air Force Reserve photo

# Coast Guard provides relief, recovery and security to Katrina victims in New Orleans

MIAMI, FL – Thirteen members from the Coast Guard's Maritime Safety and Security Team Miami, located at Homestead Air Reserve Base, spent nearly two weeks in New Orleans assisting with recovery and relief efforts in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina.

Devastated from the hurricane and subsequent levee failure, New Orleans quickly fell into lawlessness. When search and rescue operations were threatened due to security concerns, the Maritime Law Enforcement and Force Protection (MLE/FP) detachment from MSST Miami

deployed to support security efforts in and around the city.

As such, members of this Miami-based team played a vital role in the rescue and recovery of over 22,000 evacuees, working countless hours assisting Coast Guard and FEMA urban search and rescue teams going door to door in the flooded neighborhoods.

During these operations, members of the MLE/FP detachment spent countless hours providing security on Coast Guard and FEMA flat bottom boats, patrolling the flooded neighborhoods, and assisting in the

evacuation of hundreds of hurricane victims.

In addition to search and rescue efforts, members from the team provided much needed convoy security, escorting vital resources in and out of the city. These efforts ensured that equipment and supplies critical to recovery operations safely arrived at their destination.

A few of the team members have family ties to the affected area. It was especially rewarding for these individuals to work towards the rescue and recovery of the Gulf Coast region.



U.S. Coast Guard photo



U.S. Coast Guard photo

**Above: MSST Miami team members assist in Hurricane Katrina relief operations.**

**Left: MSST Miami's Maritime Law Enforcement and Force Protection Detachment train with MSST Boston and Cape Cod Air Station during Vertical Insertion training at Cape Cod, Mass. This versatile capability increases the team's capacity to swiftly react to maritime security threats and provide an alternate delivery method during non-compliant boardings.**

# Guard aviation mission helps Key West recover from Hurricane Wilma

Story and photos by  
Staff Sgt. Thomas Kielbasa  
Florida National Guard Public Affairs

KEY WEST, Fla. (Oct. 27) – Flying high above the azure waters of the Florida Keys, National Guard aviators helped expedite Hurricane Wilma recovery by delivering pallets of water to hurricane victims in Key West.

Four Army National Guard helicopters – including three UH-60 Black Hawks and one CH-47 Chinook – airlifted pallets of bottled water from Homestead Air Reserve Base to the football field at Key West High School during hurricane recovery operations.

The high school had suffered only minor storm damage, and was serving as both an evacuee shelter and a distribution point where Florida Army National Guard Soldiers passed out

the water to lines of waiting Key West residents.

After the Black Hawks – flown by members of the Florida National Guard’s 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 171<sup>st</sup> Aviation Regiment – touched down at the football field and delivered their pallets of water, Guardsmen used forklifts to move the supplies to the adjacent distribution point.

Staff Sgt. Deborah Miale of the 260<sup>th</sup> Military Intelligence Battalion explained that the people had been arriving all day in cars, on bicycles and even on foot.

As she passed boxes of food, water and cleaning supplies to hurricane victims, a man wearing multicolored clothes and sporting a black top hat with feathers in the band rode up to her on a battered bicycle. Miale was about to meet the self-

proclaimed, semi-famous, “Wizard of Key West.”

The colorful bicyclist – Donald Cobert of Key West – chatted briefly with the Guardsmen while receiving four boxes of food.

“This was probably the worst storm I’ve seen here,” Cobert, whose vibrant outfit matched his unique moniker. “I live on the second floor, and my building was shaking.”

As the “Wizard” pedaled away, Miale commented that visits by fantastically dressed residents like Cobert weren’t unusual at the Key West distribution point.

Sitting in a wheelchair outside the high school gymnasium and watching some of the recovery efforts, 66-year-old Marly Knowles described how the flooding from the hurricane took her by surprise: “It was so awful. I fell asleep, and when I got up off the bed I put my foot down and I couldn’t believe that halfway up to my knee was water.

“At first it was such a shock I didn’t even know what it was,” Knowles, a widow who’s lived in Key West since 1959, explained. “Then I realized ‘Oh, my house is flooded!’”

Knowles lost part of her roof from hurricane-force winds and said she had witnessed similar damage throughout the city.

She said she expected the cleanup from Hurricane Wilma could take months, but due to the “easygoing nature” of Key West residents many people would take the damage “in stride.”



Photo by Staff Sgt. Thomas Kielbasa.

Staff Sgt. Deborah Miale of the Florida Army National Guard’s 260<sup>th</sup> Military Intelligence Battalion (left) talks with Donald Cobert - the self-proclaimed “Wizard of Key West” - at a food and water distribution site in Key West, during hurricane relief operations Oct. 27.

# Inspiration for all ages

## Honoring the legacy of Tuskegee Airmen

By Senior Airman Ben Ziskal,  
482nd Maintenance Group

Who were the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II?

They were America's first black military Airmen who were forced to train in isolation at a time when many people believed black men were inferior in the areas of intelligence, skill, courage and patriotism. They overcame the humiliation of racism and bigotry both overseas and at home in America while posting a flawless flying record that will live on forever as an inspiration to those dedicated to defending freedom. They were not only pivotal in the success of our military during the war, but also played a significant role in the fight for racial integration in the United States.

Several members of the 482<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing recently attended the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual National Convention of the Tuskegee Airmen held in Orlando

August 15-20. This was an event that had something to teach all of those in attendance about pride, honor, dignity and worth. It was truly an eye opening experience. I was personally amazed by how interested these heroes were in what we were doing in today's Air Force.

Upon meeting these men and asking them questions about their experiences they would immediately respond with questions about who you were and what you did. We were there to honor them, but they maintained the same humble attitude that they had back in their flying days, putting their service before themselves and setting the example that all of us should try to mirror.

The convention featured an exhibit hall where many of the original Tuskegee Airmen had booths set up featuring memorabilia including posters, clothing and books telling their

stories. Another major part of the convention was a series of discussion panels covering a wide variety of topics dealt with by military members today. Also featured were an awards reception with dinner, a military luncheon, and several guest speakers.

The convention provided great opportunities to meet military members from all branches of service and from all across the country, all of whom were there to honor the Tuskegee Airmen for their superb service while simultaneously aiming to promote this same selfless service for the years to come. I would highly encourage all members of Homestead ARB to attend such conventions if able. Regardless of career field or rank, communicating and interacting with those who have served our country in the past will help lead us all down the path of success in the future.

### Tuskegee Airmen Facts

**992**

Graduates received their commission and pilot wings at Tuskegee Army Air Field in Tuskegee, Ala.

**450**

Graduates who served overseas

**1,578**

Missions flown by Tuskegee Airmen in World War II

**32**

Tuskegee Airmen were shot down and captured

**66**

Tuskegee Airmen killed in action

**950**

Railcars, trucks and other motor vehicles destroyed by Tuskegee Airmen

**0**

Bombers lost while being escorted by Tuskegee Airmen

**150**

Tuskegee Airmen that received the Distinguished Flying Cross

Tuskegeearmen.org



Photo by Master Sgt. John E. Lasky

**BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq (AFPN) — Capt. Mark Ferstl (left) explains an unmanned aerial vehicle's ground control station to Tuskegee Airmen retired Lt. Col. Lee Archer (sitting) retired Lt. Col Robert Ashby (back right) and retired Col. Dick Toliver (leaning on the chair). The Tuskegee Airmen are here to meet deployed 332nd Expeditionary Operations Group Airmen and observe operations. The Army created the Tuskegee Airmen unit in 1941.**