

Border Eagle



Photos by Airman 1st Class Timothy J. Stein



Exercise, exercise...

(Top) Tech. Sgt. Thomas Cooper, 47th Security Forces Squadron, and Trooper David Cordova, Texas State Highway Patrol, inspect a vehicle involved in a joint training exercise between Laughlin and emergency response teams from Del Rio and Val Verde County Jan. 30. (Right) Staff Sgt. Michael Patterson, 47th Civil Engineer Squadron fireman, confers with an exercise director from the downtown fire department during the exercise.

Unit counselors ready to assist voters

By 1st Lt. Lindsay Logsdon
Public affairs

Sixty-seven unit voting assistance counselors have been appointed to aid Laughlin's eligible voters with the absentee voting process for this year's federal, state and local election.

The absentee voting process was established under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act. The act allows U.S. citizens who are members of the uniformed services and their family members who are either overseas or away from their registered polling area to vote through the mail.

"The Federal Voting Assistance Program works under the guidance of the voting act," said Maj. Brad Wensel, 86th Flying Training Squadron G flight

assistant commander and the Laughlin installation voting officer.

"The program ensures that everyone on active duty and their dependents have the ability to vote absentee because the military vote counts," he said.

To vote absentee, Laughlin members need to complete a Federal Post Card Application. All states and territories accept the FPCA as an application for registration and for an absentee ballot. These postage paid applications will be given out and explained by a voting counselor.

"It's natural for people in the military to wonder where they're going to vote and without the voting counselors they won't be able to understand the process," said Major Wensel.

Information requirements for com-

pleting the FPCA are different from state to state. Voting counselors have been given the 2004 Voting Assistance Guide that explains the requirements of each state. The last submission date for a FPCA is Sept. 15.

"It's better to submit the FPCA as soon as possible, especially if individuals want to vote in their state's primary election," said Major Wensel.

A voting counselor has been assigned for every 20 potential voters. Their goal is 100 percent contact with all people assigned to their area and to answer any questions on the FPCA.

"The most important thing for eligible voters to understand is that by law they have to vote in the state where they are a legal resident," said Major

See **Vote**, page 4

Newslines

Federal job seminar set

The Family Support Center is holding a seminar on how to apply for federal jobs from 2 to 4 p.m. Wednesday in the Family Support Center conference room.

The seminar will cover how to build a resume, how to self-nominate for positions and more.

For details or to R.S.V.P. by Monday, call 298-5620.

Scholarship deadline looms

The deadline for the Defense Commissary Agency's Scholarships for Military Children is Feb. 18.

Applications can be picked up at the commissary or downloaded through a link on the front page of www.commissaries.com or www.militaryscholar.org.

Warrior call scheduled

A Warrior Call about Laughlin members and their families who have gone through a deployment in the last year is set for 3 p.m. Feb. 25 in the Anderson Hall auditorium.

The focus is on common problems or lessons learned during any phase of the deployment.

A reception will follow at 4 p.m. in Anderson Hall rooms E and F.

To R.S.V.P., call 298-5620.

Deployment stats

Deployed:	34
Returning in 30 days:	26
Deploying in 30 days:	2

Mission status

(As of Tuesday)

Days behind or ahead:

T-37, -7.85	T-1, 0.78
T-38, -1.84	T-6, -2.29

Mission capable rate:

T-37, 88.7%	T-1, 91.2%
T-38, 76.7%	T-6, 65.8%

Inspection process changes with times



Commander's Corner

By Lt. Col. Tom Lukenic
47th Flying Training Wing inspector general

For those of you who've been in the service for a while, you may have fond memories of an ancient Inspector General's Inspection process called the Quality Air Force Assessment or QAFA. If a chill runs down your spine, it's quite understandable.

As the Mission Support Inspection Chief on the Pacific Air Force IG team in 1990, I had the enjoyable task of conducting unit inspections and reviewing Quality Programs across the Pacific theater.

For those new to the service, you probably know the IG as either the dreaded "black hats" who come in and burn units down while searching every nook and cranny for problems or as the guy to complain to when no one else listens. However, there was a time when your Major Command IG team conducted the QAFA program on a regular basis.

Why did the Air Force stop doing these inspections if quality was such an important gauge for unit performance?

Assessments of units were conducted against the Malcolm Baldrige criteria, a long list of performance measures that gauged a unit's processes, procedures and products. Every year awards were given to businesses that best exemplified adherence to the model's disciplines. This tool was adopted by the Air Force after seeing the business community use it. However, serious problems with the model became apparent as time passed in the business sector, and eventually in its use in the

military arena.

First, the award was no guarantee that a company's products or a military unit's performance was, in fact, superior. Cadillac, a Baldrige winner in 1990, was recognized for establishing an excellent quality-management system. The process was the winner, not the product. Other companies had actually won the award one year and went bankrupt the next.

On the military side, we had one combat unit, that I will not name, that did extraordinarily well on a QAFA early in the year and went 'Marginal' when an operational readiness inspection was conducted that rated their combat effectiveness only a few weeks later.

Second, using the Baldrige criteria was not a cure-all/be-all since it didn't address such key issues as innovation, financial performance, or long-term planning – all of which are necessary for business or, in this case, Air Force success.

Additionally, the process of applying to receive the award was very time consuming and expensive. For example, the telecommunications division of Coming applied for the award in 1989 and, although it did not win, ended up putting in over 7,000 man hours documenting the process.

I personally inspected Kadena Air Base, Japan, and the mission support group commander showed me a book two ham-fisted thick that took him and his team over a year to prepare – matching his organization's performance against the criteria with the sharpest detail.

And, that was only one unit on one base.

Going over these reports, as an IG team member, was painful and enormously personnel-intensive. The entire team would review reports line item by line item, comparing the unit's performance against the criteria and then assigning point values. It could take a 60-man team three 16-hour days to get through these massive documents. All this came after a

week of collecting and compiling reports for review, then drafting the IG's interpretation of the unit's adherence to the criteria and producing our own report.

We all loved doing those QAFAs. New team members typically did not understand how it all worked until about the third inspection visit. But, just as the business community had discovered, the Air Force realized that scoring high against the criteria was no guarantee a company would be successful or a combat unit would be effective. It simply meant you scored well against the criteria. And for that bit of news we found units and companies spent a huge number of man hours producing a document that said a lot but meant little. These were man hours that could or should have been better spent elsewhere – elsewhere in the business community meant producing innovative products that make companies more money and are profit-oriented.

In the Air Force it was found to be more unit specific. How you judge the effectiveness of a finance office or a judge advocate's office or an operational F-15 unit is all different and dependent on different characteristics.

Now, the Air Force has dropped the whole notion of QAFAs and developed the compliance inspection report process. This is designed more in line with how we operate – units are judged against an individual unit checklist and graded accordingly. They are not measured against a defined list of subjective criteria that may have little adaptability to the unit mission.

Will we ever go back to those "Quality" type inspections?

I had the opportunity to ask the Inspector General of the Air Force that very question, and thankfully the answer is 'no.' The Air Force found that for the amount of effort expended, that type of assessment is simply not worth the cost in both manpower and resources.

May the QAFA rest in peace.

Border Eagle

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Advertising should be submitted to the Del Rio News-Herald, 2205 Bedell, Del Rio, TX, 774-4611. Advertising should be submitted by 4 p.m. each Friday.

Submissions can be e-mailed to: timothy.stein@laughlin.af.mil or sheila.johnston@laughlin.af.mil.

Chief of staff offers vision for shaping Air Force

By Gen. John P. Jumper
Air Force chief of staff

(Editors note: This article is the latest Chief of Staff of the Air Force Sight Picture and may be accessed from the Air Force Issues Web page at www.issues.af.mil)

Over the last decade, we've seen a dramatic change in our security environment. We reduced our active duty force by nearly 40 percent – from 608,000 to 375,000 – while remaining engaged around the world at levels higher than at any time during the Cold War.

To accommodate the changing world, we have completely transformed our Air Force, from one that dealt with the Soviet and North Korean threats into an agile Air Expeditionary Force, capable of rapidly responding anywhere, with tailored forces ready to deal with any contingency. Our transformation has yielded outstanding results. But, for the past two years, we have exceeded our mandated active duty end strength of 359,000. Under the President's declaration of a national emergency, our excess numbers are appropriate. While this is a temporary situation

fueled by the Global War on Terrorism, we now need a plan to return to the authorized levels.

By the end of 2005, we should reduce the size of our active force by 16,000 people, and we must reshape the force to correct existing skill imbalances and account for a new range of missions in the GWOT.

I know it may not be clear why our active duty end strength needs to decrease while we are still heavily engaged around the world. Let me explain how we got to this point and what we are doing to fix it.

As a result of several years of high operations tempo, we were given some latitude on how quickly we came down to the legal end strength limit of 359,000. We also suffered an unprecedented recruiting problem during the 1990s. Recruiting has traditionally not been a problem for the Air Force, but a robust economy late in the 1990s had us falling short of recruiting goals for the first time since 1979. As a result, we took in thousands of people using skill mix assumptions that are no longer applicable to the demands of the GWOT. We now have several career fields overmanned, while

suffering shortages in others. Our task now is to reduce the force while also fixing this skill mix imbalance.

One area that has affected our end strength is Stop Loss – a program we used in 2002 and 2003 to stop people from separating. When Stop Loss was lifted, many of those airmen who intended to separate elected to stay. Other policies associated with the GWOT also influenced our end strength. We swelled the force by implementing programs that brought prior-service members and Air Reserve Center volunteers on active duty to fill known critical skill shortages. Perhaps the most significant factor affecting our strength was, and still is, retention. Our goal for first term-enlisted retention is 55 percent, but, at the end of fiscal year 2004, it was 61 percent. Across the board our retention is up, and for good reason! In addition to an increased sense of patriotism, the tax and pay changes – some implemented for GWOT – really work. Imminent Danger Pay, Hardship Duty Pay, Combat Zone Tax Exclusion, Family Separation Allowance and a host of others, plus bonuses we pay to ensure

we can retain critical skills, all add up to a very attractive compensation package that turned the tide toward staying in uniform. We are proud of our retention rates and that our people are electing to continue to serve.

To start our reshaping effort, we have set new targets for recruiting, from 37,000 this year to 35,600 in fiscal year 2005 and 34,500 in fiscal year 2006. We are also working on fixing our stressed career fields. Where we are short of people for the rotational requirement, we've taken action to direct more of our recruits into the stressed career fields. However, we know we can't replace 5- and 7-levels with people right out of technical school. Part of our force shaping will have to be done by retraining and shifting experienced people from over-staffed career fields. Many of our airmen are willing to make the shift, and we will encourage retesting and support for waivers to qualify for retraining into critical skills. But in some career fields, our ability to absorb more people is often limited by training facilities and capacity. We will work to unclog any

See **Picture**, page 4



Actionline
298-5351

Col. Dan Woodward
47th Flying Training Wing commander

This column is one way to work through problems that haven't been

AAFES fliers

Question: The base exchange no longer receives those fliers which list things on sale, so they don't have any idea of what's on sale and neither do we.

I was wondering if they could at least get one to put in one of the offices there so we

solved through normal channels. By leaving your name and phone number, you are assured of a timely personal reply. It's also very useful in case more information is needed in order to pursue your inquiry. If you give your name, we will make every attempt to ensure confidentiality when appropriate.

If your question relates to the general interest of the people of Laughlin, the question and answer may also be printed in the Border Eagle.

Before you call the Actionline,

could have access to it. It sure would help.

Answer: The base exchange stopped carrying the fliers because the store does not carry all of the sale items advertised. This is because some merchandise must be purchased in bulk, and based on the store's size and current use, the BX would not be able

to sell all the items it would be forced to order.

The BX does carry the everyday items on the flier and will start printing a copy from the Army Air Force Exchange Service Web site and have it available in the store. Any sale item not carried here can be ordered from a BX in San Antonio and, if the item is in stock, would generally arrive within a week.

Below are some useful telephone numbers that may be helpful when working your issue with a base agency.

AAFES	298-3176
Finance	298-5204
Civil Engineer	298-5252
Civilian Personnel	298-5299

Clinic	298-6311
Commissary	298-5815
Dormitory manager	298-5213
EEO	298-5879
FWA hotline	298-4170
Housing	298-5904
Information line	298-5201
Legal	298-5172
MEO	298-5400
Military Personnel	298-5073
Public Affairs	298-5988
Security Forces	298-5900
Services	298-5810

Customers may sign up to have the weekly sale flier mailed to them.

They can also sign up for the electronic AAFES Newsletter. Just go to www.aafes.com, click on "AAFES Sale Flier," log on, and then click on "Receive our weekly sale flyers by mail" or "Sign up for our weekly newsletter."

Vote, from page 1

Wensel.

Legal voting residence can be the state or territory where a member last resided prior to entering the military service or the location that has since been claimed as the member's legal residence. The 47th Flying Training Wing Legal office can answer specific questions pertaining to legal residence.

Laughlin members who are legal residents of Texas and are registered in Val Verde County can vote in person. Other Texas residents not registered in Val Verde County can also vote in person by updating their county voter registration at the Texas Department of Public Safety, Driver's License Division and Val Verde County Voter Registration.

Lt. Col. Ron Stevens, 84th Flying Training Squadron, and Major Wensel are voluntary deputy registrars who can also assist individuals with Val Verde County voter registration.

"Voting in this general election is not only our privilege in a democratic society, but it's our responsibility," said Major Wensel.

For more information on the Federal Voting Assistance Plan or voting in general, individuals can log on to www.fvap.gov.

For a list of unit voting assistance counselors, see page 5.

County voter registration:

Texas Department of Public Safety, Driver's License Division
2012 Veterans Blvd
Del Rio, TX 78840
(830) 775-2367

Val Verde County
Voter Registration
309 Mills Street
Del Rio, TX 78840
(830) 774-7529

Picture, from page 3

training backlogs. I am dedicated to reducing our stressed career fields and putting in place the right incentives to retain the people we task the most.

In addition to looking at retention, recruiting and retraining, we are also looking at where our people are – we have airmen serving in jobs outside the Air Force who don't deploy as part of our AEF. Some of these, such as joint positions and some defense agency positions, require uniformed people, and we benefit by having an airman's perspective in those jobs. Others, however, may not require a uniformed person, or a military person at all. These are positions that we are working to legitimately reclaim into our ranks. Until very recently, we had not made all the manpower cuts we agreed to

during the 1990s. We've now made the adjustments in our books – over 13,000 positions eliminated but we still need to move some of the people. That means we have airmen with advanced training and professional skills filling positions that no longer exist. It's hard for me to argue to the Congress that we don't have enough people when we should be using some of our airmen in other required positions.

All of these efforts will be combined with several additional force shaping tools to get to our authorized manpower levels and to get the right skills in the right places. We will include initiatives such as restricting reenlistment in overage career fields, voluntary transfers to the ARC, shortening service commitments, limiting officer continuation for those deferred for promotion, commis-



Courtesy photo

Happy birthday...

Master Sgt. Karla Jordan-Hunnicut, 47th Medical Group first sergeant, serves a birthday meal to diners at the Chapparal Dining Facility during the Second Quarter Birthday Meal recently. Each quarter the dining facility hosts a large birthday meal for meal card holders whose birthday falls in the quarter.

sioning ROTC cadets direct to the ARC, limiting reclassification of those eliminated from technical school, rolling back separation dates, and officer and enlisted retraining.

We are out of balance for the contingency world in which we live. I recently returned from the area of responsibility where I met people who had been deployed for more than 200 days. They take great pride in the job they are doing, but we are being unfair to them and their families.

If at all possible, our goal is to give every qualified airman who wants to stay in the Air Force the opportunity to do so. In addition, we will use every tool to shape

the force we have available to avoid the extreme measures that were used in the early 1990s.

Saddam Hussein buried his airplanes in the sand rather than face your Air Force. That's respect, and you continue to earn it every day.

Secretary Roche and I are proud of you, and are honored to serve with you. We will continue to remain closely engaged on these issues to ensure that we reshape the force into one that is suited for the 21st century while sustaining the standards of excellence and morale that are emblematic of the world's greatest Air Force.

Newsline

Scholarship application due

The application for Park University's Military Family Scholarship, good for 15 credit hours, is due by April 1. All active-duty family members are eligible.

For more information, call Park University at 298-5593.

OSC offers scholarships

Laughlin's Officers Spouses Club is offering academic and vocational scholarships to military spouses, dependent children and E-4s and below.

For eligibility, guidelines and application forms, contact the base edu-

cation office at 298-5520, local area high school counselors' offices, local colleges or go to www.captain.park.edu/laughlin/ocs_scholarship.htm.

For more information, call Marlene Katz at 298-3752 or Allyson Ludington at 298-3184.

The deadline for applications is April 10.

FEEA scholarship available

The Federal Employee Education and Assistance scholarship is available for civilian federal employees and their dependent family members.

For a list of rules and an application, go to the FEEA Web site at www.feea.org.

Unit voting assistance counselors

47th Wing Staff Agencies

1st Lt. Lindsay Logsdon 298-4752
Yvonne Ford 298-5432
Staff Sgt. Manny Laureles 298-5231
Senior Airman Jacob Rivera 298-5111
Capt. Derek Martin 298-5681
Senior Airman Sharee Branson 298-4137

47th Operations Group

2nd Lt. Jennifer Adsit 298-5293

84th Flying Training Squadron

Capt. Jeff Dennis 298-3065
1st Lt. John Somogyi 298-4755
Maj. Alez Darosa 298-4003
1st Lt. Jeremy Hintz 298-4775
2nd Lt. Alan Dick 298-4777
1st Lt. Ryan Menath 298-4783

85th Flying Training Squadron

1st Lt. Matthew Minkley 298-5521
1st Lt. Steve Henderson 298-5243
2nd Lt. Michael Reilly 298-5848
Capt. Katrina Gieselman 298-4751
1st Lt. Nannette Menath 298-5511
Capt. Brad Dyer 298-5355
Capt. Scott Segal 298-5162

86th Flying Training Squadron

Capt. Nathan Day 298-5170
Capt. Richard Morneau 298-5378
Capt. Kevin Woods 298-5378

Capt. David Underwood 298-5378
Capt. Leron Hudgins 298-5922
2nd Lt. Dominic Cardella 298-5443
Capt. Jason Welch 298-5443
Capt. Steve Sprowls 298-5725
Capt. Eric Guttormsen 298-5011
1st Lt. Andy Lee 298-5011
1st Lt. Nelson Bennett 298-4243
2nd Lt. Brad Percy 298-4243
2nd Lt. John Eccles 298-5355
Capt. Chris Vecchione 298-4784
1st Lt. John Schultz 298-4219

87th Flying Training Squadron

1st Lt. Matthew Strohmeye 298-5112
Capt. Sid Stegall 298-5112
1st Lt. Kevin Cossey 298-5223
1st Lt. Joshua Ney 298-5509

96th Flying Training Squadron

Maj. Thomas Gregg 298-5186
Maj. Rory Shrum 298-4127

47th Operations Support Squadron

Capt. Barb Costa 298-5972
Senior Master Sgt. Christopher Evert 298-4350
Master Sgt. Robert Ochs 298-5434
Tech. Sgt. William Bartram 298-5300
Tech. Sgt. Steven Bromley 298-5475

47th Mission Support Group

1st Lt. Paula Schoch 298-5304

47th Communications Squadron

2nd Lt. Joseph Watson 298-4328
1st Lt. Michancy Schultz 298-5542
Senior Master Sgt. Bruce Hoch 298-4357
Airman 1st Class Matthew Rall 298-4366

47th Civil Engineer Squadron

1st Lt. Meg White 298-5253
Master Sgt. Michael Sweet 298-5633
Staff Sgt. Michael Patterson 298-5633

47th Mission Support Squadron

2nd Lt. Tiffany Ewton 298-5244
Staff Sgt. Myrna Garcia 298-5244

47th Contracting Squadron

Master Sgt. Gerald Norris 298-5116
Tech. Sgt. Christopher Trujillo 298-4257
Stephanie Hebert 298-5715

47th Services Division

2nd Lt. Andre Clark 298-4340

47th Security Forces Squadron

2nd Lt. Garland Wilmoth 298-4721
Tech Sgt. Jonathan Wallace 298-5861

47th Medical Operations Squadron

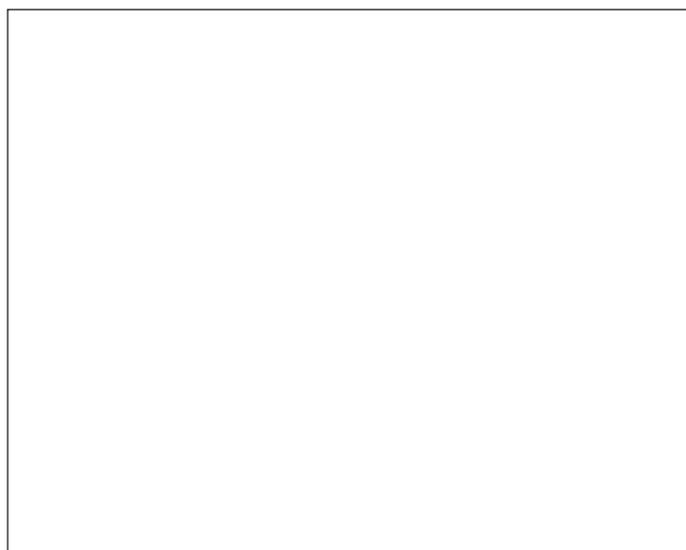
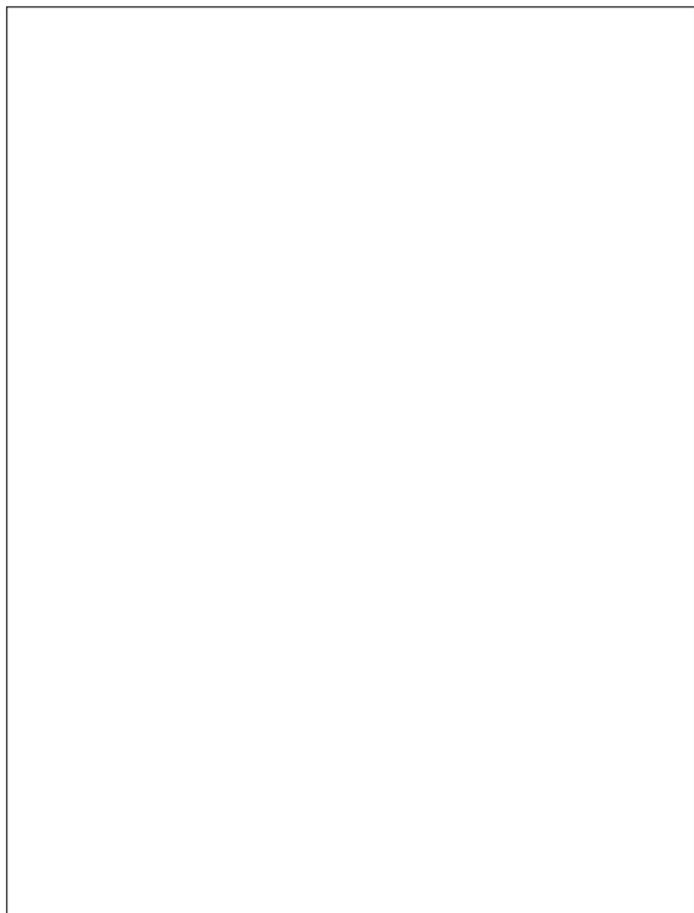
1st Lt. Tomao Rose 298-6362

47th Aeromedical-Dental Squadron

Master Sgt. Tracy Patterson 298-6341
Tech. Sgt. Daniel Beary 298-6806

47th Medical Support Squadron

Master Sgt. Glynis Sims-Bonds 298-6454



Preventive dental health starts with infants

Compiled from staff reports

Overall health is an important issue to individuals. These issues have a wide range and include oral and dental health.

"The care taken today will have an impact in the future," said Capt. (Dr.) Mark Halverson, 47th Aeromedical-Dental Squadron dentist. "Preventive dental care has greatly improved the oral health of American children. It's now possible for many children to reach adulthood without ever experiencing tooth decay."

February has been designated National Children's Dental Health Month, and the Laughlin dental clinic has some tips for parents and caregivers.

■ Take children to the dentist regularly, beginning around the child's first birthday. Put only water in a child's naptime or bedtime

bottle to prevent baby bottle tooth decay.

■ Begin brushing (or using a wet washcloth on) a child's teeth with water once the first tooth appears.

■ Toothpaste should not be used until age 3 when children have developed the ability to rinse and spit without swallowing toothpaste.

■ A pea size amount of toothpaste should be used for children ages 3 to 6.

■ Start flossing a child's teeth when two of them begin to touch.

■ Brush and floss a child's teeth daily until he learns to do so by himself.

■ Supervise a child's oral hygiene regularly after he starts brushing and flossing on his own.

■ Make sure children get the correct amount of fluoride needed for added protection against decay. Ask a dentist about this.

■ Ask a dentist about dental sealants, which form a pro-

TECTIVE barrier on teeth to help shield the chewing surfaces of premolars and molars from decay.

There are many different dental care products to choose from. "Well it really doesn't matter what brand you choose or whether the toothpaste is a gel, a paste or even in a powder form, as long as the toothpaste contains fluoride," said Captain Halverson, "All fluoride toothpastes work very well in fighting plaque and cavities."

One thing to look for when choosing a toothpaste is the American Dental Association Seal of Approval, said Captain Halverson.

This shows the product has adequately shown evidence of safety and efficacy in a controlled clinical trial.

Toothbrushes and floss pose the same type of problem.

"Deciding on a toothbrush is very easy," said Cap-

tain Halverson. "Make sure that the toothbrush has soft nylon bristles with rounded ends."

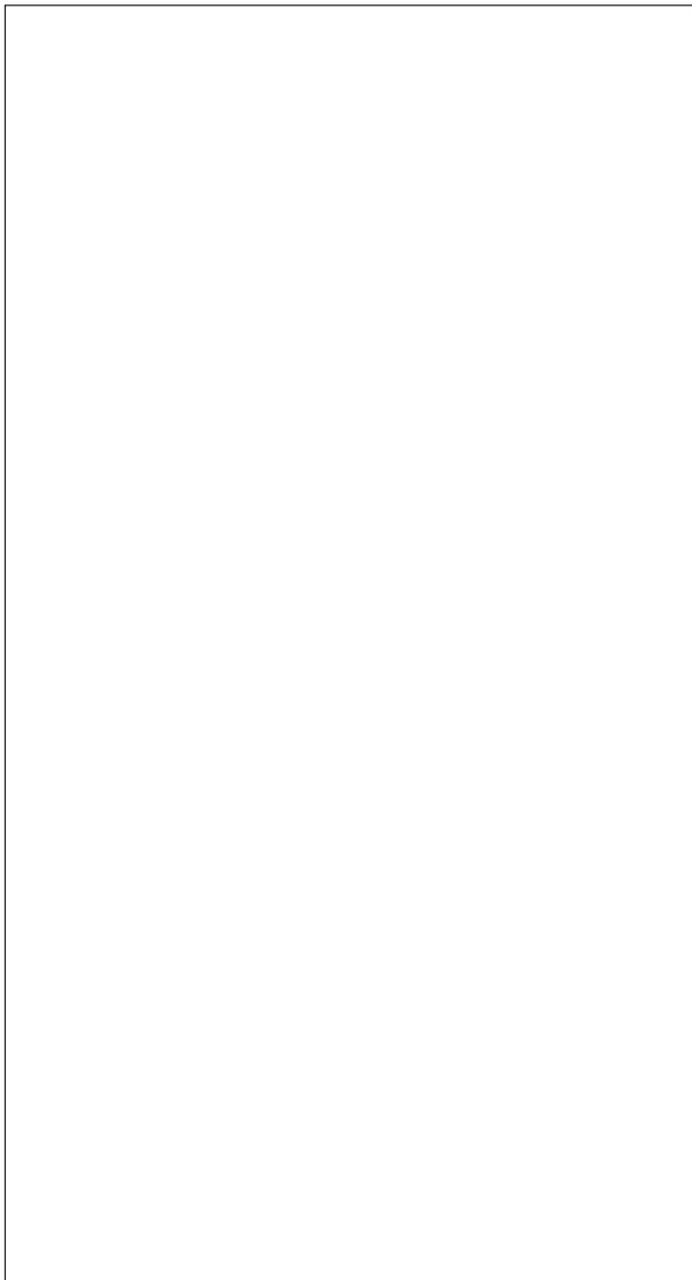
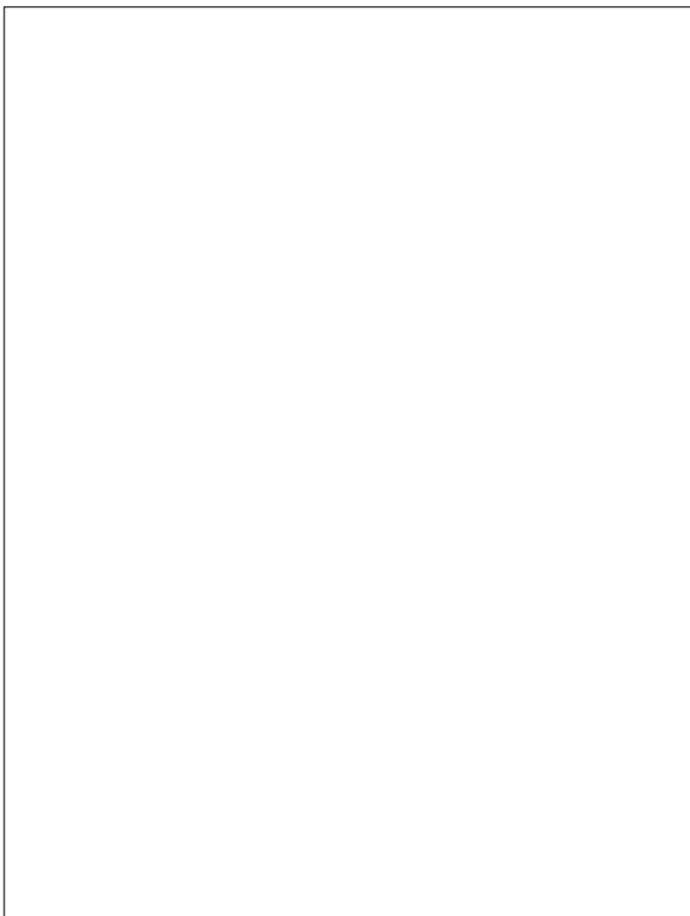
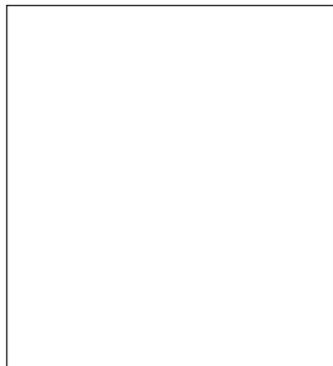
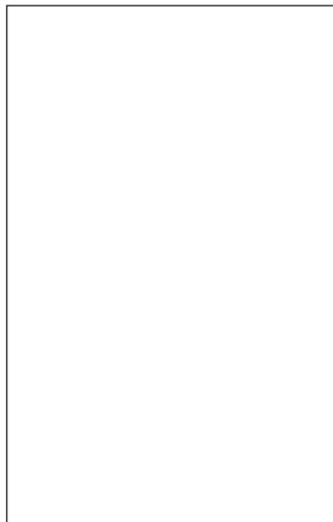
Others are not recommended, he said, because they cause problems later on like abrading tooth enamel away.

"Deciding on a floss is just as easy," said Captain Halverson, "Buy the one you prefer the most. All flosses work the same."

He added that the most important thing is to floss at least once a day.

"Good oral health practices should begin in infancy and continue throughout

adult life," said Captain Halverson.



DoD offers civilians buyout, early retirement

Employees could receive up to \$25,000 in buyout payment

By Tech. Sgt. David Jablonski
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON – The Department of Defense now has permanent authority to offer civilian employees voluntary early retirements and buyouts (voluntary separation incentives) without having to get Office of Personnel Management approval each year.

The voluntary early retirement and voluntary separation incentive programs are similar to other programs the Air Force has used since 1993.

They allow the Air Force to offer employees up to \$25,000 to leave the Air Force, and/or take a volun-

tary early retirement. By exercising these authorities, the Air Force will be able to take reductions in their civilian workforce while minimizing reductions in force, personnel officials said.

These permanent authorities came as part of the new National Security Personnel System.

“These programs may be used to reduce the number of personnel or to restructure the workforce to meet mission objectives,” said Sara Bonilla, chief of the Air Force NSPS project management office. “Because the authority is now permanent, it allows managers greater flexibility in long-range planning. In addition, NSPS included a limit on the total number of VSIPs that can be used in DoD and our allocation this year is 5,873. This does not imply we are downsizing 5,873 civilians or that we must use all of the VSIPs. It just means that, if

needed, we could offer up to that number.”

There are no limits for using voluntary early retirements.

“Buyouts allow the Air Force to decrease (its) workforce without resorting to reductions in force, or reshape it without requiring the loss of positions,” Ms. Bonilla said. “In addition to offering a separation incentive to employees eligible for early or optional retirement, it can be also be used for resignations.”

Employees who accept a buyout, or an early retirement must leave government service in the same fiscal year.

Both the early retirement and buyout programs have other requirements.

For early retirement, the employee:

- Must have at least 20 years of federal service and be at least 50 years old. Younger employees may be eli-

gible if they have 25 years of federal service.

- Must have worked for DoD continuously for at least one year.

For buyouts, the employee:

- Can receive a maximum of \$25,000 before taxes and deductions.

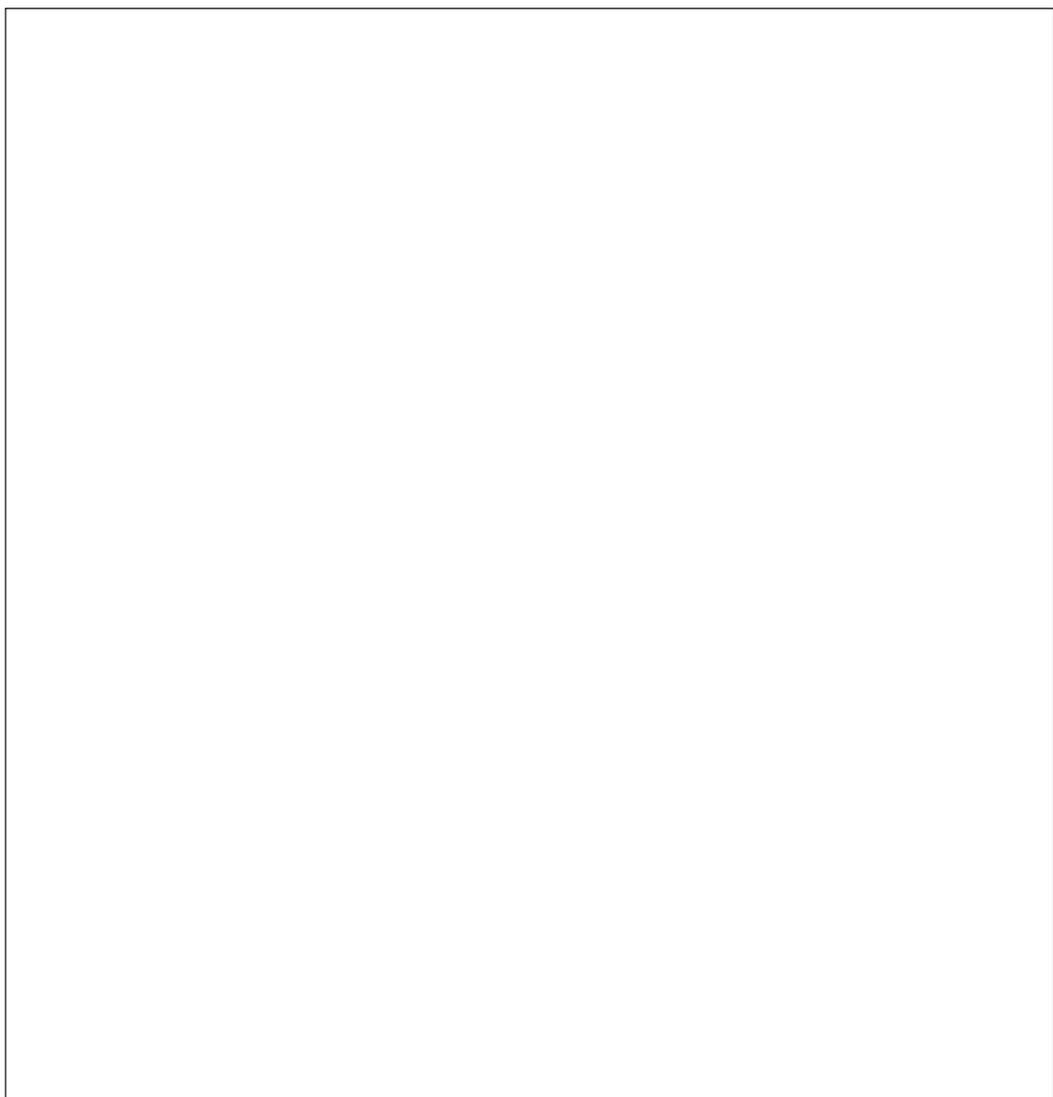
- Must be a U.S. citizen.

- Must be serving under an appointment without time limitation.

- Must have been employed by DoD for a continuous period of at least 12 months.

Employees who accept buyouts may not take another position with the federal government, directly or via contract, for at least five years or they will be required to repay the buyout. Additionally, employees may not return to work for the DoD for at least one year unless they receive a waiver from the secretary of defense.

The cost of the buyout is funded by the organization offering it.



Homelink ensures family communication

By Master Sgt. Jim Randall
379th Air Expenditionary Wing
Public affairs

SOUTHWEST ASIA – Operation Homelink is a nonprofit organization that facilitates e-mail communication among deployed servicemembers and their loved ones by providing free, refurbished computers to families of juniorenlisted members deployed overseas.

“Military families want to know their loved ones are safe when they’re deployed overseas,” said Dan Shannon, founder and president of Operation Homelink. “Many (families of junior-enlisted personnel) do not own computers and must rely on slow postal mail service and expensive long dis-

tance. E-mail can solve this problem.”

The all-volunteer organization was formed in February 2003 and has received so many requests for computers that it has had difficulties trying to keep up with the demand.

“Although we have successfully linked hundreds of military families since launching our operations, word has quickly spread and we now have more than 2,500 families waiting for a computer,” Mr. Shannon said.

“The backlog is a problem because it takes time to process orders, and we want to get computers out to families as quickly as possible,” Mr. Shannon said. “We can only accept requests once the military person is deployed, and if people have to wait months to get a computer, it defeats our purpose.”

Besides processing orders, Operation Homelink faces the challenge of acquiring donated computers and coordinating their refurbishment and shipping. The organization depends on defense contractors and other large American corporations to donate used computers.

Operation Homelink does not accept individual donations.

Corporations benefit from the program by retiring used computers in a cost-effective, secure manner, protecting the environment from unnecessary waste and showing appreciation for servicemembers overseas.

To qualify for a computer, applicants must reside in the continental United States and be a spouse, parent or guardian of an active-duty

servicemember who is deployed for 90 days or more. Spouses, parents or guardians of a servicemember who works aboard an active Navy ship or is a mobilized member of the Reserve or National Guard on recall orders of at least one year currently outside the continental United States also qualify.

Operation Homelink’s backlog may get worse before it gets better, Mr. Shannon said.

The organization cannot guarantee all qualified applicants will receive a computer, but since many servicemembers go on repeated overseas deployments, the program may remain a future option for junior-enlisted people and their families to stay in touch.



Scooter safety: Is it merely child's play?

By Paul Blair
47th Flying Training Wing
safety office

If you have a child who plans to push or motor off on a scooter, beware. Scooter injuries are rising dramatically.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reported 2,870 emergency room-treated injuries relating to motorized scooters for the first nine months of 2001. Statistics showed that most injuries happen to kids under the age of 15 and the younger the child, the more severe the injury.

The most common injuries were broken bones and joint dislocations in the upper extremities, but there were also a lot of lacerations, contusions, abrasions, strains and sprains, the commission reported. Head trauma was the most serious.

The CPSC recommends the following safety guidelines to help avoid injuries:

- Children under 12 should not ride motorized scooters.
- Always wear a helmet, elbow pads, kneepads and sturdy shoes. These are a small investment and can instantly eliminate almost two-thirds of possible scooter injuries, including the most serious ones. In many states, provinces and regions throughout the world, these are required by law.

Current Air Force policy requires the use of an approved properly worn helmet. Elbow pads, kneepads and gloves are highly recommended.

- Children under 8 should always be supervised when us-

ing scooters. Almost a third of all scooter-related injuries and accidents involve children under the age of 8. Scooters are capable of traveling very quickly, and children that age may not have the judgment or coordination to handle high speeds.

- Use scooters in safe places. Cars and scooters don't mix, especially for younger riders. Smooth, paved surfaces are best – avoid bumpy, uneven wet or rocky ones. Never ride an electric scooter into puddles of water. Schoolyards, parks and paved trails are examples of safe places to scoot. On sidewalks, riders should be especially careful of pedestrians, who always have the right of way.

- Always observe the basic rules of the road anywhere you use scooters. As scooters can travel as fast as many other types of vehicles, motorized and nonmotorized, they too must observe the rules of the road. These include:

- ◆ Stop at every stop sign. Look left, right, and left again before proceeding.
- ◆ Stop at the end of the driveway. Look left, right, and left before entering the street.
- ◆ Use proper hand signals.
- ◆ Obey traffic signs and signals

- Never hitch a ride from a car, bus, truck, bicycle, etc., and limit usage of the scooter to one person at a time.

- Do not ride a scooter at night. When it is dark out, there are too many things that can easily upset balance and cause a fall.

Parents must give children only as much independence and responsibility as they can

safely handle. Throughout childhood, children slowly develop the cognitive, perceptual and sensory skills necessary to be safe in traffic.

Children are children, not young adults. It's important to comprehend their limitations in understanding traffic.

According to the CPSC, children:

- have a narrower field of vision than adults – about one third less.
- cannot easily judge a car's speed and distance.
- assume that if they can see a car, its driver must be able

to see them. However, children are easily hidden from view by parked cars and other objects.

- cannot readily tell the direction a sound is coming from.
- may be impatient and impulsive.
- concentrate on only one thing at a time. This is likely not to be traffic.
- have a limited sense of danger.
- often mix fantasy with reality.
- imitate the (often bad) behavior of others, especially older children and adults.

Adults should always model appropriate traffic safety practices, whether you are walking or driving. Children learn from important people around them.

It is important for motorists to watch for children who have yet to develop good traffic safety habits.

The bottom line is to use good judgment when buying this "toy," and make sure children know, understand and follow good safety rules when using it.

Remember, their safety is in your hands.

Always Wear Safety Gear:

- * A Helmet
- * Elbow Pads
- * Knee Pads

Always Ride Your Scooter On the Sidewalk Or Paved Off-Road Paths – Stay Away From Cars or Other Vehicles!

Always Ride Your Scooter During the Daytime!

Stay Away From Sand, Gravel, Water and Dirt – Try to Keep Your Scooter on Smooth Surfaces.



Courtesy of the
U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

Check us out online ...

Click the link the Laughlin home page for an electronic version of the Border Eagle or log on to:
<http://home.laughlin.af.mil/47ftw/ftworg/pabasepaper/index.html>



The Air Force rewards good ideas with money.
Check out the IDEA Program data system at
<https://ideas.randolph.af.mil> or call
Tech. Sgt. Thomas Mayo at 298-4355.

Chapel information



Catholic

Monday - Friday

- Mass, 12:05 p.m.

Saturday

- Mass, 5 p.m., Reconciliation, 4:15 p.m. or by appointment

Sunday

- Mass, 9:30 a.m., Religious Education, 11 a.m.

Thursday

- Choir: 6 p.m., Rite of Christian Initiation, 7:30 p.m.

Protestant

Wednesday

- Choir, 7 p.m.; Protestant Women of the Chapel Ladies' Bible Study, 9 a.m.

Sunday

- General worship, 11 a.m., Contemporary worship, 9 a.m. in the base theater

Chaplain Staff

Wing chaplain:

Chap. (Lt. Col.) Joseph Lim, Roman Catholic

Senior Protestant:

Chap. (Capt.) Terri Gast, Presbyterian Church, USA

Protestant:

Chap. (Capt.) Alex Jack, Independent Christian Church

Protestant:

Chap. (1st Lt.) Kenneth Fisher, Evangelical Church Alliance

For more information on other denominations, chapel events or services, call 298-5111. For information on special events, see the Community Calendar on page 16.

The *XLer*

Staff Sgt. Sean Flansbaum
47th Civil Engineering Squadron

Hometown: Clayton, Calif.

Family: Wife, Ericka

Time at Laughlin:

Four years

Time in service:

Four years and six months

Greatest accomplishment:

Spearheading a canned food drive as an airman and seeing it continue today

Hobbies: Playing volleyball, listening to music and watching movies

Bad habit: Worrying too much

Favorite movie:

"Rad" or "E.T."

Favorite musician:

The Clash

If you could spend one hour with any person, who would it be? Osama Bin Laden because one hour would be all I need to knock him out, bag him and claim my reward.



Photo by Airman 1st Class Timothy J. Stein



Fitness Fact:

Ways to Keep Active for Good Health: ride a bike or walk for short errands, shoot hoops, follow regular exercise programs on television, make stops to stretch while traveling, try fitness videos, play frisbee, walk your dog more often, take stretch breaks at work, do pushups or situps during television commercials, take a walk after dinner, enjoy family hikes or bike rides, do household chores to music.

MSS/Wing defeats CES B in overtime

By Airman 1st Class
Timothy J. Stein
Editor

The team representing the 47th Mission Support Squadron and the 47th Wing Staff Agencies defeated the 47th Civil Engineer Squadron Team B in overtime, 43-40, in an intramural basketball game Wednesday at the fitness center.

Sean Neal scored six of his 13 points in overtime to help seal the win for MSS/Wing.

The beginning of the first half saw the teams trading baskets. Led by Travis Logsdon's six points, MSS/Wing found itself with a 10-9 lead with 10 minutes left in the half. CES responded by outscoring MSS/Wing 14-2 in the remaining minutes of the half. At the half, CES had an 11-point lead, 23-12.

Eric Hanson led CES with seven points in the half while Logsdon led MSS/Wing with nine.

MSS/Wing came out firing in the second half. Logsdon and Nicholas Stanfill combined to score seven unanswered points to bring the margin within four points.

Hanson quickly countered with a three-point shot but MSS/Wing scored the next six points bringing the score

within one.

The teams battled back and forth for the remainder of the second half. Down by three with time running out, Logsdon nailed a three-pointer to send the game into overtime.

With the game clock reset for five minutes, overtime began. Neal, who had seven points in regulation, was fouled while driving to the basket early in overtime. He made both shots to put MSS/Wing up by two.

CES answered with Hanson hitting a three-pointer to put his team up by one. Neal countered that play by hitting an 18-foot jump shot to retake the lead.

Hanson was fouled on CES's next possession where he made one free throw, tying the score at 37.

MSS/Wing retook the lead on a Logsdon jump shot and then extended it when an intercepted pass led to a layup by Stanfill.

Hanson brought the score within one with another three-pointer but Neal made both his free throws after being fouled on the next possession. CES had just one more chance at tying the game with a last second three-point attempt. The shot bounced off the rim giving MSS/Wing the 43-40 victory.

Basketball standings

(As of Thursday)

<u>Western Conference</u>		<u>Eastern Conference</u>	
Team	W-L	Team	W-L
CES A	8-0	86th	5-2
CCS	6-2	LCSAM	4-1
SFS	6-3	87th	3-1
MSS/Wing	6-4	84th/85th	3-3
CES B	4-6	OSS	1-5
MED A	2-7		
MED B	0-8		