

# GULF DEFENDER



Vol. 61, No. 44

Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla. *Gulf Defender*

Nov. 8, 2002

## In brief

### Chief selectees, quarterly awards

Check out which Tyndall members made E-9, and which members won quarterly awards on Pages 2,6.

### Commissary closure

The commissary will be closed Monday and Tuesday in observance of the Veterans Day holiday.

### AF news videos

Public Affairs will air Air Force News stories on Channel 12 at 8 a.m., noon and 2 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday.

### 'Operation Turkey Drop' food baskets

Thanksgiving food baskets for military families are collected, assembled and distributed by the Tyndall chapel community, first sergeants and Top Three groups.

Non-perishable food donations may be placed in collection boxes at Chapel 1, Chapel 2 or designated locations across the base. A canned goods food drive will be held at the commissary Nov. 16. All base members are invited to help assemble baskets beginning at 4 p.m. Nov. 24 in the Chapel 2 annex.

For more details call the chapel staff at 283-2925.

## Inside

● Engineer unit gallops in ... **Page 4**

● Tyndall has tower power ... **Page 8**

● Tyndall Tigers split with Eglin ... **Page 13**



## View from above

Tech. Sgt. Timothy Hibbard, air traffic control chief of training, points out traffic on the radar scope as trainee Senior Airman Dale Drake observes from their air traffic control tower location here. The mission of the 325th Operations Support Squadron ATC unit is featured on Page 8.

Photo by 2nd Lt. Albert Bosco

## New Career Status Bonus options available

**RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN)** — Airmen eligible to opt for a \$30,000 lump-sum bonus upon reaching 15 years of service now have the option to receive the money in annual installments, potentially decreasing their tax liability.

The Career Status Bonus program, which began in April 2001, gave eligible servicemembers a choice to take the "bonus" in addition to their retirement instead of choosing the current "high three" retirement plan. The "high three" retirement program pays retirees 50 percent of their highest three pay years after 20 years of service.

"Congress wanted to give servicemembers a more lucrative

option to receive their CSB payment," said Staff Sgt. Althea Bard, CSB program manager.

People who received their CSB bonus payments on or after Dec. 28, and those who have yet to make their decision, may now elect from the following options:

- One payment of \$30,000
- Two annual installments of \$15,000 each
- Three annual installments of \$10,000 each
- Four annual installments of \$7,500 each
- Five annual installments of \$6,000 each

Each choice includes the 40 percent "Redux" retirement. Those who decline are automatically entered under the "high

three" retirement program.

"A potential decrease to the amount a member is taxed and greater participation in the Thrift Savings Plan are advantages to taking the installments," said Master Sgt. Mike Hall, superintendent of the Air Force Personnel Center's requirements branch. "People will receive their CSB payments each year in January."

Local military personnel flight officials will notify people who received payment after Dec. 28 of their eligibility. Those who switch to one of the installment options will be required to repay all but the first installment and then begin drawing one of the annual installment options. The

deadline to switch to a payment plan is Nov. 15.

Officials will also contact people who were previously notified of their CSB eligibility and declined participation to afford them the opportunity to take part in the installment options.

"(Servicemembers) should take their time and weigh their options carefully though," said Sergeant Hall. "People must do their homework. It's a decision only they can make."

Installation family support center financial management counselors can provide investment-type information to interested members, officials said. People should work through their person-

SEE BONUS PAGE 6

# Stripes, awards go out at Tyndall

**BRIG. GEN. LARRY NEW**

325th Fighter Wing commander



There's nothing better than being able to share good news about great people and this week we have plenty of both.

First, this week the Air Force announced the selection of the newest chief master sergeants and we're fortunate at Team Tyndall to have seven selected. Senior Master Sgts. Dan Barber, 325th Security Forces Squadron; Lewis Mohr, 325th Medical Group; Mark Charles, 325th Communications Squadron; James Wilkerson, 325th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron; George Mason, Jr., 325th Contracting Squadron; Dean Kashiwbara, 82nd Aerial Targets Squadron and Robert Cox, 83rd Fighter Weapons Squadron will join the most elite tier in the enlisted corps that only one percent of the entire Air Force ever reaches. I've often heard our very own command chief, Chief Master Sgt. Kevin Hodges say, "it's not an end, it's a beginning and the real work starts now." Dan, Lewis, Mark, James, George, Dean and Robert,



**"Monday marks a very special holiday and honors the sacrifice and dedication of those who've gone before us, and worked hard to build the strong military this nation enjoys."**

**BRIG. GEN. LARRY NEW**

325th Fighter Wing commander

congratulations! We look forward to your continued leadership and the great things your new stripes will help us accomplish at Tyndall and throughout the Air Force.

Team Tyndall celebrated the accomplishments of another group of top performers recently during the combined 325th Fighter Wing and Tyndall Air Force Base Associate Unit Quarterly Awards competition. The overall Team Tyndall winners are: Senior Airman Christopher Tuck, 325th Contracting Squadron, Airman of the Quarter; Staff Sgt. Bradford Harewood, 823rd REDHORSE Squadron, NCO of the Quarter; Master Sgt. Steven Lantz, 325th Operations Group, Senior NCO of the Quarter; 1st Lt.

Ryan Nash, 325th Maintenance Operations Squadron, Company Grade Officer of the Quarter; Melissa Sanders, 325th CONS, Category I Civilian of the Quarter; and William Baker, 325th CONS, Category II Civilian of the Quarter. Congratulations to all our winners and keep up the good work.

Monday marks a very special holiday and honors the sacrifice and dedication of those who've gone before us, and worked so hard to build the strong military this nation enjoys. Veterans Day dates back to 1926 when Congress officially called for an Armistice Day to remember those who served in World War I — "the war to end all wars." The

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## Action Line

The Action Line is your direct line to me. It is one way to make Tyndall a better place to work and live.

Action Line calls are recorded and staffed through the proper agency. The goal is to provide you with an accurate, timely response. You must leave your name, phone number or address to receive a response.

Questions or comments of general interest will be published in this forum. This avenue should only be used after coordinating problems or concerns with supervisors, commanders, first sergeants or facility managers. If you're not satisfied with the response or you are unable to resolve the problem, call me at 283-2255.

For fraud, waste and abuse calls, you should talk to the office of inspections, 283-4646. Calls concerning energy abuse should be referred to the energy hot line, 283-3995.

**BRIG. GEN. LARRY D. NEW**

325th Fighter Wing commander

## Formula for success, leadership hasn't changed with times

**CHIEF MASTER SGT. BILL MILLIGAN**

Command Chief Master Sergeant of Air Education and Training Command

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AETCNS) — People, especially young airmen I meet when visiting our training units, often ask what it takes to be successful in today's Air Force.

The things airmen should do to have a successful career have not changed since airmen first wore chevrons. Success is based on your performance in three primary areas: Air Force specialty, airmanship and leadership. The ability to lead is the fruit of your technical competence combined with your development as a complete airman.

The more you know and can apply in your primary duties, the better supervisor, manager and leader you will be as you progress in rank and responsibility.

You should learn your career specialty inside and out, and always strive to excel in your duties.

To be truly successful, you can't be just a skilled technician,

however. You have to be a well-rounded airman, too. You must do all the things that make you a professional. Performing special duties outside your primary career field, such as a tour as a military training instructor, military training leader, professional military education instructor or technical training instructor can enhance much of this professionalism.

When PME is offered, take it. Support your unit, club and the professional organizations that keep our Air Force strong. Stay physically fit. Give of yourself to help the community around you.

These are some of the things we all should do to develop ourselves as better people, and they are the things I see successful leaders doing every day.

When you excel in your job and develop yourself as a professional airman, leadership opportunities naturally follow. One of the first measures of a good leader is how well you support leaders. When leadership asks for input, make it. Tell leadership what you think. Once leadership makes a decision, be

sure to support it.

I like to say that once decisions are made by leadership, "Yeah, buts" are over. There's no more "Yeah, but this ..." or "Yeah, but that ..." It's over, it's done and it's time to press. You have to learn to accept that. You have to learn to accept that at any given time there will be tasks that probably you don't relish doing. That's OK. Somebody has to do those tasks, and if it's you, do them to the best of your ability. I've got a sign on my desk that says, "When they make you the water boy, serve them Perrier." You have to approach things that way to grow as a leader. You also have to learn to take care of your people. This means sometimes not telling your people what they want to hear or letting them do what they want to do. Sometimes, that means you have to give them a swift kick in the seat of the pants, not because you want to hurt them, but because you care. You care about them, and you want to help them.

●SEE SUCCESS PAGE 10

### Gulf Defender Editorial Staff

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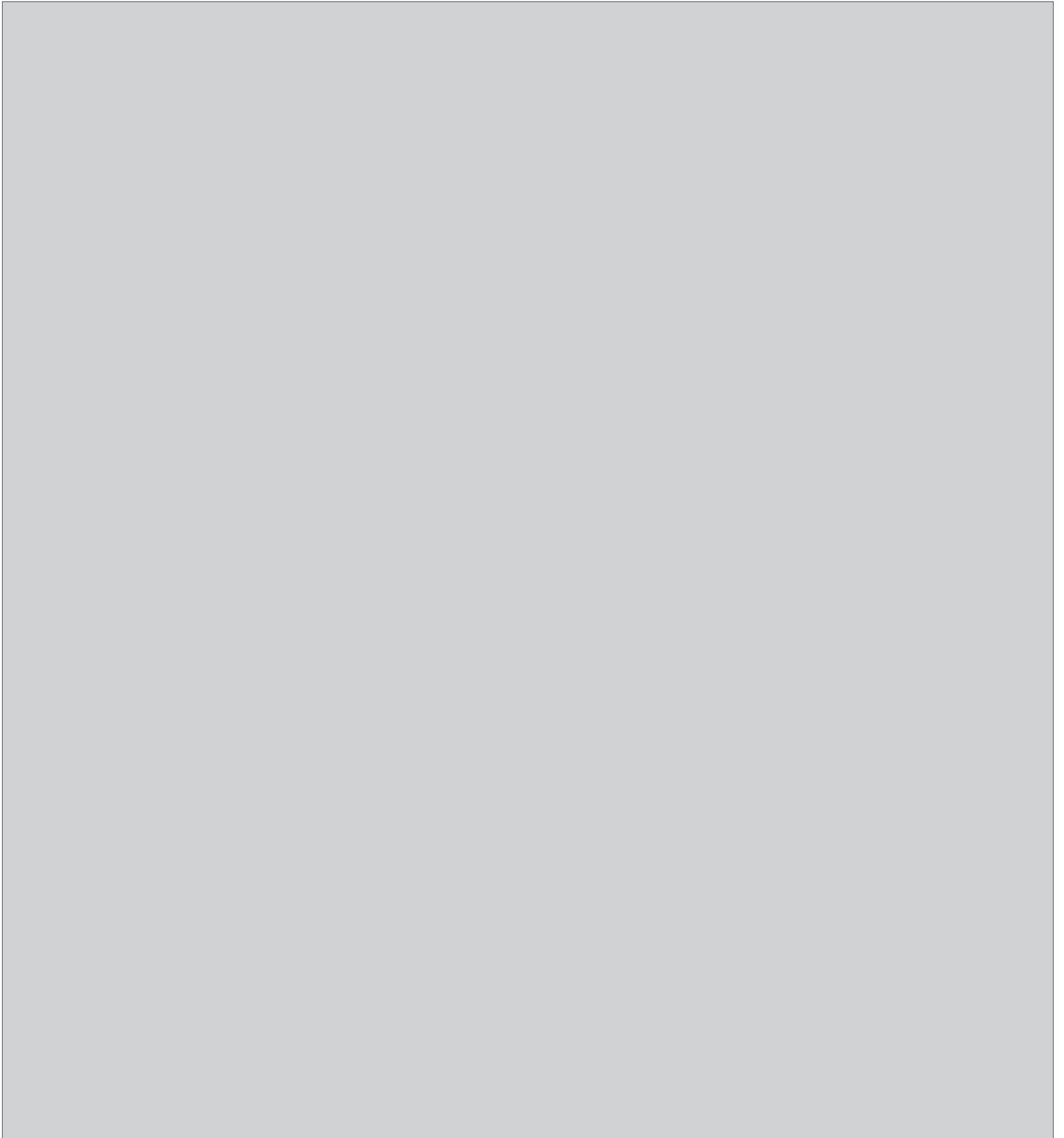
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Editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the 325th Fighter Wing public affairs office. Photographs are U.S. Air Force photos unless otherwise noted.

The deadline for article submissions to the *Gulf Defender* is 4 p.m. Friday, prior to the week of publication unless otherwise noted. Articles must be typed and double-spaced, preferably on a 3.5-inch disc. Stories should be submitted directly to the public affairs office, Building 662, Room 129 or mailed to: 325 FW/PAI, 445 Suwannee Ave., Tyndall AFB, FL, 32403-5425 or emailed to editor@tyndall.af.mil. Public affairs staff members edit all material for accuracy, brevity, clarity, conformity to regulations and journalistic style. The delivery of the *Gulf Defender* to Tyndall base housing sections is provided by the *Panama City News Herald*.

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# Hurlburt RED HORSE unit gallops in, expands Silver Flag site

**TECH. SGT. DAN NEELY**

325th Fighter Wing public affairs

A specialized team of military engineers deployed to Tyndall Air Force Base last week with a mission of greatly expanding storage and operating space for Silver Flag and its Readiness Challenge training exercise site.

Thirty members of the 823rd RED HORSE (an acronym for Rapid Engineer Deployable/Heavy Operations Repair Squadron Engineers) from Hurlburt Field embarked on a two-month training program, part of which includes construction of a 7,800-square-foot K-Span building at Tyndall's Detachment 1, 823rd RHS Silver Flag site.

"We brought craftsmen from different career fields and specialties, working together as a team, to provide an excellent product for the customer, while honing needed wartime skills," said Capt. Jonathan McDowell, 823rd RED HORSE. "Another bright side to the project is that the job is estimated to save the Air Force more than \$190,000, because military labor and equipment usage is not charged to the government."

The captain said the detachment needed a building to help store training equipment and host large functions for Readiness Challenge. The completed building will

store more than \$800,000 worth of explosive ordnance disposal robotics and other material, as well as facilitate the worldwide Readiness Challenge.

More than 300 participants, comprising 16-18 competing teams will be able to meet in and use the facility during the event. Captain McDowell said the K-Span is constructed by taking light-gauge steel and running it through a machine to the desired radius and height. Each individual panel is then seamed together with adjacent panels and lifted into place by crane.

The 823rd RHS is the Department of Defense's premier expeditionary heavy construction unit. In order to train for assigned wartime tasks, the squad-



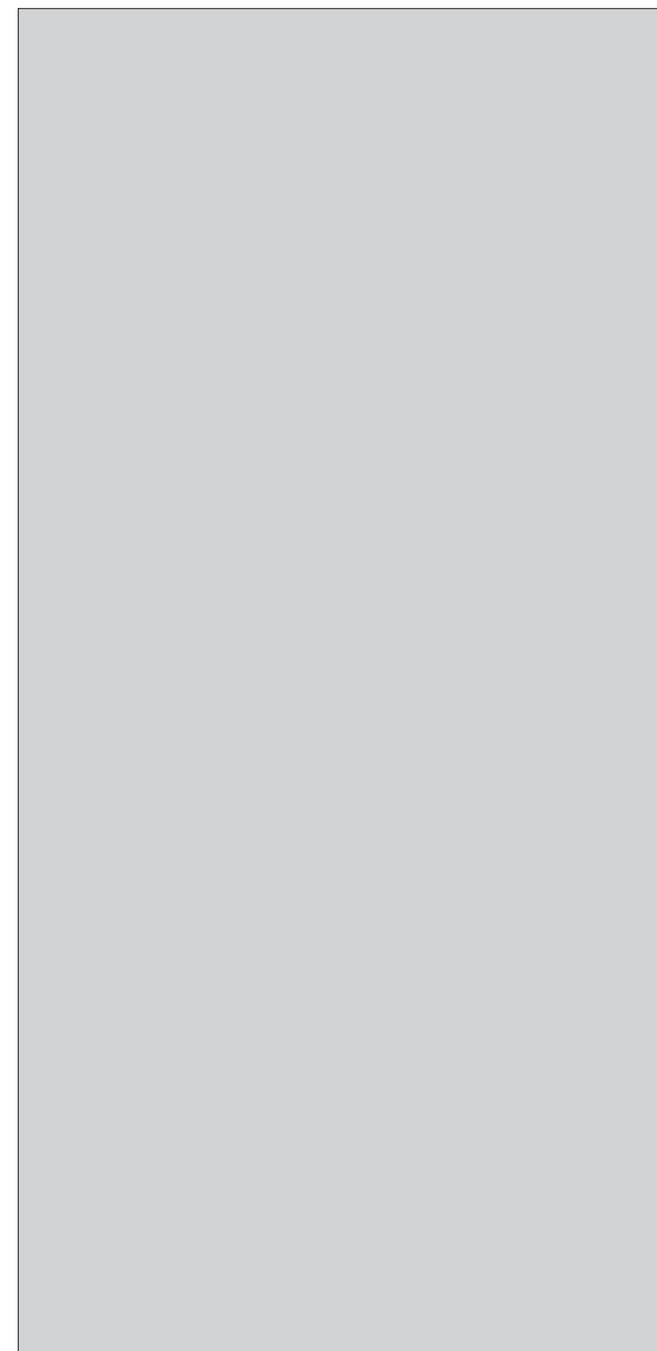
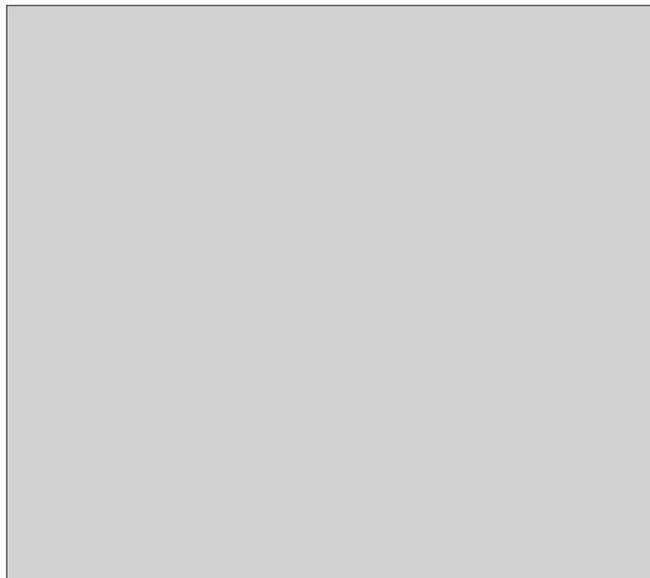
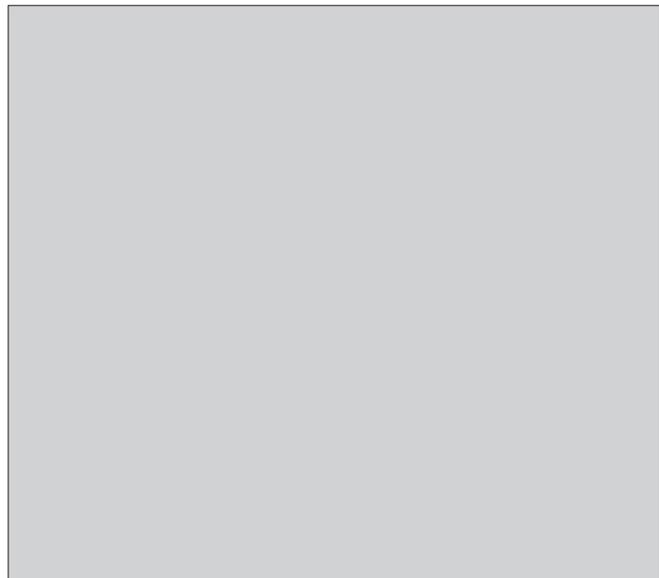
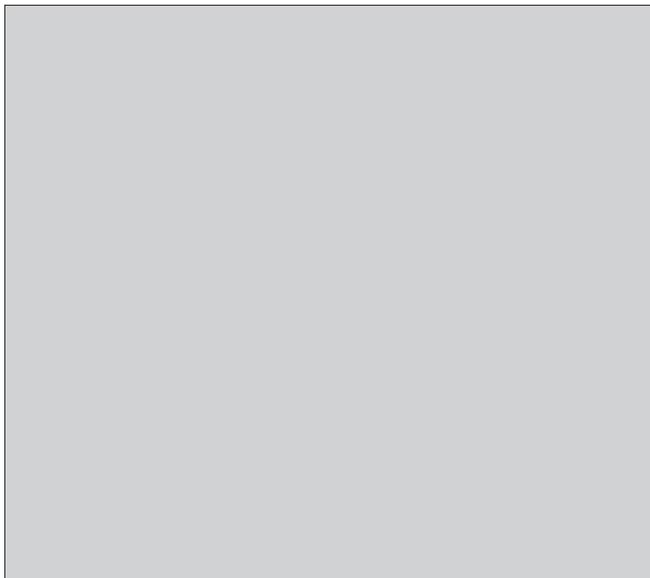
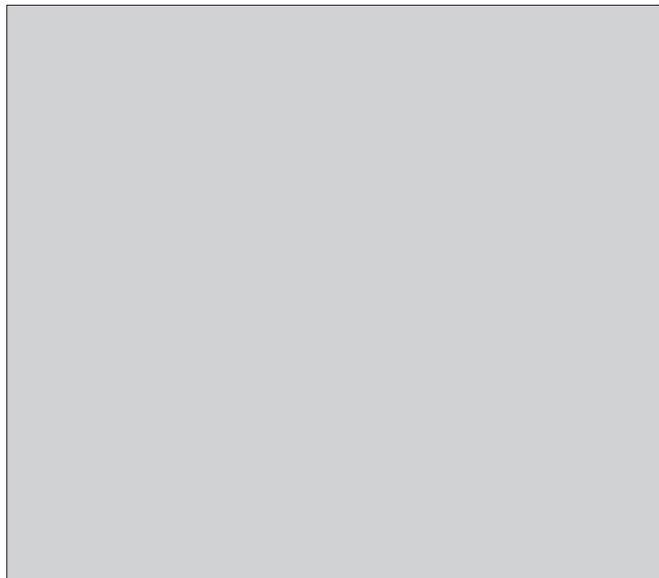
Photo by Staff Sgt. Roy Utley

**823rd REDHORSE engineers construct a K-Span facility at Tyndall's Silver Flag site.**

ron deploys to bases and locations throughout the United States and around the world and constructs projects as part of the training program.

"Det. 1 provides outstanding training to engineers, services, PERSCO (Personnel Support for Contingency Operations) and others in contingency operations, as well as

hosting the biannual Readiness Challenge," Captain McDowell said.



# Officials expand Aviator Continuation Pay program

**WASHINGTON (APFN)** — The Air Force's Fiscal 2003 Aviator Continuation Pay program has been expanded to include bonuses for not only pilots but also certain groups of navigators and air battle managers, according to personnel officials.

"The expansion of the ACP program shows that the Air Force recognizes and depends on the warfighting contributions of all its rated people," said Maj. Edward Ford, chief of Air Force rated force policy for combat forces at the Pentagon.

ACP agreements will be offered to navigators who have at least 15 years of aviation service and 18 or more years of total active military service.

Eligible navigators will be offered three-year agreements at \$10,000 per year, five-year agreements at \$15,000 per year, and agreements to 25 years of aviation ser-

vice at \$15,000 per year.

Navigators who have 20 or more years of aviation service will be eligible to take a three-year agreement at the low rate, \$10,000 per year, or an agreement to 25 years of aviation service at the high rate, \$15,000 per year, if the agreement is greater than three years. If the agreement to 25 years of aviation service is less than three years, they will be able to accept a bonus at the low rate of \$10,000 per year.

Besides pilots and navigators, air battle managers who have completed their initial aeronautical rating active-duty service commitment will be eligible to take an ACP agreement.

Under the expanded ACP program, air battle managers will be able to take either three-year or five-year agreements. The amount they receive will be similar to those

paid to eligible navigators: \$15,000 per year for five-year agreements and \$10,000 per year for three-year agreements.

ABMs with 20 or more years of aviation service will be eligible to take a three-year agreement at the low rate, \$10,000 per year, or an agreement to 25 years of aviation service at the high rate, \$15,000 per year, if the agreement is greater than three years. If the agreement to 25 years of aviation service is less than three years, ABMs can take it at the low rate.

This year's ACP program for pilots will be similar to last year's program.

Pilots who have completed their active-duty service commitment for pilot training will be eligible to accept agreements to either 20 or 25 years of aviation service as well as three-year and five-year agreements.

The five-year agreement and the agreements to either 20 or 25 years of aviation service will be at the rate of \$25,000 per year, while the three-year agreement will be at the rate of \$15,000 per year.

The one change in the program for pilots this year concerns the amount of money that can be taken up front, Major Ford said.

Partial lump-sum payments of 50 percent for first-time eligible pilots will be offered, but options for lesser percentages of up front lump-sum payments have been eliminated. Additionally, pilots under previous ACP agreements will have the ability to convert or amend their current agreement if the new agreement adds three or more years of a service commitment.

## 325th Fighter Wing, associate unit quarterly award winners

### 325th Fighter Wing

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*Airman of the Quarter*  
Senior Airman Christopher Tuck  
325th Contracting Squadron

*NCO of the Quarter*  
Tech. Sgt. Dorothy Russo  
325th Fighter Wing

*Senior NCO of the Quarter*  
Master Sgt. Steven Lantz  
325th Operations Support Squadron

*Company Grade Officer of the Quarter*  
1st Lt. Ryan Nash  
325th Maintenance Operations Squadron

*Civilian of the Quarter (Category I)*  
Melissa Sanders  
325th Contracting Squadron

*Civilian of the Quarter  
(Category II)*  
William Baker  
325th CONS

### Associate units

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*Airman of the Quarter*  
Senior Airman Valicia Collins  
Air Force Civil Engineer Support Agency

*NCO of the Quarter*  
Staff Sgt. Bradford Harewood  
Det.1, 823rd REDHORSE

*Senior NCO of the Quarter*  
Senior Master Sgt. Jeff Gray  
83rd Fighter Weapons Squadron

*CGO of the Quarter*  
1st Lt. Allana Stephens  
83rd FWS

*Civilian of the Quarter (Category I)*  
Lynn Kibbe  
HQ AFCESA

*Civilian of the Quarter (Category II)*  
James Greene  
AFCESA

### Honor Guard

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*Red Flight Member of the Quarter*  
Staff Sgt. Jeremy Smith  
325th Fighter Wing

*Blue Flight Member of the Quarter*  
Airman 1st Class Joel Benavidez  
325th Air Control Squadron

*Honor Guard Member of the Quarter*  
Staff Sgt. Jeremy Smith

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nel flight to confirm eligibility, said AFPC officials.

For more information, people can contact their local MPF career enhancement section or call the

Air Force Contact Center at DSN 665-5000, toll free at (866) 229-7074 or via e-mail at [contact.center@randolph.af.mil](mailto:contact.center@randolph.af.mil). (Courtesy of Air Force Personnel Center News Service)

## Checkertail Salute



Lisa Carroll

**Sergeant Ryan is presented the Checkertail Salute Warrior of the Week award by Col. Douglas Cochran, 325th Fighter Wing vice commander.**

The Checkertail Clan salutes Sergeant Ryan, who set the example for the 325th SFS through four separate deployments supporting Operations Southern Watch, Desert Fox and Inca Gold. His outstanding duty performance and professionalism warranted two

### Staff Sgt. Chad Ryan

**Duty title:** Security forces

**Unit:** 325th Security Forces Squadron

**Time on station:** Five years

**Time in service:** 5 1/2 years

**Hometown:** Dallas, Texas

**Hobbies:** Softball, football, golf and family activities

**Goals:** Outstanding ORI for personnel security; making technical sergeant the first time testing

**Favorite thing about Tyndall:** The golf course

**Pet peeves:** I don't have any!

**Favorite book:** *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

**Favorite movie:** *Black Hawk Down*

Air Force Achievement Medals and letters of appreciation. Sergeant Ryan's superiors call him an exceptional law enforcement desk sergeant, responsible for controlling and dispatching on-duty forces with precision.

The Checkertail Salute is a 325th Fighter Wing commander program designed to recognize Tyndall's Warrior of the Week. Supervisors can nominate individuals via their squadron and group commanders. Award recipients receive a certificate, letter from the commander and a one-day pass.

# Tower Power

## Tyndall air traffic controllers keep eagle eyes on air/ground safety

**2ND LT. ALBERT BOSCO**  
325th Fighter Wing public affairs

They are perched nearly 120 feet in the air in an office no bigger than some living rooms with a view that many corporate executives would love to have from their offices. There are no cubicles, there is no music and no pizza delivery. Their job is to keep a watchful eye over flying aircraft, ground traffic and nearly anything else that moves on the Tyndall Air Force Base flightline. It may seem like a lonely job, locked away in a room with only 600 square feet of floor space, but believe it or not, the men and women who work in the tower have more than their fair share of work and it is anything but dull.

The 325th Operations Support Squadron, Airfield Operations Flight, Air Traffic Control Section is tasked with providing a safe and orderly flow of traffic within Tyndall's Class D airspace, a zone measuring a little more than five miles horizontally from the base in any direction and from the surface up to 2,600 feet. Although the airspace is rather small, considering the amount of traffic in the air, the air traffic controllers are quite adept at managing and maintaining a safe flying environment.

Aside from the daily task of monitoring Tyndall's F-15s during their training, the tower also provides services to aero club aircraft and transient aircraft visiting Tyndall. The tower operates 24 hours per day, year-round, and handles nearly 175,000 operations each year, second in the Air Force only to Luke AFB, Ariz.

"We have a huge responsibility, but we get a higher level of respect than many jobs in the Air Force," said Staff Sgt. Kevin McGarry, one of the flight's tower watch supervisors.

According to Master Sgt. Michael Lang, 325th ATC tower assistant chief controller, the tower is required to have a minimum of five rated personnel to be considered "manned" during scheduled flying operations although there are typically eight to 10 people in the tower at any given time due to the training environment. During non-scheduled flying hours, the tower

is only required to have two rated personnel, a five-level controller and a seven-level supervisor, on duty.

In addition to supporting the 325th Fighter Wing's flying mission, tower controllers also support 82nd Aerial Targets Squadron manned and unmanned drone operations. When the drones are manned, they taxi, takeoff and land on one of Tyndall's active runways. In the case of unmanned drones, however, there is a runway Southeast of Tyndall used solely for launching and recovering them.

"When we support drone operations, we will release the restricted airspace over the drone runway from the surface up to 10,000 feet," said Sergeant Lang. "If a manned drone is scheduled to rendez-

vous with an unmanned drone, we'll control the airspace around the drone runway until the pilot meets up with the unmanned aircraft and they are safely away from the area."

With the task of controlling hundreds of aircraft each day, safety is obviously a concern. In order to provide the necessary services to keep the flight environment safe, each controller must monitor his or her area of responsibility closely in addition maintaining a ready posture to assist fellow controllers should they need help.

"Controllers have to rely on crew resource management," said Sergeant Lang. "Things change all the time, and you have to know what the person next to you is doing."

Aside from providing air traffic control services, the flight also provides the foundation for hundreds of new controllers each year. Being only one of three officer training program and controller-training locations, training is provided by the squadron and is aimed at both officers and enlisted personnel alike. Officers are trained in base and tower operations procedures, as well as Radar Approach Control procedures, spending approximately four weeks in each area before they are ready to assume supervisory positions in airfield operation flights throughout the Air Force.

Enlisted training, on the other hand, is slightly different. Controllers gain initial skills at Keesler AFB, Miss., where they are selected for either tower operations or RAPCON. When they arrive at Tyndall, the controllers begin training to upgrade their experi-

SEE TOWER PAGE 10



**Senior Airman Andrew Jackson, an air traffic controller trainee, reviews safety information during his shift in the Tyndall ATC tower.**



Photos by 2nd Lt. Albert Bosco

**Operating from a work center 10 stories above the ground provides controllers a clear view of flightline area activity.**

# 'Hidden Treasures' to be found on Tyndall

**MARCIA ROBERTSON**  
325th Services Squadron marketing

Where is the bathing baby located? What is a VIB? What base tournament lasts all year? Correctly answering these and similar questions could mean prizes for the successful winners of this year's Hidden Treasures contest.

"Last year's contest was canceled following the September 11th attack," said Lt. Col. Gregory Parsons, 325th Services Squadron commander. "We're really pleased to start it again this year."

Hidden Treasures requires contestants to correctly complete a game board by answering questions about various base agencies. While most of the questions center around Services facilities, there are also questions relating to locations such as the chapel and the health and wellness center.

"We try to include the organizations which not only interact with the active-duty personnel, but also with their dependents," explained Peggy Geil, 325th Services Squadron marketing manager. "The purpose of the game is to familiarize people with the services that provide support to families."

Winners will be randomly drawn from all correct entries. The grand prize is a



four-night stay in a Kissimmee hotel, courtesy of Enjoy Florida Hotels, and four one-day tickets to Disney World as well as SeaWorld. Additional prizes will also be awarded.

"We've got a two-night stay at the Silver Shells Beach Resort and Spa in Destin which includes facials at the spa and gift certificates from the Silver Shells Grill," said Steve Riddle, 325th Services Squadron commercial sponsorship coordinator. "We'll also be giving away a two-night stay for two at the Best Western Fort Walton

Beachfront, an overnight stay for two from the Ramada Plaza Beach Resort and the Four Points Hotel Sheraton in Fort Walton Beach, and lighting fixtures from Lighting Unlimited here in Panama City."

Game boards are available at the following facilities: library; vet clinic; fitness center; Sand Dollar Inn; information, tickets and travel; youth center; golf course; skills development center; Raptor Lanes; community activities center; pizza pub snack bar and family child care.

They are also available at outdoor recreation-famcamp; child development center; marina club; Tyndall clubs; services human resource office; chapel; health and wellness center; family advocacy; education center; family support center; life skills support center.

Hidden Treasures runs in November as a means to recognize the presidential proclaimed National Family Week. The contest began Monday and will end Nov. 22. The winners will be announced during the tree-lighting ceremony at Flag Park Dec. 5. For more information, contact the participating facilities or the services marketing office at 283-4565. *(No federal endorsement of sponsors intended.)*

## Re-enlistments

Master Sgt. Walter Albro, 325th OSS  
Senior Airman William Allen, 325th SFS  
Staff Sgt. Raymond Bailey, 325th AMXS  
Staff Sgt. Stephanie Bailey, 325th FW  
Senior Airman Kelsi Bascom, 325th MDOS  
Senior Airman Marcus Baucom, 325th CS  
Staff Sgt. Raymond Bryant, 325th MXS  
Tech. Sgt. Reginald Conner, 325th AMXS  
Master Sgt. Zane Craig, 1st FS  
Tech. Sgt. Robbie Dickie, 325th MXS  
Staff Sgt. Steven Errington, 325th MXS  
Master Sgt. Keith Fieschel, 82nd ATRS  
Master Sgt. James Givens, 325th OSS  
Chief Master Sgt. Richard Gomer, 325th MXS  
Senior Airman Kamisha Hubbard, 1st FS  
Tech. Sgt. Antra Jones, 325th CS  
Master Sgt. Mark Lemond, 1st AMU  
Staff Sgt. Louis Lindsey III, 325th MSS  
Staff Sgt. Gary O'Brien Jr., 325th MXS  
Tech. Sgt. Thomas Painter, 325th CES  
Staff Sgt. Michael Peters, 2nd FS  
Tech. Sgt. James Reagh, 325th MXS  
Senior Airman Cheryl Roelofs, 325th OSS  
Staff Sgt. Yahil Sanchez, 325th AMXS  
Tech. Sgt. Anthony Spears, Det. 1, 823rd RHS  
Master Sgt. Diane Thrift, 325th SVS  
Senior Airman Katina Toole, 325th MSS  
Tech. Sgt. David Vaughn, 325th MOS  
Staff Sgt. Donte Walker, 325th MDG  
Master Sgt. Steven Whiting, 83rd FWS

## Bay organization offers expertise to help base preserve cultural heritage

**TECH. SGT. DAN NEELY**  
325th Fighter Wing public affairs

With an eye on the future, a group of local archaeologists and historians took a first step in helping Tyndall Air Force Base preserve the heritage of its distant past.

Escorted by 325th Civil Engineer Squadron officials, several members of the Bay County Historical Society received a guided tour of a sample of the more than 90 historical/archaeological sites of historical interest throughout the base reservation – sites from 19th-century cemeteries to the artifacts of the region's ancient mound builders.

"We wanted to see what's out here and see how Tyndall Air Force Base is preserving it," said Becky Saunders, the society's president and a local history specialist for the Bay County Public Library. "We hope we can be of help," she added.

The Bay County Historical Society was formed in 1936 to preserve Bay County's heritage. Its goals are to identify, preserve and document Bay County history; to assist in the preservation of county historical sites; and to



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Dan Neely

collect, identify and preserve documents, pictures and artifacts of historical value.

"These folks have a tremendous knowledge base," said Dr. Bridget Keegan, 325th CES environmental engineer, "and their expertise will help us put together our cultural resources program."



Bay County Historical Society visitors were shown some of Tyndall's historical treasures such as Native American artifacts (above) and a Civil War-era cemetery (left). The headstone notes a Missouri infantry unit soldier.

**FROM SUCCESS PAGE 2**

It's important today to follow the disciplines you learned in basic military training as you grow as an airman and leader. Every discipline you could ever want to be successful in the United States Air Force is instilled in BMT. I don't have any more discipline today than I did when I left Lackland almost 29 years ago. What you do is you don't lose that foundational knowledge or those skills. You keep them, you hone them, you polish them and you expand them.

That's why we call it basic training. You're given all that you need, and then it's up to you to take it to the next level.

If I can be parochial or selfish from a command perspective, AETC instills everything during BMT and technical training to give you the military and skill knowledge to be successful in the Air Force. If in the field, leaders continue to enforce it, reinforce it and ensure you don't lose it, there is no reason

not to be successful in today's Air Force.

In fact, you have total control of this. There are no secrets to success in the Air Force. The path to success is clearly defined. It's a matter of taking the initiative to want to be successful. When I leave this Air Force, I will not be a wealthy man, but I am a rich man because of the discipline it's given me and the opportunities I've had. Fortunately, along the way I've had some great leaders who've embodied this.

There's a quote I often use by a Brig. Gen. Richard Secord, who spent seven years as a POW. He said to be born free is an accident — you can't control where you're born. To live free is a privilege. Serving in uniform to ensure others may die free is a responsibility.

There is no doubt in my mind that young people entering our Air Force today will be every bit as competent, committed, professional and successful — if not more so — as air-

men and leaders as anyone who has ever put on the uniform.

We must continue to reinforce those disciplines I've mentioned. If we keep taking care of people, educating them and giving them opportunities, this Air Force is going to be the best Air Force in the world for years and years and years to come.

**Notice to TRICARE beneficiaries**

An advertisement for Coastal OB/GYN on Page 7 of the Oct. 25 *Gulf Defender* reads "*TRICARE Prime...you do not need a referral for your annual exam.*" **This is incorrect.** Currently, the Tyn-dall military treatment facility has no Network OB/GYN providers, therefore, if a beneficiary were to seek care downtown, without their primary care manager's authorization, they would be put at financial liability for the care received (i.e., assessed a point-of-service charge). TRICARE Prime beneficiaries must receive an approved authorization, from their PCM, in order for their care to be covered under TRICARE. For any questions, call 2nd Lt. Brent Kerr at 283-7167 or Staff Sgt. Robert Edwards at 283-7171.

**FROM TOWER PAGE 8**

ence levels so they may eventually become control tower operators. This is accomplished by becoming certified in the flight data, ground and local positions, which takes approximately one year. Trainees must demonstrate that they can perform their duties without being monitored by a trainer to obtain certification.

The tower controller environment is separated into six positions: flight data, ground control, local control, coordinator, watch supervisor and supervisor of flying. Additionally, each position,

with the exception of the SOF, requires that the controller in that position has met the training requirements and become qualified although often, controllers are qualified to work in more than one area.

All of the controller positions in the tower are filled by enlisted personnel, with the exception of the SOF. The SOF is a position manned by a current rated pilot, and his or her job is to represent the operations group commander in the tower.

Additionally, the SOF provides knowledge and experience in the event

of an in-flight emergency since he or she is familiar with the aircraft and its systems.

If an aircraft has an emergency, the SOF can assist the pilot in troubleshooting systems and assisting with procedures to ensure the safe return of the pilot and aircraft.

Although each job is distinct in the way it is carried out, working in the tower is a tall order, and the personnel within those jobs must all work together as a team, often providing an additional set of eyes or ears to ensure operations run smoothly.

*Drinking and Driving Don't Mix*

**FROM AWARDS PAGE 2**

name changed in 1954 when President Eisenhower signed a bill proclaiming November 11 as Veterans Day. Today our nation is once again at war. No one knows what the future holds, but history tells us that wars are inevitable. The men and women who fight these wars and serve in our military are our veterans and deserve our deepest gratitude and respect.

If you have the chance, take the time this holiday weekend to visit with or shake the hand of a veteran and thank them for their service.

Whether you're a veteran or on active duty, good health is important. It's especially critical to a strong force, and the 325th Medical Group staff continues working hard to keep us fit to fight. Last week, the medical group had a groundbreaking

for a \$7.6 million Tyndall clinic addition. The new facility will provide our medics with additional space to perform their mission and aid immeasurably in providing quality medical health care to Team Tyndall. When completed, the pediatrics, family practice, women's health and flight medicine clinics will be located on the first floor of the main facility and new addition. Optometry and physical therapy will be located on the second floor. The main pharmacy will increase to nearly double its current size.

Also, speaking of maintaining one's health, the medical group continues offering flu shots to all active-duty, Department of Defense and contractor personnel with valid identification. I encourage everyone to get a flu shot at the earliest opportunity, since the cold and flu season is just about upon us.

It takes just a few minutes of your time to protect yourself from the flu by getting a shot. It's extremely important to take the necessary precautionary steps to ensure your protection in all life's activities. For example, it only takes seconds to protect your life when you get in a vehicle and yet many still don't take the time to 'make it click.'

Our wing ground safety staff recently completed a seat-belt survey, checking people at various locations on base for seat-belt wear. Sadly, we still haven't

reached 100 percent compliance. The Air Education and Training Command requirement is 90 percent and Team Tyndall is at 93. Most people would think that's acceptable—I don't.

There is no acceptable percentage of lives lost or serious injuries occurring due to failing to wear seatbelts. Your lives are priceless to your families, Team Tyndall and the mission, so please buckle up, it's Air Force policy and Florida law!

Florida takes driving safely very seriously and recently conducted phase two of Strike Force 98 Oct. 25. Twelve law enforcement agencies conducted operations using laser speed-measuring devices and unmarked patrol cars to identify traffic violations and enforce safe driving conditions on US Highway 98.

Along the portion of Highway 98 passing through Tyndall, they detected one DUI, one driver's license violation, 22 speeding violations and five other various traffic violations in a 24-hour period. While these stats include a cross-section of the Bay County community, it does convey a need for all of us to abide by the posted speed limits and drive with caution. The Florida Strike Force 98 will continue efforts to keep our roadways "safe and sober," as the holidays approach. Let's do our part to help make this possible. Have a great week and a safe holiday weekend!

Your link  
to what's going on

# Gulf Guide

in the  
Tyndall community

## NOVEMBER

FRI  
8

### Chapel contract position

A position is now available for a part-time Protestant Kid's Club coordinator. Interested individuals may submit a sealed bid no later than Nov. 17. For more information, call 283-2925.

SUN  
10

### Chapel religious education

The Tyndall Chapel offers religious education 9:30-10:30 a.m. Sundays for Protestants and 11 a.m.-noon Sundays for Catholics. Both sessions will be held at the spiritual fitness building. For more information, call 283-2925.

TUE  
12

### Children's weight class

The health and wellness center's sensible weight class for children meets 3:30-4:30 p.m. every Tuesday in Room 111. For more information, call the health and wellness center, 283-3826.

### Civil Air Patrol meeting

Civil Air Patrol meetings for boys and girls 12 years old and older will be held 6-8:30 p.m. every Tuesday in Building 852. The CAP offers local and national activities with a focus on educational and professional development. For more information, call Capt. Tim Jones, 283-8018, or Master Sgt. Perry Newberry, 283-4189.

WED  
13

### Protestant youth group

The Tyndall Chapel's Protestant Youth Group meets 5-8 p.m. Wednesdays in the spiritual fitness center. For more information, call the Chapel 2 office, 283-2925.

THU  
14

### Bible study

A weekly Bible study session offered by the Officer Christian Fellowship and Christian Military Fellowship will be 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Thursdays in the community activities center. For more information, call Capt. Carma Pauli, 283-7669.

### Antiterrorism training

Mandatory antiterrorism training is provided by the Air Force Office of Special Investigations on a walk-in basis 8 a.m. every Thursday in Building 656. The training will last about 45 minutes. Anyone with a permanent change of sta-

tion or temporary duty assignment to an overseas location who has not received Level-I Antiterrorism training within six months of their departure date is required to receive this training prior to out-processing. Out-processing checklists should be brought to the training session. Military dependents are encouraged to attend. For more information, call Special Agent Doug Hartwell, 283-3261 or 283-3262.

FRI  
15

### Customer service closure

The Military Personnel Flight Customer Service office will be closed due to annual records audits. All other offices such as relocations, employment and career enhancements will be open. In case of an emergency, contact 774-6022 for assistance.

SUN  
17

### Unity service and picnic

The Annual Unity Service and Picnic scheduled by the Tyndall Chapel Protestant Parish will be Nov. 17 at Heritage Park. The worship and communion service will begin at 10 a.m. followed by a picnic meal and family activities. All are invited to attend. For more information, call the chapel, 283-2925.

## NOTES

### AADD program

The Airmen Against Drunk Driving program is designed to provide military members with a free, safe ride home within the local area. The AADD phone line is staffed with E1 through E4 volunteers who can be reached by calling 867-2233. This program is available to all ranks who have a valid military identification card. AADD stresses complete anonymity to ease fear of retribution. For more information, call Airman 1st Class Carrie Wilks-Campbell, 283-2891.

### Chapel schedule

The following Catholic services will be held at Chapel 2: Daily Mass, 11:30 a.m. Monday-Friday; Reconciliation, after Saturday Mass or by appointment; Saturday Mass, 5 p.m.; Sunday Mass, 9:30 a.m.; religious education, 11 a.m. Sunday. Protestant services will be as follows: Communion service, 9:30 a.m., Chapel 1; general Protestant service, 11 a.m., Chapel 2.

### Tyndall Riders Association

The Tyndall Riders Association currently has about 50 riders and is inviting others to join. Membership is free and open to military members, civilians and dependents. The association was set up to help both new and experienced riders to be safe riders and to encourage esprit de corps. For more informa-

tion, call Senior Airman Guy Leach, 283-4231 or e-mail [guy.leach@tyndall.af.mil](mailto:guy.leach@tyndall.af.mil).

## RETIREE NEWS

### Consumer credit file privacy

According to the Federal Trade Commission, many consumers nationwide have received an e-mail alleging that, starting July 1, the four major credit bureaus in the United States would be allowed to release personal credit information, mailing addresses, phone numbers, etc. to anyone who requested them. The FTC states that this e-mail message is full of half-truths and misinformation – and issued the real story.

Credit bureaus can release an individual's credit information only to people with a legitimate business need, as recognized by the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

For example, a company is allowed to get your report if you apply for credit, insurance, employment or rent an apartment. In addition to these uses, lenders and insurers may use information in your credit file as a basis for sending you unsolicited offers. This is known as "prescreening." However, you have a right to opt out of these offers.

The "opt-out" toll free phone number for the major credit card bureaus' prescreened offers is (888) 567-8688.

The July 1 date relates to the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, which set July 1, 2001 as the deadline for financial institutions to give you notice of their privacy policies and a way for you to opt out of some of their information-sharing practices.

Consumers may recall getting mailings or statement inserts from financial institutions, creditors, insurance companies and brokerage firms about this. The July 1 date was not a deadline for consumers to do anything.

In fact, consumers can contact their financial institutions any time to opt-out under GLB, according to FTC officials.

The FTC strongly advises that you not give out personal information on the phone, through the mail or over the Internet unless you know who you're dealing with. Identity thieves may pose as representatives of banks, Internet service providers and even government agencies to get you to reveal your Social Security Number, mother's maiden name, financial account numbers and other identifying information.

Legitimate organizations with whom you do business have the information they need and will not ask you for it. To file a complaint or get free information on consumer issues, visit [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov) or call toll-free, (877) 382-4357.

## YARD SALES

The following yard sale is scheduled for Saturday: 2928-A Bomarc St. All yard sales are held between 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

## BASE THEATER

**Today:** "ECKS vs SEVER" (R)

**Saturday:** "One Hour Photo" (R)

**Sunday:** "ECKS vs SEVER"

**Thursday:** "One Hour Photo"

*Note: Sunday showtime only has changed to 5 p.m. All other shows start at 7 p.m.*

# Tyndall Tigers split with Eglin in SEMAC action

For the second consecutive week, the Tyndall Tigers men's varsity basketball team went 1-1 on the road in Southeastern Military Athletic Conference action last weekend. The Tigers fell to the host Eglin Eagles 74-62 Saturday, but rebounded on Sunday to win 80-75 and retain sole possession of first place in the conference.

## Eglin 74, Tyndall 62

In Saturday's game, the two teams battled back and forth with the Eagles taking a 34-32 lead at the intermission. In the second half, the two squads mirrored their first half performance, as the action was close throughout the final stanza with the Eagles maintaining a slim lead.

At the 3 minute mark, with Eglin leading 60-54, the Eagles went into their delay game, forcing the Tigers to foul in hopes of the Eagles missing from the charity stripe. The Eagles converted 10 of 12 attempts to secure the victory.

Israel Figueroa paced the Tigers in scoring 16 points, followed by Lance Clark and Tarrance Garner with 12 and 10 points respectively. Garner also led in rebounding with 12 followed by Scott Moore and Ronald Butler with 10 boards each. Omar Johnson had six assists, and Garner added six blocked shots. Corey Fletcher led Eglin in scoring with a game-



Guard KeJuan Bostick goes up on a 12-foot jumper for two of his 11 points in Tyndall's game two victory Sunday at Eglin. Courtesy photos

high 26 points.

## Tyndall 80, Eglin 75

In the second contest, the Tigers jumped out to an early lead behind Marvin Gamble's 11 first-half points and took a 40-35 lead at the half. In the second half, as in the opener, the two squads again played evenly. Each time it appeared the Tigers were ready to put the Eagles away, the hosts came soaring back. Tyndall built

a 10-point lead down the stretch and with clutch free-throw shooting (17-18 for the game, .944 percent — a new team record) the Tigers were able to subdue a final attempt by Eglin to steal the win.

Marvin Gamble and Israel Figueroa paced the Tigers in scoring with 16 points each, followed by Chris Jackson with 12, KeJuan Bostick with 11 and Tarrance Garner and Scott Moore with



Guard Tarrance Garner battles for one of his team-leading 12 rebounds in the Saturday opener.

10 points each. Gamble and Moore tied for rebounding honors with 10 each. Garner led in assists with six, along with four steals. Israel Boyd led the Eagles in scoring with a game-high 19 points.

The Tigers travel to Moody AFB, Ga. this weekend to compete in the Annual SEMAC Men's Thanksgiving Tournament. Tyndall will host the Keesler Dragons next weekend in SEMAC action. *(Courtesy Tyndall Tigers)*

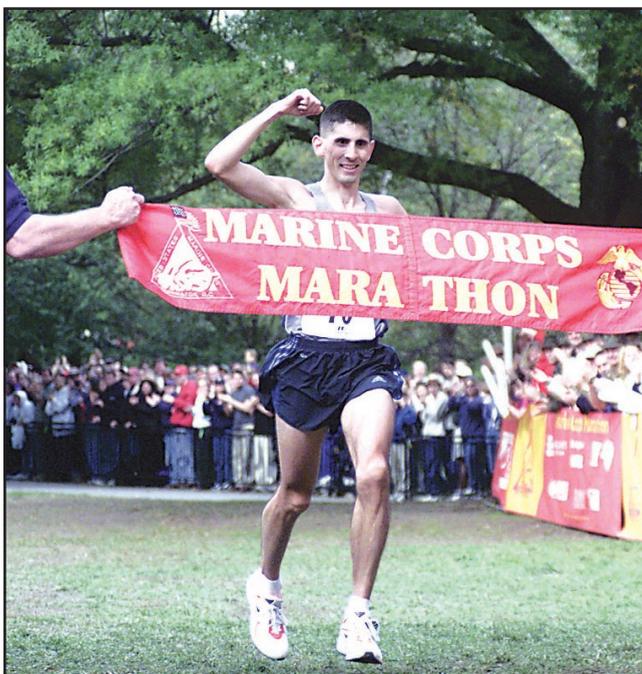
# Air Force captain wins annual Marine Corps marathon

ARLINGTON, Va. (AFP) — Capt. Christopher Juarez won the 27th annual Marine Corps Marathon Oct. 27 with a time of 2 hours 25 minutes and 1 second. Juarez was running as part of the Air Force Team, which was competing for the annual Armed Forces Marathon championship.

The 32-year-old Juarez was running in the event for the third time. He finished 22nd in 1998 and 14th in 1999. "This year, I thought I had a chance to win, but it didn't hit me until mile 24," said Juarez, a contracting officer at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. More than 14,600 runners battled a headwind through much of the course. Juarez had about a quarter mile lead, but he was feeling the strain and did not know if his lead would hold.

"Those last two miles, I was really falling apart," he said. "But when I made that final turn, I took a quick peek and realized I had it."

The win was not a complete surprise for Juarez. The day before the race, at an armed forces icebreaker, he told a friend that after the meeting he had something to do. He was going to the awards display to take one more look at the first-place trophy he hoped to win. Juarez then left for the airport to pick up his support team: his wife, Capt. Billee



Captain Juarez, a 32-year-old contracting officer at Nellis AFB, Nev., crosses the finish line with a winning time of 2:25:01. Marine Corps Pfc. Sara Cote

Juarez, an all-Air Force and all-Armed Forces Women's Volleyball player. The lead in the race changed hands a few times. Juarez was part of a foursome who took an immediate lead in the race for the first five miles.

"Around the fifth mile, two guys were pulling away from us," said Juarez. "John Sence and I were running next to each other and he told me not to worry, just relax and let them go. They would come back."

They did. After the 12th mile, Juarez and Ethiopian Retta Feyissa ran stride for stride until mile 20. Then Juarez took the lead for good and finished only three minutes shy of the U.S. Olympic Trials qualifying mark. Maj. Mark Cucuzzella of Buckley AFB, Colo., finished 11th with a time of 2:34:46. He was followed by Maj. Jon Scheonberg from Fort Meade, Md., who placed 25th with a time of 2:40:00.

Because the armed forces team championship is determined by adding the top three team men's scores with that of the top woman finisher from the service, the final results were not determined until the women crossed the line.

Capt. Brenda Schrank of Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, finished at 3:04:39.

Upon adding the results, the Air Force won the armed forces championship by 50 seconds.

# Funshine NEWS

November 8, 2002

This page is produced by the 325th Services Marketing office, 283-4565.



Current members  
are already entered  
to win!

Through  
December 20

One new member & one current member per command will win:

#### Grand Prize

Sony 32TS1 Plasma TV  
Bose Lifestyle 28 Home Ent. System  
Monster Cable M1000i  
Monster Power MPB2100

An additional drawing will be held to award a Tyndall Member a Breitling Watch.

Just pick up an application from your club and sign up now through December 20 to be eligible for the random drawings.

Sponsored in part by: **First USA & Ted's Jewelers**  
No federal endorsement of sponsors intended.

## Tyndall Enlisted Club Steak-Out Zone Every Friday

5:30-8:30 p.m.

Only \$5.95

283-4357

## Have a Birthday Party at Raptor Lanes

Economy Party - \$22 ■ Custom Party - \$39  
Deluxe Party - \$59

Birthday child must be 16 years old or younger. Your child will love the Bowland 3-D Animated Graphics. They're awesome!

283-2380

## Discover the... Hidden Treasures ...at Tyndall

Did you know there are hidden treasures on Tyndall? You could Discover the Hidden Treasures on Tyndall and win great prizes by following the clues between Nov. 4 and 22.

Game boards for Discover the Hidden Treasures at Tyndall will be available through the following facilities during their normal business hours

- 325th Medical Group: Health and Wellness Center, Family Advocacy, Life Skills Support
- 325th Mission Support Squadron: Family Support Center, Education Center
- 325th Fighter Wing Chaplain Service (Chapel 2)
- 325th Services Squadron: Human Resource Office; Fitness Center; Information, Tickets and Travel; Enlisted Club; Officers Club; Golf Course; Marina Club; Community Activities Center; Pizza Pub & Snack Bar at CAC; Skills Development Center; Youth Center; Family Child Care; Child Development Center; Outdoor Recreation (FamCamp); Sand Dollar Inn; Veterinary Clinic; Library; Bowling Center Center.

Sponsored in part by: **Enjoy Florida Hotels, Four Points Hotel Sheraton Ft. Walton Beach, Best Western Ft. Walton Beachfront, Ramada Plaza Beach Resort Ft. Walton Beach, Silver Shells Beach Resort & Spa Destin & Lighting Unlimited.** No federal endorsement of sponsors intended.

## Passport to Adventure

Validate Your Passport NOW  
for a Chance to  
Win These Great Prizes:

A Cruise for 2 on the Riviera  
A Cruise for 2 on the New England Coast  
To get your passport and information on how to play stop by Information, Tickets and Travel or call: **283-2499.**

## Community Activities Center FREE CONCERT

"Girth Brooks & Done"

November 8, 5:30-7 p.m.

Heritage Park in the  
Large Gazebo

Please bring your own chairs.  
In case of inclement weather the concert will be held at the CAC in the Ballroom.

283-2495

All Ranks at the O Club

## Super Sunday Brunch!

November 17, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

\$8.95\* Champagne Available - add \$3

#### Menu Includes:

- Carving Station
- Omelet Station
- Belgian Waffles
- Sausage
- Bacon
- Hash Browns
- Fresh Fruit
- Muffins
- Danish
- Biscuits & Gravy

\*Members First! Show your club card to receive a \$1 discount!

Want to keep up with "What's Happening" at Tyndall? Send us your email and we will add you to our weekly mailing.  
[whats.happening@tyndall.af.mil](mailto:whats.happening@tyndall.af.mil)  
or call us at **283-4565**  
Check us out on the world wide web:  
[www.325thservices.com](http://www.325thservices.com)

## Youth Center

283-4366

### Final Basketball Signups

Nov. 16th, 9:30 a.m. in the Youth Center gym, 9-10 year old skills evaluation and team selection.

\$10 late fee for signups after the 15th.

## Vet Clinic Grand Opening

November 18, 2002 at 10 a.m.  
Building 1309 on Suwannee Ave.

Tour the new veterinary clinic & family child care facility. Free gifts to take home to your pets. (While supplies last.)

Sponsored in part by:  
IAMS Foods and Hills Pet Nutrition Inc.  
No federal endorsement of sponsors intended.

283-2434

## TURKEY TROT

Thurs., Nov. 21

Walk 2:30 p.m. Run 3:30 p.m.  
Call Fitness Ctr. for more information

283-2631

Sponsored in part by First Command.  
No federal endorsement of sponsor intended.

## Fitness Center

283-2631

### Restringing Service

Fee is \$15 per racquet with the string provided by the Fitness Center. If patron provides the string, the fee is \$10. Restringing will be completed within 48 hours.

## Marina Club

283-3059

### Deep Sea Charters

Call the Marina for more information.

### Christmas Parties

Have your squadron Christmas party at the Marina Club overlooking St. Andrews Bay.

## Community Activities Ctr.

283-2495

### 2002 AF Family & Teen Talent Contest

Nov. 23. If you sing, dance or have a special talent, we're looking for you. Call 283-2495 for more information.

## Teen Center

283-0295

### Skate Night

Nov. 8, \$6 members, \$8 non-members.

### Teen Council & Keystone Club Elections

Nov. 1-12. Results will be announced at Keystone Club/Teen Council meeting on Nov. 13 at 6 p.m.

### Skin Care Party for Teens

6 p.m. till ? Members free, non-members \$2. Parent permission slips must be turned in to receive facial. Call for date.

## Community Activities Center Pigskin Picks

Entries must arrive at the CAC by 5 p.m. Friday preceding the weekend games. (Thursday games do not count.)

Sponsored in part by:  
AAFES, Hodge Barb-Que & The Chefs Shop.  
No federal endorsement of sponsors intended.

Call for more information:  
**283-2495**

## Tyndall Clubs Hosts

### Watch the multi-game action at the CAC Pizza Pub!



The CAC will be open  
**Sundays, 12-7 p.m.**  
during football season  
(Through January 26)



### Win a trip to:

49ers vs. Cowboys game  
Super Bowl  
Pro Bowl

San Francisco to

meet 49ers Terrell Owens

For more information call **283-3222**

Sponsored in part by: American Airlines, Double Tree Alana Hotel Waikiki, Miller Lite, First USA Bank, Destination Arlington, TX. No federal endorsement of sponsors intended.

# Civilian health benefits program open season starting soon

**1ST LT. BRANDON LINGLE**

Air Force Personnel Center public affairs

**RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN)** — Air Force civilian employees will have the opportunity to review and update their health-care plan during the Federal Employees Health Benefits program open season Monday through Dec. 9.

Program changes could affect more than 7,000 employees since 11 health-plan carriers are dropping out of the FEHB and many others are drastically changing their services in

2003, said Janet Thomas of the benefits and entitlements service team, or BEST team, at the Air Force Personnel center. Carriers will still offer 188 enrollment choices. “Even though insurance carriers leaving the FEHB or making significant service changes are required to notify their customers, we send letters to those affected too,” said Ms. Thomas, “but it is still the employee’s responsibility to ensure (his or her) plan is in order. Open season is the best time for people to review their health-care coverage,” she said, “not only to make desired changes, but to ensure their plan hasn’t been altered or discontinued.”

FEHB premiums are expected to increase an average of 11 percent in January. Health maintenance organizations will increase an average of 13.6 percent and fee-for-service plans will increase 10.5 percent, Ms. Thomas said. Studies show health-care premiums nationally will climb as much as 20 percent in 2003, according to officials of the office of personnel management. Employees with “self-only” coverage will pay about \$4.45 more and those with family coverage will pay about \$10.21 more per pay period, Ms. Thomas said. The government will continue to pay an average of 72 percent of FEHB premiums.

OPM officials attribute these premium increases to the health-care providers’ rising costs, advances in medical technology, and an aging population, said Ms. Thomas. More FEHB information including guides, rates and plan descriptions are available on the OPM Web site, or the BEST home page. All Air Force-serviced civilian employees must make their open season changes by one of two methods:

— AFPC’s Employee Benefits Information System Web site. Employees with an existing plan can use the BEST Web automated system to make their elections and avoid having to transfer to a counselor to complete their transaction.

— The BEST automated phone system is at (800) 997-2378. Hearing impaired employees may call the TDD line at (800) 382-0893. Counselors are available weekdays, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Central Standard Time.

