

DESERT AIRMAN

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Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz.

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Saluting Americas heroes on Veterans Day



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Tell the Air Force story ... it's your story to tell

By Lt. Col. Ted Davis

325th Air Control Squadron Commander

TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. — The American public loves a great story. With that said, the Air Force has that great story and it's yours to tell.

Not surprising to anyone in this day and age, as we are fighting a war on terrorism, there are great stories in the making every day — not only in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Pacific theater and a number of countries in Africa, but right here at home.

As amazing as some of these stories are, and as proud as they make us feel to be Americans in the profession of combat arms, they make up only a portion of the Air Force story. The need to get the Air Force story out to the general public is so important that Secretary of the Air Force, Michael W. Wynne, along with Air Force Chief of Staff, General T. Michael Moseley, recently created the Office of Strategic Communication to help the American public better understand our daily successes and challenges. Brig. Gen. Erwin Lessel III, who leads the Secretary of the Air Force's Office of Strategic Communication states, "Every Airman can become an Air Force spokesperson at any time."

Airmen are engaged at every level of this conflict in every theater across the globe; and sometimes to a fault. We humbly go about our business taking for granted what we do. We need to do a better job making our entire story known to the American public, both nationally and at the locally.

"By nature, we are quiet warriors," said General Lessel. "We do not beat our chests and talk about what we do. It's going to take a culture change, but it helps the public better understand the Air Force when they hear from the Airmen themselves."

As difficult as it may be for us to recognize our terrific accomplishments, and as humble as we are sometimes, when the American public gets insight into what we do, they are simply amazed. They are amazed at what we take for granted, because the things we do are indeed amazing.

Maj. Gen. Scott Mayes, commander of 1st Air Force, said it best some time ago when he was a guest speaker at a 325th Fighter Wing Warrior Call. To make his point, he used the setting of a high school reunion to illustrate how important our work is and how much the American public wants to hear about it.

He told a room full of Air Force officers how, when compared to many of the jobs and occupations our high school classmates have gone on to be successful at in the private sector, it is our achievements and adventures as Airmen that captivate our school friends and hold their attention. As noble as their entrepreneurial successes might be, and

as financially well off as they may become, it is the Airmen who defend the nation both at home and abroad who everyone wants to hear from.

When I say we need to know our own story as individuals, what I means is that we should be able to tell our civilian friends and neighbors about what we do in the Air Force and how our roles and responsibilities play into the bigger picture of our squadron, Wing and greater Air Force mission. We need to tell what we actually do, what purpose our specialty serves and what it brings to bear on the battlespace.

If the Air Force story can be summed up by "payload, effects and reach," then there must be a lot of detail supporting it. That's where we come in.

Whether assigned to a fighter squadron or one of the tenant units, every one of us is either fighting the war on terrorism directly or supporting that fight. We must learn to articulate the facts to those not versed in "Air Force speak" and welcome the opportunities to do so, while recognizing that sometimes we tell that story in ways we don't even realize.

Our story is told not only in our words, but in our deeds and appearance. Sometimes we tell the Air Force story not by standing in front of a thoughtful audience, but by our appearance, actions and deeds in the community.

Whether we realize it or not, something as simple as going off base to have lunch creates a forum for the public to form its own opinion of the Air Force. Off base, like on base, we are constantly in the spotlight, being evaluated with every move we make. The key point is that we are being watched by the very people we swore to protect and defend when we took the oath of office.

How we wear the uniform, how we behave in public and even how we drive all speak volumes about the Air Force story. It illustrates our discipline as individuals and members of a select group of professionals in the respected profession of combat arms.

We all know how great the Air Force is. The public hears about the success stories that get publicized in the media, but those stories don't always tell the larger Air Force story.

Recognize how great you are as an active duty Airman, Guardsman, Reservist, Air Force civilian or contractor, and don't take for granted your personal day-to-day routine. Truth be told, it is actually very interesting to the American public. And don't assume that they aren't anxiously watching and listening to find out more about your greatness.

The public enjoys a great story. Learn the Air Force story and willingly tell it. Tell the Air Force story. Tell your story!

Commander's Corner



Col. Kent Laughbaum
355th Wing
Commander

Comment: I was at the old gym, Haeffner, today at 2 p.m. The Haeffner Fitness Center is an air conditioned facility and should have all the doors and windows closed.

The doors on the West side of the building by the front desk were wide open. This is one of the hottest days of the year, about 85 degrees out and the sun sets in the West so all the sun's hot rays can enter and make this place hotter.

Evidently, they've got a bunch of new people running the gym. It used to be pretty good, but these people aren't aware of what an air conditioned facility is. I wish somebody on this line would get a hold of Morale, Welfare, and Recreation, and pass on the info to those who are responsible.

Response: Thank you for your concern regarding installation stewardship at the Haeffner Fitness Center. While parts of our facility are air conditioned, the basketball court area is not one of these areas. When our guests are playing basketball or attending squadron physical training sessions in the court area, they typically request the doors be opened to allow air flow into the building. Our Fitness Center staff does their best to accommodate the requirements of the diverse customer base. Our Fitness Center Director is more than happy to assist you with any questions or concerns. He can be reached during the weekdays at the main fitness center or by phone at 228-0022.

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First Term Airman's Center welcomes incoming Airmen to D-M, Air Force

By Airman 1st Class Melissa L. F. Taeu
355th Wing Public Affairs

For months before being assigned to their first base, Airmen are in a training environment to learn the basics of the Air Force and their role in it.

The First Term Airman's Center acts as a liaison to assist the incoming personnel to the base and the Air Force.

According to Air Force Instruction 36-2252, "FTACs are designed to transition first duty station Airmen from training to a mission-oriented environment. FTACs provide a means of in-processing Airmen with a solid foundation of base and ancillary training programs and briefings in order to prepare them to become mission-ready Airmen in a minimum amount of time."

The First Term Airmen's Center at Davis-Monthan was established in March of 1998.

"FTAC was created to establish uniformity of in-processing across the Air Force," said Master Sgt. Craig Wood, FTAC flight chief.

Upon checking in to their work centers, Airmen are scheduled to attend the next available FTAC class.

"Unit commanders will be responsible for scheduling all first term airmen to attend FTAC in-processing and briefings at the earliest possible date," as stated in AFI 36-2252.

"Here at D-M, we operate on a two-week schedule," said Sergeant Wood. "A new class starts every other Monday."

The number of incoming Airmen in each FTAC session varies significantly.

"Our average class size is 20 Airmen, but we have had classes as large as 45 and as small as five," Sergeant Wood said.

All Airmen attending FTAC are new to the base and the Air Force. FTAC personnel and briefers reiterate the procedures taught in BMT and technical school.

"The two weeks they spend at FTAC reinforces what they have learned to this point," Sergeant Wood said. "They are slowly being introduced to the operational Air Force."

Airmen are also given valuable training and mission-essential information during FTAC.

"FTAC ensures they (the Air-

"FTACs are designed to transition first duty station Airmen from a training to a mission-oriented environment. FTACs provide a means of in-processing Airmen with a solid foundation of base and ancillary training programs and briefings in order to prepare them to become mission ready Airmen in a minimum amount of time."

— Air Force Instruction 36-2252

men) receive the Air Force mandated information they need to get started at their first duty station. They complete a large portion of ancillary training so they can focus on the job," Sergeant Wood said.

FTAC attendees are also afforded the rare opportunity to meet the base leaders.

"The Airmen are thoroughly introduced to Wing leadership and base facilities – they meet

the 355th Wing commander, the 355th Mission Support Group commander, the 355th Wing command chief, 1st Shirts and Chiefs," said Sergeant Wood.

During the program, various offices and organizations brief the incoming personnel on the services available to them and their dependants.

"The briefings are very informative and provide useful information," said Airman Allison Encarnacion of the 612th Air Intelligence Squadron, who is attending the current FTAC session. "I know what to do now because of the briefings."

Some of the briefers include: the 355th Wing Military Equal Opportunity office, Airmen Against Drunk Driving, Finance, 355th Legal Office, Innovative Development through Employee Awareness program, Sexual Assault Response Coordinator and many more.

Just as the FTAC program was established to assist new Airmen at their first duty station, the supervisors were set in place to do the same.

"I really enjoy our supervisors, they are really helpful and I've learned a lot from them," said Airman 1st Class Charles Webb of the 355th Component Maintenance Squadron, an engine propulsion mechanic.

"We have really cool supervisors," said Airman Encarnacion. "They really make it a relaxed and comfortable environment."

The FTAC flight chief has one of the most important roles in the welcoming of these new Airmen.

"The time I have spent here at FTAC has been very rewarding," said Sergeant Wood. "I have the opportunity to meet every new Airman that arrives here at D-M. Hopefully I am making a difference."

News Notes

Overseas quarterly assignment listing

The Enlisted Quarterly Assignment Listing for overseas requirements for the July through September 2007 cycle will be available today. Airmen need to work through their military personnel flights, commander's support staff or vMPF to update their preferences by Nov. 17. Deployed troops must work with their Personnel Support for Contingency Operations, or PERSCO, representative to update assignment preferences. Airmen will be notified of their selection by Dec. 15. EQUAL advertises upcoming assignment requirements, by Air Force Specialty Code and rank. Members are instructed to review, prioritize and update their assignment preferences based on the EQUAL list. Airmen can view the list on the Assignment Management System on the Air Force Personnel Center's secure Web site, or at the local MPF.

Basewide notifications

Any person or persons having claims for or against the estate of Master Sgt. Eugene B. Becquet, deceased, assigned to the 563rd Maintenance Squadron, should contact Summary Court Officer Captain Richella-Hope F. Rosete, 563rd Maintenance Squadron, at 228-0156.

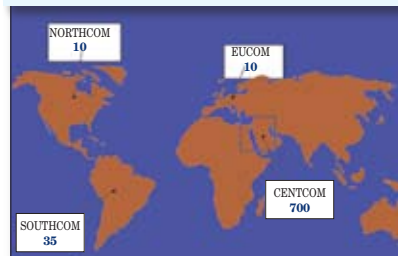
Any person or persons having claims for or against the estate of Senior Airman Amon Bruce Cook, deceased, assigned to the 355th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, should contact Summary Court Officer 2nd Lt. Eric Wanless, 355th AMXS at 228-1246.

Flying Hours

Squadron	Goal to date	Flown	Annual
41st ECS	82.7	54.9	N/R
43rd ECS	83.9	27.0	N/R
55th RQS	129.0	14	1700.0
79th RQS	190.0	22.6	1905.0
162nd OSB	200.0	0.0	2,135.0
354th FS	751.8	707.5	8,018.4
357th FS	602.0	618.5	6,238.0
358th FS	660.0	874.8	9024.0

D-M Deployed Worldwide

755 Total



Davis-Monthan history

Nov. 15, 1945

Davis-Monthan Field, no longer charged with the primary mission of training B-29 combat crews, passed from the jurisdiction of the Second Air Force to that of the San Antonio Air Technical Service Command.

A Warrior's Tradition:

Reflecting on their contributions during American Indian, Alaskan Native Heritage Month

By Tech. Sgt. Chastity Lee
355th Wing Military Equal Opportunity

The first of November began American Indian/Alaskan Native Heritage Month and the Davis-Monthan community can celebrate by recognizing the unique traditions and military contributions associated with the observance.

The purpose of National American Indian/Alaskan Native Heritage Month is to honor and recognize the original peoples of this land. President George W. Bush declared the first National American Indian/Alaskan Native Heritage Month Aug. 3, 1990.

American Indians have participated with distinction in military actions for more than 200 years. Their courage, determination and fighting spirit were recognized by American military leaders as early as the 18th century.

A Winnebago elder once said, "To be a Native American warrior is to have physical, mental and spiritual strength. A warrior must be prepared to overpower the enemy and face death head-on." This proverb mimics both the spirit of the Native American Indian people as well as some of the Air Force characteristics of effective leadership.

The contributions of American Indians are attributed in every major American War and armed con-

flict, including the current Global War on Terrorism.

Scouting the enemy was the only recognized skill of the Native American soldiers during early battles. Over the years Native American Airmen, Sailors, Marines and Soldiers have fought heroically in several combat positions and have been formally recognized for their bravery through prestigious military decorations and honors.

It is estimated that more than 42,000 American Indians have served in the U.S. military and have given more than \$50 million in war bonds and provided financial support to the American Red Cross and the Army and Navy Relief societies.

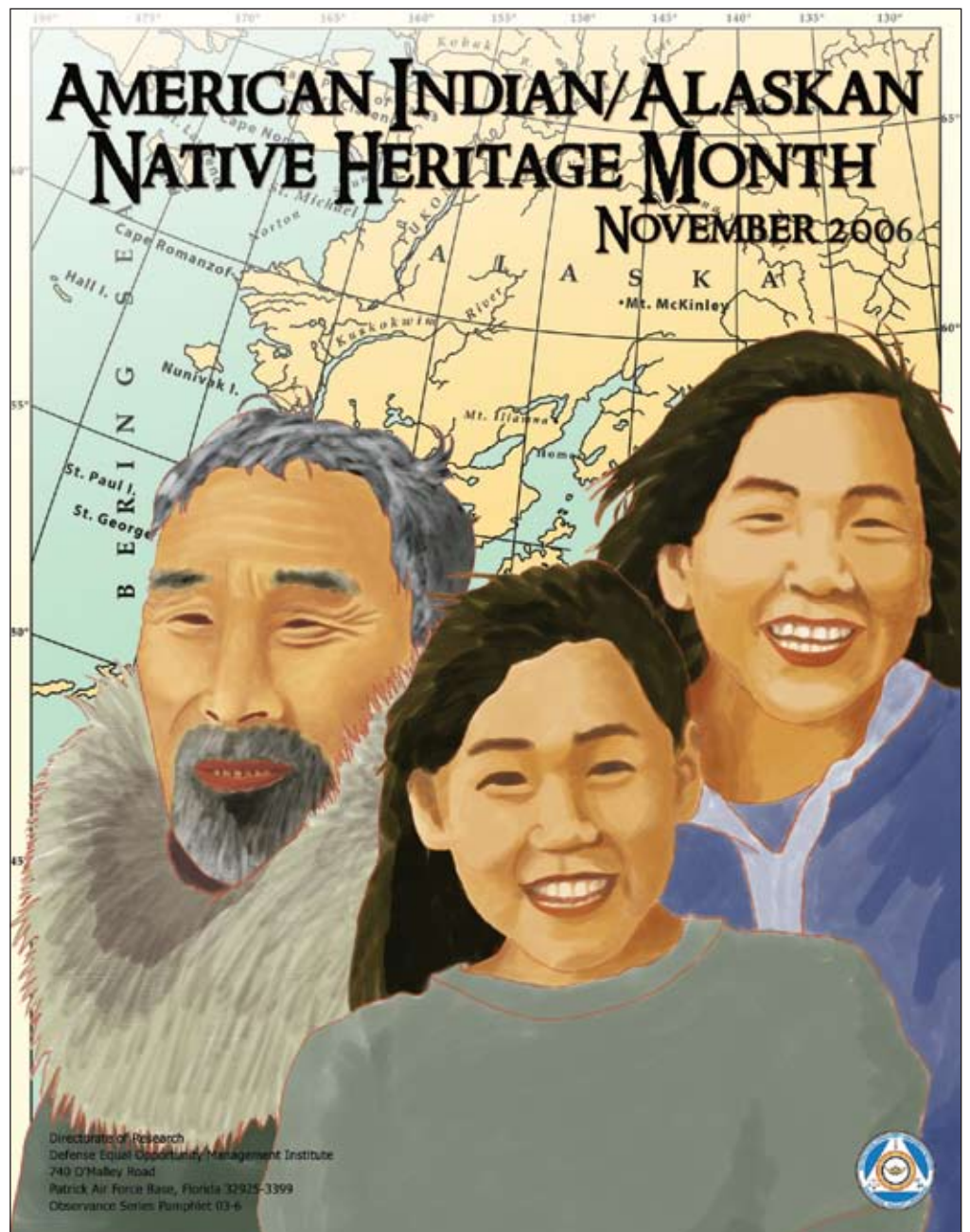
Today, Native American Indians continue to play a productive role in securing our freedom. And the overall contributions of the Native American Indians will forever be recognized.

For more information about American Indian heritage, call the D-M Military Equal Opportunity office at 228-5509.

Question: Which Indian War was fought in the Florida Everglades?

- A. Seminole War
- B. The War of 1812
- C. French-Indian war
- D. Civil War

(Answer: A. Seminole War)



Davis-Monthan recognizes Chief Sharp Award winners

The Desert-Lightning team congratulates the latest Chief Sharp Award Winners:

Airman 1st Class Alicia Gopee,
355th Mission Support Support

Airman 1st Class Jon B. Reid,
355th Logistics Readiness Squadron

Senior Airman Aubrey Juell,
12th Air Force

Senior Airman Malissa Wood,
355th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

Staff Sergeant Joseph J. Bianculli,
355th Equipment Maintenance Squadron

Staff Sergeant Michael Creek,
612th Air Communications Squadron

Staff Sergeant Kyle Grzywacz,
355th Maintenance Group

Tech. Sgt. Gardner L. Jones,
355th Civil Engineering Squadron

Staff Sergeant Lakiesha L. Mendoza,
355th Security Forces Squadron

Airmen take to the skies

Santa wears blue suit this holiday season

Compiled from staff reports

Airmen will soon be taking to the Arizona skies for reasons other than close air support and rescue operations training.

They will be escorting Santa Claus and the thousands of donated gifts he will present to children at area Native American schools.

Santa and Mrs. Claus have joined forces with Airmen from Davis-Monthan as part of the annual Santas in Blue program.

"We're counting on the support of the Desert Lightning Team to once again make a big impact in the lives of many under-privileged children," said Master Sgt. Jess Mendoza, program coordinator. "This program has been a great way to make the holidays happy for these kids. It's very rewarding and extremely worthwhile."

Santas in Blue is designed to help D-M give back to the local community by donating gifts to students in Native American elementary schools.

The program works by providing volunteers from the base with a list of children and their respective holiday wish lists. Santa works with D-M to personally give each child his or her desired present.

"To make it fair, there is a \$15 to \$25 gift limit for each child," Sergeant Mendoza explained.

The program is an opportunity for Airmen to experience the joy of giving and to make an impact in the community where it's needed most.

"Volunteering, and especially donating is a great way to put a smile on a child's face," according to Tech. Sgt. Yara Mitchell, who participated in the program last year as assistant coordinator. "It was wonderful to see the looks on their faces when they received the gifts. It meant so much to them. Because they don't have very much, they really appreciate their gifts. It's a great way to put some joy into their lives."

Volunteers working with the program have the option of helping out at one of several schools.

Santas in Blue will be visiting kindergarten through fifth-grade students at San Xavier, Santa Rosa, San Simon and Indian Oasis schools, which are located on the Tohono O'odham Indian Reservation. The program has a long history there. Santas in Blue got its start in 1965 when the 571st Strategic Missile Squadron began donating toys to poor children on the Tohono O'odham reservation, Sergeant Mendoza explained.

People interested in volunteering by donating gifts, refreshments or handing out gifts, can call



Sergeant Mendoza at 228-6169 or e-mail him at jess.mendoza@dm.af.mil, or Tech. Sgt. James Fisher at 228-3378, james.fisher@dm.af.mil.

"It's an incredible feeling watching the children with Santa and opening the only gifts they will probably receive this holiday season," Sergeant Mendoza added.

Snapshot

from downrange

Logistics Planner

Staff Sgt. Jeanie Holland

355th Logistics Readiness Squadron

How do you support the mission? I support the mission here by coordinating redeployment missions for troops going home. I also provide vital mission data to troop commanders to ensure that everyone arrives at their home station.

How many times have you deployed and what makes this one unique? This is my first deployment. This deployment is unique because it allows me to see just how important my job is in the area of operation. As a logistics planner, I am the "go to" person for a lot of redeployment issues.

How does your job differ in a deployed environment versus home station? The only difference to my job here versus at home station is the operations tempo. There is almost always an individual or a group of people leaving to go home. There is never a dull moment.



Courtesy photo

Desert Lightning strikes ~ again

D-M Services Squadron named 2007 LeMay, Eubank Award winners

By Senior Airman Melissa Maraj
355th Wing Public Affairs

The 355th Services Squadron once again leads Air Combat Command, having received the 2007 LeMay and Eubank Award in the Large Base category. This announcement came on the heels of the Desert Inn Dining Facility receiving the 2007 Air Combat Command John L. Hennessy Award in the Single Facility Category.

Services personnel have accomplished a great deal during this past year to ensure their position as the best in the command — all while providing top-notch service to the customers here at Davis-Monthan.

For those unaware of the responsibilities that Services takes on to provide customers here with the very best, the 355th SVS Commander Maj. Christopher J. Lavallee noted them in a recent letter. He lauded the accomplishments and hard work he feels contributed to the achievements of the whole.

“This has been a banner year for the 355th Services Squadron. The entire D-M Services team has made great strides in showing the Air Force just how much we do. You may not always hear it from your customers, but it’s plain to see from all the awards that what you do really does matter, and people are recognizing it,” the commander said.

The squadron’s success, according to Major Lavallee, is due to the sum of its parts — the people. And he believes in taking the time to recognize them for a job well done.

“Recognition is an important aspect of our day to day jobs, and it’s clear that we’ve earned quite a bit,” he said. “As always, it’s a tremendous honor to serve on the same team as each and every one of you.”

In a memorandum sent throughout command, ACC Vice Commander Maj. Gen. Kenneth Decuir congratulated all of the competitors

and wished the Services Squadron here the best of luck.

“We wish you great success and look forward to bringing the Air Force trophies back to ACC. We commend all the competitors for providing our Airmen with high-quality Services programs and world-class customer service,” he said.

The Commander of the 355th Wing Col. Kent Laughbaum echoed these sentiments.

“The Services Squadron team has contributed in significant ways to the successes being recognized with this award. I know that this recognition is richly deserved,” he said. “This award is a testament to the quality of the services provided to the people here at D-M,” Colonel Laughbaum said.

The following are just a few of their accomplishments throughout the year:

- ◆ *The ACC Innkeeper Honors: The Inn at Davis-Monthan;*
- ◆ *The ACC John L. Hennessy Award: The Desert Inn Dining Facility;*
- ◆ *The 5-Star Outdoor Recreation Program;*
- ◆ *The 355th MSG Junior Civilian of the second Quarter: Amanda Walker (Child Development Center);*
- ◆ *The ACC Services Airman of the Year for 2006: Senior Airman Nicolas Paulino (Fitness Center);*
- ◆ *The John L. Hennessy Top 50 Award winners: Tech. Sgt. Roxanne Wilson, Staff Sgt. Joseph Youngs, and Airman 1st Class Stasia Smith;*
- ◆ *The Air Force Innkeeper Traveler nominee: Staff Sgt. Mario Wiggins;*
- ◆ *The 355th Wing Airman of the third Quarter: Airman 1st Class*



Photo by Chris Sweeney

Ruby Rivera-Reyes from (Food Service) and

◆ *The 355th WG and 12th Air Force Junior Civilian of the third Quarter: Kat Nickola (Outdoor Recreation)*

For more information on services

offered through the 355th Services Squadron, visit <http://www.dmservicesonline.com>. To provide customer feedback on services provided, using the online comment card, visit <http://ice.disa.mil/>.

Volunteers assist Tucson community in computer drive

By Airman 1st Class Melissa L. F. Taeu
355th Wing Public Affairs

The Davis-Monthan Company Grade Officer Council and 355th Communications Squadron Automated Data Processing Equipment Flight, are working together in support of the Chaparral Foundation.

The foundation provides technology as well as technical assistance to both non-profit and for-profit organizations. The organization's aim is to improve the quality of life for economically disadvantaged individuals seeking to enhance their lives through education.

The CGOC and the ADPE Flight assist in the collection of computers to be refurbished and distributed to individuals through the Chaparral Foundation. "The CGOC has taken great pleasure in assisting the Chaparral Foundation with our base-wide computer donations," said 1st Lt. Julie Kena, 355th Medical Support Squadron, chief of laboratory operations and community service chair for the CGOC.

"The Chaparral Foundation program is different because it takes anything and everything," said Master Sgt. Marcus Ricardi of the 355th Communications Squadron, ADPE NCO in charge and base equipment control officer.

The foundation recycles 100 percent of all equipment. To make it easier for anyone wanting to donate equipment, they will also pick up the equipment from you.

With the help of the CGOC and the 355th CS, 70 computers and printers were donated to the Chaparral Foundation in September, who in turn refurbished the computers.

"The Foundation's Computer Hospital has

"The computers will enhance the students' ability to pursue technology skills, thereby supporting President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act. This will be a great tool for them to succeed academically."

— 1st Lt. Julie Kena,
355th Medical Support Squadron

provided a wonderful service to non-profit groups, churches and day-care centers," Lieutenant Kena said. The computers are built to meet specific needs and are donated to various groups – at no cost. One such group is schools in the local area.

"The teachers are so excited about receiving computers, as technology is vital to learning," Lieutenant Kena said. "The computers will enhance the students' ability to pursue technology skills, thereby supporting President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act. This will be a great tool for them to succeed academically."

The two organizations from D-M are requesting

computer donations and accessories to give to the Chaparral Foundation.

"What is very important to know is that anyone can donate computer equipment, including your own personal computers," said Sergeant Ricardi. "But if the equipment being donated is an Air Force asset, then you need to contact our ADPE section for further instructions. We will have step-by-step instructions on our Web page soon."

The computer donations received by the organizations benefit many individuals and groups that need the technology.

"The Chaparral Foundation Computer Hospital operates by funding the foundation," said Lieutenant Kena. "The more computers they repair the more they can donate." "This can be a great program as long as everyone follows the rules and every ADPE item is processed through us," said Sergeant Ricardi.

The Chaparral Foundation has donated over 1,000 computers to different non-profit organizations throughout Tucson and Southern Arizona. If you have any Air Force-owned computers and computer accessories, that you would like to donate to the Chaparral Foundation, contact your unit's ADPE custodian and the ADPE section at 228-3028/1127 for proper procedures.

For those wishing to donate personal computers and/or accessories or for more information, call, 1st Lt. Kena at 228-2686 or Capt. Angus Lam at 228-5369.

Sgt. Noah Tall



Sgt. Tall,
I don't understand what the big deal is about wearing motorcycle stuff. Does anyone realize that we are in the desert and it can get pretty hot with all of that equipment on? You know, you can be safe without feeling like you're going to melt!

Tech. Sgt. Organ N. Doenner

Sergeant Doenner,

And you can't "know" anything without a brain, Mr. Scarecrow — did you forget that? That's exactly what you are risking, along with other hazards, by riding a motorcycle without proper equipment.

Forget explaining the rules on base. They are already established and you will not be allowed on base without participating in the Basic Rider Course for a temporary pass, and working with a trained mentor who approves your competency.

And another thing, smarty pants — have you paid attention to what's going on off base? Although the drivers in Tucson think it's the Autobahn — it's not! I've been stationed in Germany and I can tell you that the courteous fashion in which people drive there is not the one seen on the streets here. It would behoove you to protect yourself, and the little bit of brain matter that you do have, while driving alongside our Indy 500 friends on the road. We would hate for one of our assets — and yes, you are an Air Force asset — to be compromised for bad judgment.

Sergeant Noah Tall

Final Answer

FTAC students: What do you like about the Air Force so far?



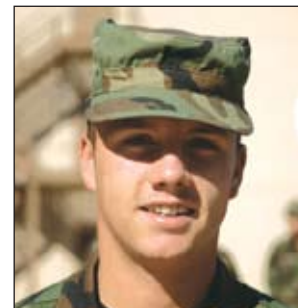
**Airman 1st Class
Charles Webb**
355th Component
Maintenance Squadron

"I like how they take care of my family."



**Airman 1st Class
Eddie Edrosa**
355th Aircraft
Maintenance Squadron

"I like the mixture of cultures."



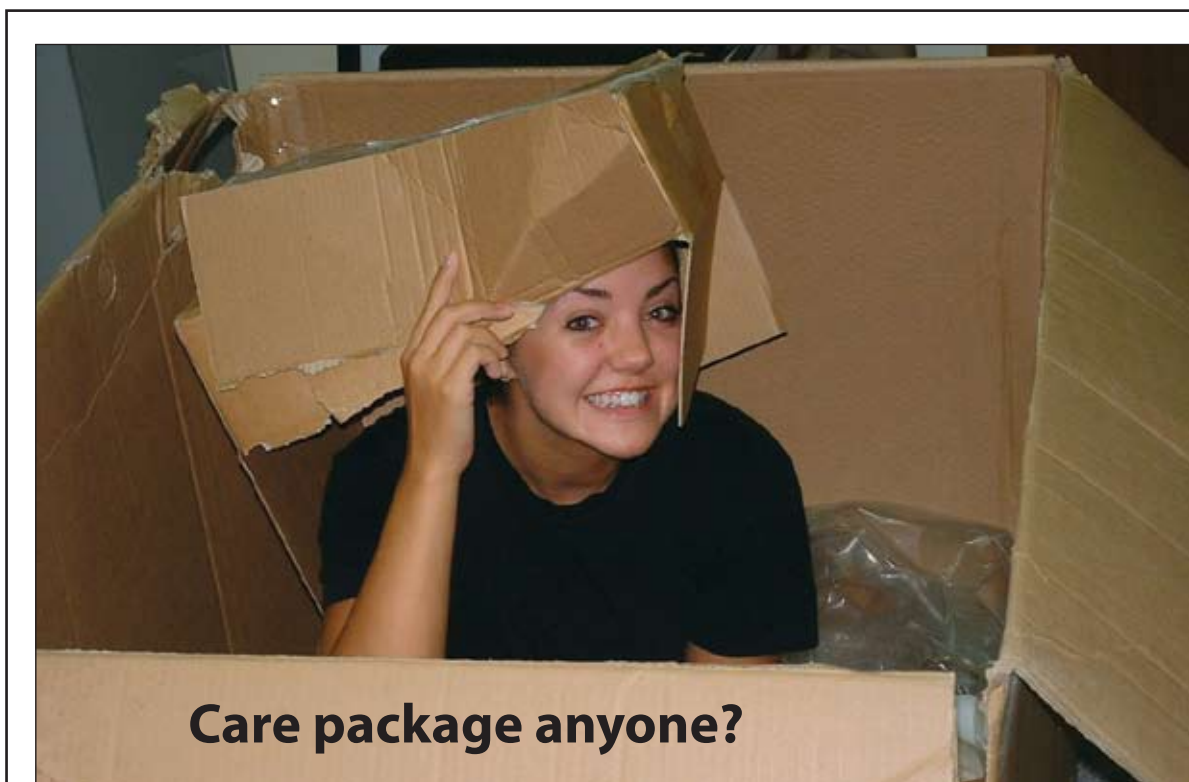
**Airman 1st Class
Steven Preston**
355th Component
Maintenance Squadron

"You get along with everybody and there's a variety of people."



**Airman
Dana Kiltbau**
355th Communications
Squadron

"You make friends for a lifetime."



Care package anyone?

Courtesy photo

Senior Airman Melissa "Skids" Adams, 43rd Electronic Combat Squadron, takes time after her duty day in Southwest Asia to pose for her friends back home.

AN AMERICAN HERO

Arizona native Arthur J. Benko, remembered

TELEGRAM

FROM WAR DEPARTMENT
BUREAU A G O
DVB 3836

384286-1 (6) 21 NOVEMBER 1947

Special Business—Government Rates
BENKO, ARTHUR J (19 NOV 43) SPXPC-H, XXV
Date
Jh

ASN 39 847 639

MRS EVA BENKO
BOX 384
BISBEE ARIZONA

THE SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES ME TO EXPRESS HIS DEEP REGRET THAT YOUR SON
TECHNICAL SERGEANT ARTHUR J BENKO
HAS BEEN REPORTED MISSING SINCE FIFTEEN NOVEMBER OVER ONE
FURTHER DETAILS OF HIS INFORMATION ARE RECEIVED YOU WILL BE
PERIOD LETTER FOLLOWS

ULIO
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
OFFICIAL:
ADJUTANT GENERAL

MIA telegram (copy) to Art Benko's mother



WESTERN UNION

CLASS OF SERVICE: This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.

SYMBOLS: DL=Day Letter, NL=Night Letter, LC=Deferred Cable, MLT=Cable M, Ship R.

(35) NEWCOMB CARLTON CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, J. C. WILLEVER FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

VUSC 40 GOVT=PXX WMU WASHINGTON DC 27 NFT
1943 NOV 27 PM 1

MRS EVA BENKO=
BOX 384 BISBEE ARIZ=

AM PLEASD TO INFORM YOU YOUR SON TECHNICAL SERGEANT ARTHUR J BENKO WHO WAS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED MISSING IN ACTION IS NOW SAFE AND ACCOUNTED FOR UNDOUBTEDLY HE WILL COMMUNICATE WITH YOU AT AN EARLY DATE CONCERNING HIS WELFARE AND WHEREABOUTS=

ULIO THE ADJUTANT GENERAL=

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BY BT

WESTERN UNION

CLASS OF SERVICE: This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.

SYMBOLS: DL=Day Letter, MT=Overnight Telegram, LC=Deferred Cable, MLT=Cable M, Ship Radiogram

A. N. WILLIAMS PRESIDENT, NEWCOMB CARLTON CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, J. C. WILLEVER FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

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MRS EVA BENKO=
BOX 384 BE=

REFERENCE MY TELEGRAM TWENTY NOVEMBER REGRET TO INFORM YOU MESSAGE STATION YOUR SON TECHNICAL SERGEANT ARTHUR BENKO SAFE AND ACCOUNTED FOR WAS IN ERROR REPORT NOW RECEIVED STATES HE IS STILL MISSING IN ACTION AS REPORTED IN MY TELEGRAM OF TWENTY ONE NOVEMBER REGRET UNDUDE ANXIETY CAUSED BY CONFLICTING REPORTS IF FURTHER DETAILS OR OTHER INFORMATION ARE RECEIVED YOU WILL BE PROMPTLY NOTIFIED=

ULIO THE ADJUTANT GENERAL=

Copy of telegram #3 saying that telegram #2 was in error and that Art is actually MIA

ARIZONA'S OWN ARTHUR J. BENKO:

By Col. Kent Laughbaum
355th Wing commander

I am thankful for the thousands of good men and women, across the many generations since 1776, who answered the clarion call to defend the United States of America in battle. On this Veteran's Day, Nov. 11, 2006, we honor those who risked all to serve their country.

The Declaration of Independence, our cherished document that established us as a people, leads with this familiar phrase:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

We are a people who, from our very beginnings, understand the blessings of freedom and liberty. These treasured concepts from our Declaration give us hope in a better future for our children, which in essence is the American dream. Americans are an optimistic, generous and peace-loving people. These early words from the Declaration are a statement for hope in the good of man. However, Americans also understand that the freedom and liberty we enjoy are perishable, and must be guarded with constant vigilance.

For those of us in uniform today, veterans of the ongoing war in Southwest Asia, we take inspiration and encouragement from those servicemen who defended America in earlier conflicts – World War I and II, Korea, Vietnam, the 1991 Iraq War, the Balkan War and other smaller yet vitally



Photos courtesy of the Bee Benko estate

Arthur Benko sits on his footlocker after completing basic training in Texas in 1942, on his way to the Las Vegas Army Gunnery School in Nevada. He was then assigned to the 308th Bomb Group, "The Goon" crew, in Pueblo, Colo.

important battles.

One such veteran worthy of special attention was an Arizonian named Arthur J. Benko. Benko was a first generation American, born in Pennsylvania. As a young boy he moved to Bisbee, Ariz., with his parents. His life in Bisbee was of a typical American. At Bisbee High School he was a good student and an excellent athlete. During his senior year, he was captain of the high school football team. After graduation from Bisbee High School in 1928, Benko gained employment in the mining industry as an electrician. He also worked part time at the Bisbee movie theater.

Of all of Arthur Benko's pre-war activities, he was best known as a superb marksman . . . one of the finest riflemen ever from Arizona. Not only was he an avid outdoorsman and hunter, but he also served as president of the Bisbee Rifle and Pistol Club. His competitive accomplishments included placing sixth in a 1937 national rifle competition, and then winning the 1941 Arizona Rifle Championship. Without question, Benko used his skill as a marksman to great effect in combat during World War II.

Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, Benko volunteered for the fight. Except for his age — a little older than most volunteers — and his pre-war exploits as a marksman, he really was just a typical young man who loved America and wanted to defend his homeland. After induction into the U.S. Army Air Force, he attended basic training at Sheppard Field, Texas, followed by turret gunner training at Las Vegas Army Gunner School in Nevada. With training complete, Sergeant Benko was assigned to his combat unit, the 374th Bomb Squadron from the 308th Bomb Group, flying B-24 Liberator bombers. Finally, in early 1943 Benko's squadron deployed to the China – Burma – India

(CBI) Theater of operations for combat, and was assigned to 14th Air Force under command of the famous Clair Chennault.

A typical mission flown by the B-24 crews from the 374th Bomb Squadron might include a launch from their base in India, a several hundred mile cruise towards Japanese targets in Eastern China or in Indo-China, a defense against attack from Japanese fighter aircraft, the actual bombing of Japanese targets and finally the cruise back to their home base. Missions commonly lasted for longer than eight hours, and the loss of B-24's to enemy action was not uncommon. With 10 men in each B-24 aircraft, the sacrifices made to accomplish these missions were, at times, quite significant and difficult to bear.

It was during the dangers of actual combat that Sergeant Arthur Benko made the transformation from typical American to legitimate wartime hero. He served as the top turret gunner in a B-24 Liberator bomber, nicknamed "The Goon" by the aircrew. Interestingly, the pilot of The Goon was 1st Lt. Samuel Skousen, a fellow Arizonan for whom Benko had great respect. Their targets included enemy airfields, shipping, coal yards, oil refineries and fuel dumps. Additionally, they provided direct support to the Chinese army, which was engaged in ground combat against the Japanese. However, as the top turret gunner in The Goon, Sergeant Benko's primary responsibility was to defend The Goon from Japanese fighters, particularly those attempting to attack from above the bomber formation.

Sergeant Arthur Benko's skill as a gunner was unmatched during his time in combat. According to the official 374th Bomb Squadron history, he achieved an astounding 16 confirmed kills against Japanese fighters. Possibly it was his expertise as a rifle marksman that contributed to his record,



Arthur Benko poses in uniform during basic training at Sheppard Field, Texas in 1942. Mr. Benko graduated from Bisbee High School in 1928 before joining the Army.

AN AMERICAN WAR HERO SALUTED

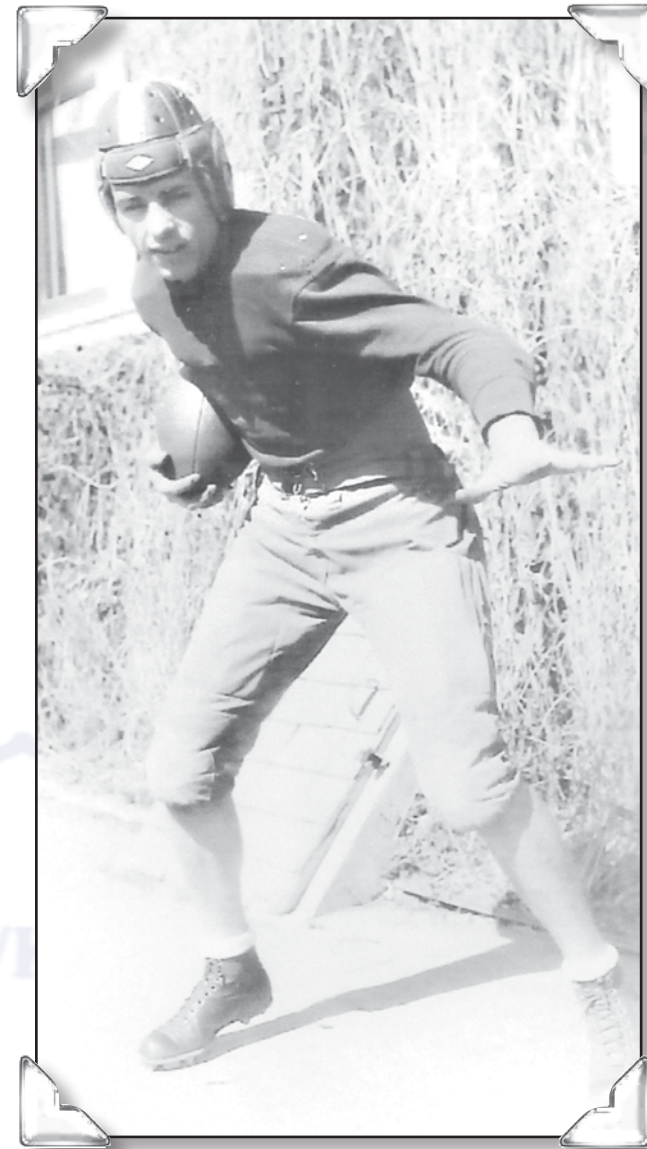
or maybe it was just his fate to face so many of the enemy. Regardless, during his time he was the most prolific turret gunner in the war. If he had survived World War II it is conceivable that Sergeant Benko would have been the most deadly turret gunner of all time.

The 308th Bomb Group flew its 20th mission on Oct. 1, 1943. By this time, Sergeant Benko had already developed a tremendous reputation across the theater as a B-24 turret gunner, but during this mission his accomplishments would earn national notoriety. The targets were Japanese docks, warehouses and a powerplant near Haiphong. Twenty-two B-24s were launched for the mission, with fighter escorts in the form of P-47s. All but one of the B-24s made it to the targets, which according to the official history, were attacked "... with good results." The 374th Bomb Squadron was the last of the Group to bomb targets, and while departing the target area they were attacked by approximately 60 enemy fighters. The attack lasted for nearly 40

minutes, principally against the trailing 374th Bomb Squadron because the P-47 escort was leading the bomber formation. During the engagement Staff Sergeant Benko shot down a total of seven Japanese Zeros – an unprecedented feat. He was also injured during the fight when bullets from a Zero pierced his machine gun turret, grazing his skull and wrist.

In the days following this mission, rumors of Benko's accomplishments spread across the CBI theater of operations. In fact, news even reach America when a reporter from The Chicago Tribune recounted the story . . . at least what portions of the story that could make it past the censors.

By November 1943, the newly promoted "Technical Sergeant" Arthur Benko was a bona fide hero. This young man from Bisbee, Ariz., who began the war like so many others by simply volunteering to fight for America, had achieved more in battle than any of his peers. Sadly, just two weeks after his great



Arthur Benko poses in his high school football gear in 1928 in Bisbee, Ariz. Mr. Benko was captain of the Bisbee High School football team.

mission Benko would give his life for the country he loved. On a mission against Japanese docks in Hong Kong, his aircraft developed severe engine trouble. Fearing that a crash was imminent, the pilot, 1st Lt. Skousen, ordered the crew to bail out. While the majority of the crew parachuted to safety, Benko was lost, possibly drowning in a river.

Technical Sergeant Arthur J. Benko, the high school football captain and champion marksman from Bisbee, was a true son of liberty. He volunteered to fight for America when the clarion trumpet called. Thousands, past and present, have made similar decisions to serve America during time of war. These men and women, like Sergeant Benko, know that defending freedom and liberty can mean great risk, danger and sacrifice . . . that they might never return to see their wives, husbands, parents, children or friends again. For Sergeant Benko, this meant that he would never again see his beloved daughter, Beatrice June Benko.

Veterans, this is your day. Thank you for your noble wartime service to the United States, past and present. May God bless you for your sacrifices, give us all strength, endurance, and wisdom for the fight ahead, and forever bless our homeland, America.

(Editors note: The Desert Airman staff would like to thank 355th Wing Historian Doug Herndon and U.S. Army Col. (Ret.) Robert Browne, for their contributions to this project.)



Photo courtesy of the Daniel Palmer family

From left to right: Robert Kirk, Arthur Benko and William Novak stand inside "The Goon" in China in 1943. Mr. Benko gives the time's traditional hand signal for victory.

Phoenix Coyotes win 6-4 during Armed Forces Hockey

By Tech. Sgt. Jim Fisher
355th Wing Public Affairs

Military hockey players go to great lengths to pursue the game they love. They pay league fees that cost more than the NFL Sunday Ticket and ESPN GamePlan combined. They shell out that kind of cash to skate on dimly-lit ice, often late at night, when the glorious sounds of sticks and pucks echo through empty rinks into obscurity.

Saturday night, hockey players from Davis-Monthan and Luke Air Force Base got the chance to pursue their passion in a seemingly more fitting environment – on an ice sheet graced by the world's greatest hockey players. As members of the D-M Defenders and Luke Falcons were lacing up at Phoenix's Jobing.com Arena, the National Hockey League's Phoenix Coyotes and Los Angeles Kings were skating to the end of a 6-4 Coyotes victory.

Military people and their families also benefited from the event, the Phoenix Coyotes' first Military Appreciation Night of the season, as they were able to take advantage of discounted tickets, food and merchandise.

The Coyotes, recently rated by CNN.SI.Com as having the cheapest ticket prices in the NHL, also offer a regular military discount on tickets to home games. But to show their support for America's men and women in uniform, they also conduct military appreciation nights twice a season.

This was the first season a large group from D-M was in attendance, many hoping to either skate for or support D-M's hockey club after the NHL game.

Defenders' Captain Chad Darvas said the ice was "incredible."

"I don't know how to describe it. It was like gliding," Darvas said. Everything about the experience was top notch, he explained, adding that it was nice to play against the Falcons.

"It was neat to play against them," Darvas said, adding that the teams weren't acquainted until meeting at a recent military hockey tournament in Las Vegas.

The Defenders came away from the Vegas tourney (held Oct. 5-9) finishing fourth out of 12 teams and with a burgeoning relationship, or rivalry, with Luke's hockey club. Their first meeting ended in a 12-9 Luke victory.

The Falcons have had a long-term association with the Phoenix-based NHL squad, which has strengthened since the Coyotes moved from the downtown America West Arena to suburban Glendale and the new Jobing.com Arena. That arena is just a few miles from Luke.

"We've had a very good working relationship ever since they built the arena, and even before that we did a lot with them," said Falcons coordinator Mike McGuire. Luke has played numerous games at



D-M Defenders skater Sean Singer works behind the net as Luke's Robert Sandmoen looks to apply some pressure.

both arenas, taking on competition ranging from Coyotes alumni to a visiting Canadian Armed Forces hockey club. They've also enjoyed many military appreciation nights, McGuire explained, adding that the Coyotes have gone out of their way to support the men and women in uniform.

"They have Armed Forces nights twice a year, and they always offer a military discount," McGuire said. "Last [week] they came out and held a pep rally on base."

The Luke skaters have supported the Coyotes as well.

"We support the Coyotes charities whenever we can," McGuire said. "We've done some community work, and we conduct charity golf tournaments."

According to McGuire, members of the Falcons took part in the Jobing.com groundbreaking and signed the last beam to be put in place during construction.

With D-M now part of the equation, the relationship, and the inter-base rivalry, should only get stronger.

Defenders notes: D-M's Ice Hockey club is now 4-1 several weeks into its fall season at Tucson Ice. They take on Quagmires at 5:45 p.m. Sunday. McGuire is still looking for players, and the Defenders are currently working toward becoming an official

base varsity team, to help divert the high cost of ice time and equipment.

For more information, call Sergeant Darvas at 228-3424.

For Coyotes tickets, call Dustin England at (623) 463-8872 or email dustin.england@phoenixcoyotes.com.



Photos by Tech. Sgt. James Fisher

Members of the Davis-Monthan and Luke hockey clubs face-off over the Coyotes logo at center ice before the contest Saturday in the NHL club's Jobing.com Arena in Phoenix.



Luke's Staff Sergeant Nicholas Siegl pokes the puck away from D-M's Captain, Chad Darvas.

Sports Shorts

Davis-Monthan Mustangs Baseball Tryouts

The Davis-Monthan Mustangs will hold their annual baseball team tryouts Nov. 16 from 5 to 8 p.m. and Nov. 18 from 8 to 11 a.m. at Phantom Field here. The Mustangs are looking for skilled players with a drive to win.

Along with a call for skilled players, the team is in need of specific position players such as pitchers, outfielders, infielders and catchers.

For more information, call Jorge Rodriguez at 228-5432.

Basketball coaches needed

The D-M Youth Center is in need of coaches for youth basketball. Skill evaluations will be held the week of Nov. 14. Practices begin Dec. 18 and games begin Jan. 20, 2007. All volunteers must complete a coach's packet, which includes a background check. All training will be provided.

"The training and recognition provided to volunteers fosters a sense of professionalism within the volunteer community. The volunteers also acquire skills that will enhance their personal and professional development," said Youth Sports Director Kathy Sands.

Anyone who is interested can call her at 228-8373, or e-mail her at Kathy.sands@dm.af.mil.



Photo by Kathryn Nickola

Ghost or Ghoul?

The Sports and Fitness and the Outdoor Recreation Centers joined forces and hosted the Annual 5K Ghost and Ghouls Fun Run, and the Volks March Walk at Sun Glow Road here. There were 53 participants.

Chapel Information

Services offered by D-M chapels are listed below. For more information on Jewish or Muslim services, Sunday School programs, Vacation Bible School, Bible studies, youth groups and ministries, call 228-5411.

Worship schedule

Catholic

- ◆ Saturday Mass – 5 p.m. at the Desert Dove Chapel.
- ◆ Sunday Mass – 9:45 a.m. at the Desert Dove Chapel.

Protestant

- ◆ Traditional Service is Sunday at 8 a.m. at the Hope Chapel.
 - ◆ Desert Lightning Fellowship (Contemporary Service) is Sunday at 9:45 a.m. at the Hope Chapel.
 - ◆ Inspirational Gospel Service is Sunday at 11:15 a.m. at the Hope Chapel.
- Children's church will be held for young children (at parents' discretion) during each worship service.

Dorm Worship Service

- ◆ CBNR (Church But Not Really) is a GenX worship service that meets in the Ground Floor day room (Dorm 4102), Saturdays at 6:30 p.m.

Help wanted

The base chapel is currently seeking applicants for the following non-personal service contract positions.

- ◆ Sunbeam Coordinator – Sundays
- ◆ PWOC Assistant Children's Ministry – Tuesdays from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- ◆ Gospel Service Choir Director – Sundays 11:30 to 1 p.m., practice during the week, other special occasions.

Resumes and bids can be dropped of at the chapel's administration office. Interviews will be conducted Nov. 15 from 1 to 4:30 p.m.

For additional information or a statement of work call 228-5411.

Education Services

For more information, call 228-4249 or 228-3813.

ERAU

Embry Riddle Aeronautical University will have limited manning during the week of Nov. 13 through 17. Management will be attending a Regional Conference at that time. For more information call 747-5540.

BTES closure

The Base Training and Education Services Office will be closed Friday in observance of Veterans Day, and will reopen Monday.

LSAT Preparation Course Session III

The University of Arizona's Learning Center is offering a comprehensive 28-hour class review and 30-hour, home-study course in the Law

School Admission Test. The four-week workshop will be offered throughout the year. All classes meet Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Session II class dates are Jan. 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2007. The registration fee is \$425 and is payable by cash, check or money order only.

Registration Deadline is three working days before the session begins. The LSAT exam dates can be found at <https://www.lsac.org>. For more information call 621-4548 or visit <https://www.ulc.arizona.edu>.

CLEP testing

College Level Examination Program testing is available through Pima College On-Base. Thirty-five different tests are available. Testing is conducted on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1 p.m. and Wednesdays and Fridays at 9 p.m. All CLEP tests are free for active-duty military personnel. Test results are available as soon as the test is completed. Spouses and dependents are eligible to take the tests for a nominal fee.

For more information, call the Pima Community College Office at 206-4866 or stop by Building 3200, Room 224.

Services Trips and Tours

For more information, call the Outdoor Recreation Center at 228-3736, or Information Tickets and Tours at 228-3700.

Nogales Shopping Trip

Outdoor Recreation is sponsoring a four-hour shopping trip to Nogales, Mexico Dec. 2. A van will depart from Building 4430 at 9 a.m. and drive to Nogales and park on the American side of the border and walk over. The cost is \$7 per person, which includes transportation and parking fees. Register by Nov. 22.

Tubac Fiesta Navidad Shopping Trip

Outdoor Recreation is sponsoring a shopping trip to Tubac, Ariz. Dec. 9 from 5 p.m. until 10 p.m. Tubac will be holding its annual holiday celebration, The Fiesta Navidad. The streets will be lined with luminarias and stores will stay open late. There will be homemade food, music and a visit by Santa Claus.

The cost is \$4 per person. Register with Outdoor Recreation by Dec. 1.

Happenings

Shirley Condit-Starkey book signing

There will be a book signing with The Scorpion Stings author, Shirley Condit-Starkey, Friday at the base exchange from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Mrs. Condit-Starkey will also speak at the Officer's Wives Club luncheon Thursday.

TRICARE For Life Seminar

A TRICARE For Life Seminar will be held Wednesday at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. at the Community Center. The seminar is for those who are 65 years and older and will last one hour.

For more information, call Barbara West at 228-2634.

Pre-Thanksgiving Dinner

The American Legion is sponsoring a Pre-Thanksgiving Dinner for Airmen and their families Nov. 21 at 5 and 6:30 p.m. at 330 West Franklin Street.

Those interested in attending must sign up today by calling Clayton Moore at the Airman and Family Readiness Center at 228-5690.

Santas in Blue

Santas in Blue will be visiting area Native American reservation schools Dec. 15 through 22 to distribute holiday gifts to the children.

Volunteers are needed to help pass out toys. All donations are welcome.

For more information, e-mail james.fisher@dm.af.mil or jesse.mendoza@dm.af.mil.

Treasure Sale

The 355th Contracting Squadron's Booster Club is holding a Treasure Sale between 7 a.m. and noon Nov. 18 in their parking lot. Anyone interested in participating can bring new or gently used items to sell. Spaces are \$10 each and tables are available to rent.

For more information call Bryan Jackson at 228-5478.

Leo Thorsness book signing

There will be a book discussion and signing with Medal of Honor Recipient and Leo K. Thorsness, whom the 355th Wing Building at Davis-Monthan was named after, at the Barnes and Noble Bookstore at 7352 N. La Cholla Boulevard Saturday at 2 p.m.

Movies

Call 228-5694 for movie theater recording.

Friday

The Guardian (PG-13)
7 p.m.

Saturday

School for Scoundrels (PG-13)
7 p.m.

Sunday

Open Season (PG) 2 p.m.
(Admission \$1.50)

Regular admission is \$3 for adults and \$1.50 for children 11 years and younger.



Photo by Chris Sweeney

Fix'n it up!

Left: Paul Tracey and Lenny Denham perform preventive maintenance on Mr. Tracey's minivan. Mr. Tracey said he saved over \$500 doing his own front and rear breaks at the Auto Skills Center. The Auto Skills Center will have extended hours Nov. 17 and 18, and will be open from 8 a.m. until midnight Nov. 17, and from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. Nov. 18. The extended hours are to provide shift workers and those with large jobs that cannot be completed in a couple of hours the opportunity to work on their vehicles for an extended period of time. Auto Skills will serve pizza starting at 7 p.m. Nov. 17. For more information, call 228-3614.