

## Community Events

### 9/11 Retreat

The 27th Fighter Wing is hosting a special retreat 4:15 p.m. Monday at wing headquarters in remembrance of 9/11 victims and the first responders who lost their lives.

Streets will be cordoned off, so attendees should park in the alternate areas.

The event is open to the military community.

### Road closure

Starting Monday a road construction project begins on Trident Ave from Olympic to Torch Blvds. Access to the bowling alley and theater parking lots will be through the Bank of America driveway off D.L. Ingram Blvd. and access to the chapel and law center will be via Sextant Ave.

The project is expected to take two weeks.

For more information, call 784-2209.

### Preferences now online

Enlisted Airmen can now change their assignment preferences online through the virtual Military Personnel Flight, as the Air Force continues Personnel Services Delivery Transformation.

Airmen wanting to make updates to the assignment preferences will be directed to instructions found in the "Self Service Actions" section of the vMPF.

For more information on this new initiative, contact the Air Force Contact Center at (800) 616-3775 (Option 1,1,2), (210) 565-5000 or DSN 665-5000.

### New MPF hours

The Military Personnel Flight will have new hours of operation beginning Sept. 18.

Customer Service, Casualty, and Personnel Systems Management will continue to have regular hours, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. It will be closed for training on Tuesdays 7:30 to 9 a.m. .

The remainder of the MPF will be by appointment only, Mondays through Fridays from 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., except Tuesdays when it will conduct training from 7:30 to 9 a.m.

Walk-ins are Mondays through Fridays 12:30 to 3 p.m. System updates/package processing is Mondays through Fridays, 3 to 4:30 p.m.

To schedule an appointment, call Separations/Retirements, 784-2171;

Outbound Assignments/Formal Training, 784-7573;

Employments, 784-2619;

Career Enhancements, 784-646;

Casualty Assistance, 784-2562; or

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# MACH METER

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Cannon Air Force Base, N.M.

Sept. 8, 2006

## Cannon troops take to the skies Airmen begin deployment

By Staff Sgt. Craig Seals  
27th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The other shoe dropped during a rainy Labor Day weekend as approximately 400 Cannon personnel deployed over the past week as part of Aerospace Expeditionary Force (AEF) 3/4, according to information provided from the Personnel Readiness Function.

**Additional photos  
on pages 12 and 13**

Those deployed will be reporting to multiple locations throughout Southwest Asia, such as Balad AB, Iraq, in direct support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and Bagram AB, Afghanistan, in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.

The deployed person-

nel come from squadrons all across the Cannon community. The majority of the deployers departed by way of military chartered aircraft while the remaining were sent on military airlift transportation.

Deployers were met by chapel, legal and medical personnel prior to departure in order to ensure all their personal and professional needs had been met. Personnel were given the opportunity to make any necessary last-minute changes to their will, power of attorney or financial needs. They then received their pre-departure briefings from finance, Office of Special Investigations and others before loading buses and heading to their respective departing aircraft.

This AEF rotation is scheduled to end in January.



PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. APRIL WICKES

**Cannon Airmen boarded a chartered aircraft Sunday morning to begin a planned four-month deployment.**

## AFSOC meetings scheduled

27th Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office

The public is invited to attend three area meetings scheduled Sept. 18-20 to learn more about environmental impact issues when the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) assumes command of Cannon Air Force Base in October 2007.

All meetings will be from 6-8 p.m. The first will be on Sept. 18 at Clovis Community College, 417 Schepps Blvd. in Clovis. The second meeting will be Sept. 19 at Clayton High School, 323 South Fifth, Clayton and the third meeting will be at the Fort Sumner Community

House, 137 East Baker Ave. in Fort Sumner.

AFSOC proposes to transfer aircraft and personnel from Hurlburt Field, Florida to Cannon along with assets that may include weapons systems, equipment and personnel. In addition to considering what assets should be housed at Cannon, AFSOC is also considering how to best use existing facilities, and what facilities may need to be built for the new mission.

Approximately 90 aircraft and 3,500 personnel will be moved to Cannon, along with possible con-

■ See AFSOC MEETINGS, Page 3



## NEWS FEATURE

# Tours give outsiders insight to operations

Story and photos by Airman 1st Class Thomas Trower  
27th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Some children take field trips to fire and police stations with their school or another organization. These trips give them opportunities to see real people doing their everyday job. Cannon has a base tour program available to organizations that provides a glimpse of the Air Force mission and how it is accomplished every day.

A group of girls from Girls Town USA in Whiteface, Texas took this opportunity to visit the base and gain ideas for possible future Air Force careers.

Several areas of interest for the girls were on the agenda for their base tour, starting with the flight simulators and ending with a visit at the 523rd Fighter Squadron.

When the group arrived at the flight simulators, they were greeted by Boeing staff members who operate the equipment. After a brief walk-through of the facilities, they were able to observe a 522nd Fighter Squadron pilot training in the simulator. The girls then headed for the Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit.

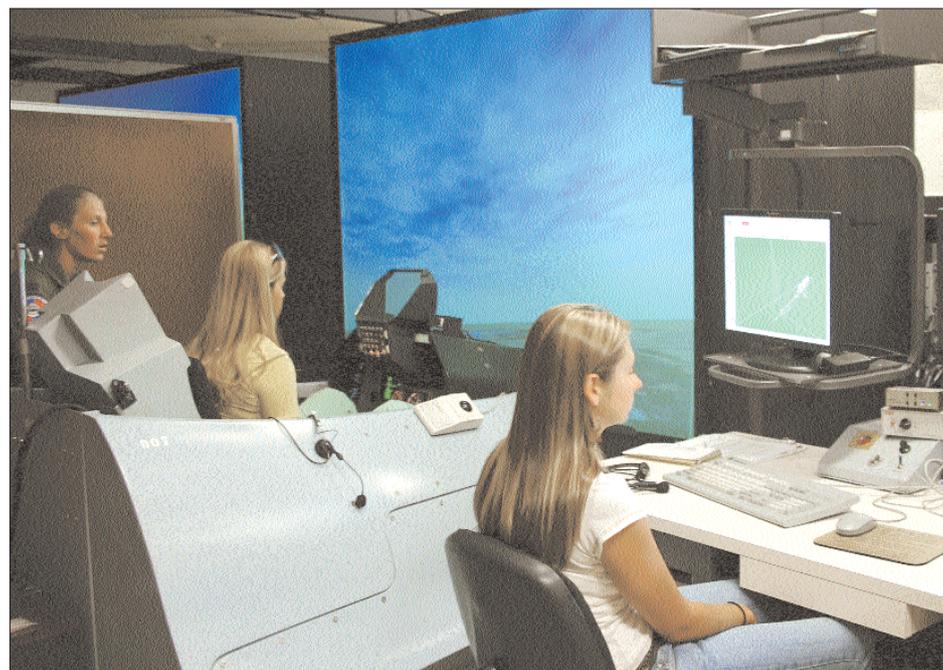
Staff Sgt. Darryl Wilcken, EOD operations, showed several different types of explosive hazards currently seen in Iraq. After a brief video of how to clear the Melrose Bombing Range of unexploded training ordnance, Airmen demonstrated some of the equipment used in their job. Among these were the X-ray camera and one of their robots.

After lunch at the Pecos Training Dining Facility where the girls got to talk with Airmen and learn about their jobs, they visited the air traffic controllers.

During the quick stop to visit the Radar Approach Control (RAPCON) facility, the control tower buzzed them in and invited the tour to the

Right: Capt. Kathryn Gaetke, 523 Fighter Squadron pilot, gave the Girls Town USA base tour a second chance to visit the flight simulators and try their skills at the controls. The tour gave the girls a glimpse of Cannon's mission.

Below: Staff Sgt. Darryl Wilcken, Cannon Explosives Ordnance Disposal, showed the girls how EOD examines and disposes of suspicious packages.



top of the tower. At RAPCON, the girls could see how all aircraft, civilian or military, in Cannon's airspace kept in touch with the base. In the tower, they saw the length of the runway and a few jets taking off and landing.

The final scheduled stop of the day was at the 523 FS. Capt. Kathryn Gaetke, 523 FS pilot, gave a quick demonstration of the abilities of the F-16 Fighting Falcon and an overview of the 523 FS. A walk down the hall landed them at the life support section, where the girls were shown how the G-suit inflates

to allow pilots to fly at higher speeds, and how the pilots fly with night vision equipment.

When Captain Gaetke heard how the girls were not able to fly earlier in the day, she volunteered to take them back over to the simulator and give them all a chance to fly. The captain activated both 523 FS simulators and gave the girls one-on-one direction on how to fly and perform a couple of aerobatic maneuvers.

Carla Jones, the house-parent for the group of girls, expressed appreciation for the tour facilitators and could not say enough about the experience.

"During the tour I heard many of the girls commenting on how they loved the trip."

One girl said, "This is the funnest trip I've ever taken – ever." Another said that the tour literally changed her life and her thoughts about what she could do with it.

The 27th Fighter Wing Public Affairs office coordinates and gives many tours throughout the year. The tours are geared to large groups of people high-school age or above, in order to keep their interest.



During a visit to the Radar Approach Control facility, the Girls Town USA group was invited to visit the top of the control tower and observe jets flying sorties.



## NEWS

# Officer promotion board changes take effect Jan. 1

By Staff Sgt. C. Todd Lopez  
Air Force Print News

The secretary of the Air Force has approved changes to the format of the selection brief presented to officer promotion boards to begin Jan. 1.

Air Force officials will implement three changes to officer selection briefs, or OSBs; two changes deal with presentation of data related to developmental education with a third change deals with deployment history.

The OSB is a single sheet of paper that summarizes an officer's career. It is an important document in an officer selection record, or OSR. The OSR is presented to a selection board when an officer is being reviewed for promotion.

The OSR contains, in addition to the OSB, such items as performance reports, training reports, decorations and a promotion recommendation form. The OSB is intended to be an overview of what is inside the OSR, said Col. Philip Odom, the chief of Air Force Military Force Shaping Policy.

"It is essentially a summary of an officer's career 'some would call it a snapshot in a format that is quickly reviewed by a board member,'" Colonel Odom

said. "A board member can look at the OSB and get an idea of where an officer's career is by looking at their job titles and duty descriptions, and whether or not they have completed developmental education."

Beginning in January, OSBs will no longer list the name of a school an officer attended as part of their developmental education. Instead, under the education heading, the brief will indicate only the level of education attained along with its completion date.

By eliminating school names from the developmental education portion of the OSB, the Air Force hopes to change a culture that in the past has put too much emphasis on the school attended rather than the fact the officer completed the appropriate level of professional military education.

"This gets into the issue of getting away from the pedigree of the school attended," Colonel Odom said. A second change to the OSB, also related to developmental education, is the addition of the "declined with prejudice" statement. That statement will display on an OSB if an officer has declined to attend developmental education in their last year of eligibility (if they were a select).

"When you are identified and designated to go do developmental education, the Air Force is saying we

need you to go do that education," Colonel Odom said. "By declining to attend, you are telling the Air Force you don't want to participate anymore."

In April, the Air Force began asking officers to sign a letter when they declined an opportunity to attend developmental education. Since that time, the letter of declination has been included in an officer's OSR. But the OSB has not reflected the declination. Instead, the OSB continued to say the officer had been selected for developmental education. Changes to the OSB will rectify the disparity.

Colonel Odom said officers who cannot attend developmental education due to operational reasons will not see "declined with prejudice" on their OSBs. Rather, their OSB will identify them as being "operationally deferred."

The final change to the OSB involves an officer's deployment history. Under the deployment history heading, the OSB will now reflect the location of an officer's contingency and exercise deployments. In the past, only the date and level of command during a CED deployment was displayed.

Changes to the OSB will not necessarily affect promotion numbers, because selection board members will continue to closely review records as they have in the past to make promotion decisions.

# Quality of life more than just another buzzword

By Janet Taylor-Birkey  
27th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Quality of Life is a buzz phrase heard around the Air Force these days, but for those working to make a difference on behalf of Airmen and their families, they are more than just words.

Working on behalf of military members and their families, former active-duty Air Force officer Dale Vande Hey, brings a passion to quality of life issues that perhaps only those who have been in the

military can fully understand. As the Department of Defense Quality of Life Southwest Liaison, Mr. Vande Hey is now in a position to bring reality to the hope for better lives.

"What I do is work outside-the-fence issues ... that impact people inside the fence," Mr. Vande Hey said during a recent visit to Cannon..

These "Inside-the-Fence issues" are in-state tuition, military children during school transitions and

deployments, spouse employment, unemployment compensation and payday lending. These are local, daily issues that make up Mr. Vande Hey's focus.

Quality of life liaisons act under the direct supervision of the Air Staff and deliver advice and assistance on ten DoD Quality of Life issues that relate to State laws, regulation and funding policies. Operating with a focus on education, relationships and assistance, the DoD works through non-profit organiza-

tions and state leadership to further awareness of needs and issues that military families face, said Mr. Vande Hey.

He said it is important to build awareness of what families need in the local community, which Mr. Vande Hey indicates is a real possibility for the Cannon community. "I learned the value at a young age of community relations," he said. "[Clovis and Cannon] is a template on how to do it right."

One of the most public of the tools are military base school liaisons who can help the transition of the military child, when changing schools, Mr. Vande Hey said. "It is important for school leadership to be conscience of things that affect the military child. It's a parent issue, but if you build the relationship between all involved, the child is better for it."

Concerns such as block scheduling and helping to partner new students with other children is important in order to integrate the mili-

tary child in their new surroundings, said Mr. Vande Hey. One way to help that integration is the S2S program. Standing for Student to Student, workshops are provided to help schools incorporate a reception program so that students coming in feel welcome." Students then stand a better chance of staying alive in sports and school sponsored clubs.

"Studies have proven that connectedness in schools is very important. Because the child that's connected typically does well and does not get into trouble," said Mr. Vande Hey. "These are real problems that have to be addressed."

Other quality of life issues Mr. Vande Hey addresses are assistance to severely injured service members, care of the guard (guard members and employers), voting, foreign language education in public schools and child care support for guard and reserve members.

## AFSOC MEETINGS

Continued from Page 1

struction of additional facilities at Melrose Locations for outlying drop zones within or outside Melrose AFR, or water training within two hours travel from Cannon may also be identified for training use.

Possible impacts on the environment will be considered in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that AFSOC is compiling.

For more information, send written

comments before Oct. 5. to:

**Mr. Carl T. Hoffman**  
HQ AFSOC/A7CV  
427 Cody Avenue, Suite 225  
Hurlburt Field, Florida 32544-5434

General information questions should be sent to:

**Cannon AFB Public Affairs**  
**Capt. Rebecca Garcia**  
Cannon Air Force Base, N.M. 88103  
(505) 784-4131



## COMMENTARY

# NCOs are the ones who make things happen

By Lt. Col. Michael Deitz  
27th Medical Support Squadron commander

I recently attended the base's NCO promotion ceremony where I listened to the oaths of the new NCOs, SNCOs, and Chief. I've attended these ceremonies many times before and I can't remember how many times I've heard the oaths. This time, however, I paid closer attention. Instead of smiling and being happy and proud for those being promoted, I looked at them and wondered, "Wow, do they know what they're getting themselves into?"

Everyone calls the NCO corps the backbone of the Air Force, but just what is a noncommissioned officer?

My vision of an NCO is based largely on my own history. Three NCOs left a lasting impression on me. The first was the sergeant major at the University of Iowa Army Reserve Officer Training Corps battalion where I was a cadet. He

was a mountain of a man. When he walked into the room you didn't have to see him, you felt his presence. He was a hardened Vietnam veteran who took care of us. We were his charge and whether he was teaching us how to make strawberry shortcake from the dehydrated strawberries, coffee creamer, sugar, and crackers in our MREs, or telling us for the hundredth time which end of our weapon was the lethal end, you knew that if he said it, it was right. We never questioned the Sergeant Major. We never had to because his professionalism, patriotism and devotion were so evident that we just knew that whatever he said was in our best interest.

I'll never forget the day several of us grabbed our rappelling gear and had a contest to see who could leap from the second floor balcony and come closest to the ground on our first bound without smashing into the ground. Sergeant Major caught us and gave us the butt

chewing of our lives. Our safety was his job. But none of us will forget the gleam in his eyes while he was yelling at us. He was proud of our rappelling skills and we could see it.

The second NCO that left an impact was the master sergeant in charge of my first flight. I was amazed at how skillfully he could take a messed up situation and turn it into a teaching opportunity. Nothing ever fazed him. He took everything thrown at him and calmly broke it down into solvable elements. His calmness spread to the flight and gave us a sense of confidence. The only time I ever saw a wrinkle in his calm, cool demeanor was if he was worried about one of the troops. I know he would lose sleep at night worrying about their health and well being.

The last, but certainly not least, NCO who left an impact on my life was not a career NCO but one called to duty at the end of World War II and then again

during the Korean War. This Army sergeant was the kind of NCO you saw in old WWII movies – the one who could get anything the unit needed, be it a case of whisky or parts for a Sherman main battle tank. You just didn't ask him how he did it. He was not the clean-cut recruiting poster NCO, but his priorities were in the right place. He did what it took to get the mission accomplished and he looked after his men.

That Army sergeant is my Dad. I still sit spellbound and wide-eyed when he tells me stories about his time during the occupation of Berlin. He taught me about two of the most useful traits an NCO has – ingenuity and resourcefulness.

Yes, NCOs truly are the backbone of the Air Force. They work tirelessly to care for, mold, prod, teach and protect our Airmen while at the same time ensuring the mission gets accomplished.

They are the ones who make things happen.

# Lack of education often results in firearm mishaps

By Master Sgt. Edward Story, Jr.  
27th Fighter Wing Weapons Safety

In the last year, two Airmen from Cannon received gun shot wounds while cleaning their firearms. Both incidents resulted from negligence and lack of familiarity with their weapon.

Fortunately for the individuals, no life threatening or long-term injuries were sustained. These mishaps are instant reminders of the importance of knowing, understanding and using the safety aspects of firearms. As a firearm owner, experience level is extremely important because accidents or deaths often result from lack of education and proficiency. The personal responsibility taken as professionals to be educated and trained in handling firearms decreases the chances of accidents occurring within our homes or while deployed to the area of responsibility. Safety

begins with everyone, and that being said, here are some firearm safety tips.

First, learn the characteristics of the firearm, starting with reading and understanding the owner's manual. By doing this, Airmen can educate themselves to become thoroughly acquainted with the firearm.

Second, treat every firearm as if it were loaded, eliminating any chance to lapse into bad habits. The bottom line is to always perform visual and physical checks to verify the status of the weapon.

Third, keep fingers off the trigger until ready to shoot. By carefully resting the finger along the trigger guard, the chance of accidentally discharging the weapon is greatly reduced.

Fourth, never rely solely on the weapon's mechanical safety because although mechanical safeties are designed to prevent a firearm from firing, these devices may fail. The more prudent practice is to keep the

weapon unloaded along with your finger off the trigger.

The last tip concerns cleaning the weapon. Too many weapons are discharged during the cleaning process – as in Cannon's recent close calls. Other than ensuring the necessary cleaning elements are available and ready, confirm the chamber is empty prior to the cleaning process. Verify possible obstructions are clear from the bore and carefully inspect for other potential mechanical malfunctions. Remember, the most important step in cleaning is making certain the weapon is not loaded.

Firearm safety is no joking matter and is equally important for owners and operators.

By using these simple safety tips, Airmen can reduce the risk of an unnecessary accident and allow Cannon to safely operate while they "work hard and play smart."

## MACH METER

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News articles, local notes and other items for the *MACH METER* should be brought to the 27th Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office, 110 E Sextant Ave. Suite 1099, or e-mailed to the Mach Meter at

27fvmachmeter@cannon.af.mil.

All submissions will be considered for publication based on news value and timeliness.

Every article and photograph will be edited for accuracy, clarity and brevity, conformance with the Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual and with Air Force Instruction 35-101. Coverage of upcoming events should be arranged in advance by calling the Public Affairs office at 784-4131.

If you have a suggestion you would like to make, or a kudo you'd like to give, call the **ACTION LINE at 784-2722** — If you have a problem you need resolved, call the responsible agency first so they can provide better service to everyone promptly.

**Deadline for submitting articles is noon Thursday the week prior to publication. Deadline for free classified advertisements is noon the Tuesday prior to publication.**

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# Reserves top recruiting goal

**By Master Sgt. Gary Johnson**  
Air Force Reserve Command Recruiting Service

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. – For the sixth year in a row, Air Force Reserve Command exceeded its recruiting goal. AFRC Recruiting Service surpassed its goal for the 2006 recruiting year Aug. 31 when it accessed its 8,001st recruit. The number signing up continues to climb.

Col. Francis Mungavin, AFRC Recruiting Service commander, said success came from hard work, outstanding recruiter training programs, a fair and equitable career management program, attainable recruiting goals, and targeted marketing strategies.

“This has been a tough year for recruiting, but our recruiters have stepped up to the plate and hit another grand slam,” Colonel Mungavin said. “This is our sixth year in a row of making command recruiting goal and it’s all because we have the best recruiters in the Department of Defense.”

Most of the command’s enlistees come from the *Get One Now* program leads given to recruiters by reservists themselves. The recruiters know reservists are the best people to explain how it feels to serve ones country and receive benefits for that service. The program acknowledges the reservists’ contributions with an award and recognition program.

## *This week's Viper Volunteer is*



### Tech. Sgt. Michael Abril

*Col. Scott West, 27th Fighter Wing commander, congratulates the 27th Logistics Readiness Squadron Airman for his volunteer efforts as a religious education teacher, Life Teen core member, parish council member and president and Knights of Columbus member.*

*The Viper Volunteer highlights the spirit of volunteerism and extraordinary contributions to the Cannon community. To nominate a Viper Volunteer, call Ellen Saccoia-Smith at 784-4228.*



## **Sgt. Afi's 36-2903** Tip of the Week

**While in uniform, Airmen are prohibited from attaching, affixing or displaying objects, articles, jewelry or ornamentation to or through the ear, nose, tongue or any exposed body part. Female Airmen may wear one diamond, gold, white pearl or silver-pierced or clip earring per earlobe.**



## COMMENTARY

## CMSAF: 'We can all learn from each other'

By Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force  
Rodney McKinley

Isaac Griffith knows what to do at 5 p.m. every evening. As soon as he hears the music, he races outside and salutes.

"I know which way the National Anthem comes from every time," he said to me recently. "Because I walk around and when the music gets louder, that's the direction I'm walking in, and that's the direction it's coming from."

At 6 years old, little Isaac, along with his younger sister, Emily, need no instruction or lessons about pride. He takes this specific Air Force tradition very seriously. But after spending a few hours aboard a C-21 with Isaac and his family, it was easy to see why.

The story of my encounter with the Griffith family began on the flightline of Peterson Air Force Base, Colo. I was heading back to Washington D.C. They were trying to catch a hop home. All I was told was, "We have this family with young children. Do you mind if they come aboard?"

Of course I didn't mind, so the family boarded and I was immediately struck by their upbeat nature. You would have never thought they had just spent two very stressful days trying to get a flight. For the next few hours, I was able to talk with the young couple and be reminded again of what I appreciate so much about the Air Force – the amazing people who serve and the amazing stories behind them.

Second Lt. Paul Griffith enlisted in the Air Force in 2000 on the recommendation of his mother. Married with a child on the way and completely dissatisfied with his job in sales, he and his wife, Catherine, were anxious for a new life.

"We had it all figured out once we made up our minds to go into the Air Force," said Catherine. "We were going to join, do the four years, work on

his degree and then get out and use the Montgomery G.I. bill afterwards."

His goal was to go to medical school, and the Air Force looked like a good way to do that.

So, he left for basic and was sent to tech school with his wife's due date just days away. Yet a heart condition necessitated Catherine being moved to a different city, and it looked like Lieutenant Griffith was going to miss the birth of his son to attend school.

But then, they got their first dose of Air Force family life.

"They held his entire class for him for a week so that he could be with me and the baby," said Catherine. "And then his first sergeant visited us in the hospital and handed us some money, saying 'We passed the hat back at the squadron and this is what we came up with for you and your family.' We were so touched, because these were strangers. Complete strangers who didn't know anything about us. But the first sergeant said, 'No, these people are your new family. Your Air Force family now.'"

That single act of kindness was a pivotal point for the Griffiths. As the lieutenant put it, "That was it for us. I pretty much said, you know, they're going to have to boot me out the door after 30 or 40 years because I'm not going anywhere."

From that point on, the Griffiths changed their plans for the future, ranging from career moves to lifestyle. As Catherine puts it, "It was a lifestyle choice. The Air Force became the career and medical school was just a part of that." So for the next few years, with the unwavering support of his wife and children, Lieutenant Griffith set out on his journey, making rank below-the-zone and applying through the Air Education and Training Command for a commissioning program. All the while, he and



PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. COHEN YOUNG

Second Lt. Paul Griffith and his daughter, Emily, stand by as Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Rodney McKinley signs the book *The Enlisted Experience*, for him. Chief McKinley met Lieutenant Griffith and his family on a hop from Peterson Air Force Base, Colo.

his wife fully embraced the Air Force life, living on base, taking advantage of career development opportunities, using various family programs for support and making friends that "enriched our lives," said Catherine.

"Sure we've met people who weren't so nice or weren't very happy with where they were," she said. "But we've found that the friendliest people were really the ones who could really offer something to us, be it their friendship or opportunities."

Now an analyst at the Pentagon and living on Bolling Air Force Base, Lieutenant Griffith said he's learning a lot about leadership and how the Air Force functions, things he's going to take with him to medical school.

"I'm also learning that you've got to take care of your enlisted corps," he said. "You can't be a good officer without their support, too."

Catherine said she feels blessed to be stationed here.

"I like to tell my family we live in an exclusive gated com-

munity on the banks of the Potomac," she said. As a girl growing up in England and South Africa, she said she noticed only Americans have great pride in their nation.

"Where I'm from, people are proud of their national (sports) team, and not necessarily of their country. But here, every American puts a hand over their heart. That's just incredible to me." It's part of what inspired her to become the first American citizen in her family.

Theirs is a family that embodies the Air Force spirit and core values. They said they've found in the Air Force an organization that matches with their own beliefs and values -- to have integrity, to put service for others above oneself and to always do your best. It's why little Isaac takes pride in observing retreat every day.

"He likes to feel he's a part of the Air Force," said his mom.

After meeting the Griffiths, I really felt invigorated by their sense of optimism and good attitudes. They are an

excellent example of where positive attitude and motivation can take you.

Their story is truly an inspiring one, and it's not the only one in the Air Force. It's overwhelming to think of how many families like them are out there supporting our service today.

Family is a very important part of our Air Force. The support of family – be it spouses, children, parents or siblings – can take our Air Force members very far in their career and life in general, as is the case with the Griffiths.

I encourage all of us to take time during our day to seek out people like the Griffiths, people who are positive and uplifting, who have experienced the ups and downs in life and have come out on top. We can all learn from them, and by sharing our stories, become better Airmen.

(This commentary and other viewpoints can be found on the AF Senior Leadership Viewpoints page at [www.af.mil/library/view-](http://www.af.mil/library/view-)



## FEATURES

# Air Force, Navy weather forecasters form one front

By Master Sgt. John Lasky  
Air Force Print News

Air Force weather forecasters from the 21st Operational Weather Squadron welcomed Navy weather forecasters into their unit at Sembach Air Base, Germany, Aug. 31.

With a Navy drawdown and reach-back initiatives, the number of maritime weather forecasters in Europe was reduced by more than half.

"Based on the cuts in theater, it made sense to have us work side-by-side," said Lt. Col. John Shepley, commander of the 21st OWS.

"We had a duplicate mission in theater whether we were at Rota, Spain; Sigonella, Sicily; or Naples, Italy," said Navy Lt. Shawn Gallagher, the unit's new assistant director of operations. "We decided to get it all in one building."

The integration of the Airmen and Sailors has been "pretty seamless," according to Staff Sgt. Antoine Valentino, the NCO in charge of Mediterranean weather forecasting.

He is trained on using Navy meteorological systems to produce weather reports for his region of Europe.

"The only thing that's really different is some of the terminology," Sergeant Valentino said.

"The merger here is proving it can be done and

we're proving it every day. The clothes may be different but the job will be the same," Colonel Shepley said.

Currently five Sailors are working on this hilltop outlook in southwestern Germany. By early next year, the 21st OWS should have gathered 14 Navy forecasters.

The weather technical schools for the services share classes for the first month of training. After that, the future forecasters continue for several months with their specialized meteorological schooling.

"The Navy forecasters can leverage maritime experience and we'll share our [over-land experience.] We can also learn the best

in both of our cultures," Colonel Shepley said.

"It's been a bit challenging," said Aerographers Mate 2nd Class Evelyn Michael. "I've been learning



Photo by Master Sgt. John Lasky

Senior Airman John Gleese and Aerographers Mate 2nd Class Evelyn Michael review weather updates at Sembach Air Base, Germany, Aug. 30. The two are weather forecasters with Sembach's 20th Operational Weather Squadron.

to do things the Air Force way along with the Navy way, and the Airmen have been very helpful in training how to use their systems."

# Armed Forces Voters Week focuses on electronic options

By Army Sgt. Sara Wood  
American Forces Press Service

The Defense Department is focusing efforts to ensure servicemembers stationed overseas and in the United States know their options for voting in the 2006 congressional and local elections.

Sept. 3-9 is Armed Forces Voters Week. Officials caution that this is the last safe week to submit a Federal Post Card Application, or request voter registration forms and absentee ballots that meet most state deadlines.

The Defense Department is responsible for ensuring the right to vote for military members and their families, and also for U.S. citizens living overseas. It accomplishes this through the Federal Voting Assistance Program, said Michael L. Dominguez, principal deputy under-secretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

He said that under the FVAP, DOD officials use three general programs: an outreach program to state and local election officials, an outreach to the voters and a program to build capacity and improve mechanisms to get information to voters and enable them to vote, he said.

In the last several years, DOD officials have had a special challenge of reaching deployed servicemembers on the battlefield, whose particular circumstances make it hard for them to participate in the by-mail absentee voting process, Mr. Dominguez said. DOD officials have been working on this problem for several years, he said, noting that servicemembers and U.S. citizens living overseas now have an ever-expanding array of electronic voting options available.

DOD officials have launched a new Web site outlining electronic voting options for residents of each state. The Integrated Voting Alternative Site, which was launched Sept. 1, includes information from all 55 states and territories on the various electronic ballot requests and delivery alternatives available to U.S. citizens living overseas covered under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, said Scott Wiedmann, deputy director of the FVAP. The IVAS can be found on the Federal Voting Assistance Program Web site at [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov), and will be updated to reflect changes to state laws, he said.

"What we wanted to do was to use our Web site to communicate, as we had

done for several years, out to the citizens covered by the act, all the electronic alternatives offered to them by their home state," Mr. Wiedmann said, "so they would be aware of all this, if they're on the move or in a remote location. We wanted to let them know that mail is not the only option from every state."

Most states allow at least part of the voting process by fax, and states are slowly embracing the use of e-mail for ballot requests and delivery, said Polli Brunelli, director of the FVAP. Currently, 50 voting jurisdictions allow the use of fax for the registration process; 34 states allow the faxing of blank ballots to the voter; and six to 10 states are interested in using Web technologies for the voting process, she said.

DOD officials have developed two Web-based tools that states can use in the voting process, Mr. Wiedmann said. Both involve an online, automated version of the Federal Post Card Application, which is the form used for voter registration and request for absentee ballots. Both are designed for individuals who are already registered to vote in their home states.

The first tool would allow registered voters covered under the overseas act to

log into a secure Web site, fill out automated FPCAs, and e-mail them to their local election officials, Mr. Wiedmann said. The second tool would allow the registered voters to upload the completed applications to a secure server, where the local election officials can log on and download the forms and then possibly upload blank ballots to the same site for the voters to access, he said.

Both of these tools would be open only to military members and their families and DOD civilian employees and contractors stationed overseas, Mr. Wiedmann said. Security of this site would be ensured because individuals in these categories already have unique identifiers from DOD that could be used for verification, he said.

In addition to electronic voting options, DOD officials continue to work with the U.S. Postal Service and the military postal system to ensure ballots are delivered on time to military members and U.S. citizens living overseas, Ms. Brunelli said. Ms. Brunelli said she has been working with state and local election officials, encouraging them to send ballots out early, so overseas voters have plenty of time to complete and return them to be counted.

**COMMUNITY EVENTS**

PHOTO BY GREG ALLEN

***Pet of the Week***

This young female Australian shepherd is available for adoption. For information on her or other available pets, call the Airman and Family Readiness Flight at 784-4228.

■ Continued from page 1

Personnel Readiness, 784-6809.

**Case lot sale**

A case lot sale at the commissary is from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sept. 15 and 16. For more information, go to [www.commissaries.com](http://www.commissaries.com).

**ASIST Workshop**

The chapel is sponsoring a two-day Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) workshop from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Sept. 21 and 22 at the chapel. ASIST educates personnel in evaluating suicide risk factors and prevention measures and to better understand and deal with the suicide. There is no cost, no lunch is provided and civilian attire is the duty uniform.

After receiving approval from unit first sergeants or commanders, call 784-2507 to register.

**Healthcare meeting**

The Community Healthcare Council meets at 11 a.m. Sept. 27 at the Landing. The council is a forum for the 27th Medical Group to interact with beneficiaries and provide information on medical services, medical group events and health benefit information. It also provides a forum for beneficiaries to offer feedback to the 27th Medical Group.

For more information, call 784-7972.

**DRMO closure**

The Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office is closed Sept. 25-29. It will reopen Oct. 2.

For more information, call 784-2437.

**Mach Meter deadline**

Deadline for submitting articles to the *Mach Meter* is noon on Thursday the week before publication.



# Lawmakers, DoD take aim at payday loan sharks

By Donna Miles

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Interest is building on Capitol Hill in putting a nationwide cap on the interest rates lenders can charge servicemembers for loans, a measure the Defense Department is pushing to protect its force.

A General Accountability Office study released last month offers insight into how payday-lending businesses frequently gouge troops short of cash by charging exorbitant interest rates on loans borrowed against their next paychecks.

“The Report on Predatory Lending Practices Directed at Members of the Armed Forces and Their Dependents” notes as many as one in five servicemembers are falling prey to loan centers near military bases.

It estimates that 13 to 19 percent of military people took out high-interest, short-term loans last year – typically borrowing about \$350 a pop at interest rates of 390 percent to 780 percent.

These loan centers have sprung up like dandelions around military bases. According to the report, they target young, financially inexperienced borrowers who have bank accounts and steady jobs, but also have little in savings and credit problems or maxed-out credit balances.

The report cited an Airman at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., as an example of the servicemembers who enter into these loan agreements to begin a cycle of debt that’s nearly impossible for many to reverse. She initially borrowed \$500 through a payday loan with an agreement to pay back \$600 in two weeks. She then took out other payday loans to cover that bill and ended up doing multiple rollovers on each loan.

Ultimately, the Airman contacted an installment loan company that gave her a \$10,000 loan at a 50 percent annual percentage interest rate. The total cost to pay off the payday loans came to \$12,750, and her total obligation to the installment loan company rose to \$15,000.

The Defense Department notes the Airman is far from alone and is exerting a major effort to educate troops about the potential dangers of predatory loans and better ways to manage their finances, the GAO report notes.

The expanded education effort, launched last year, reached more than 400,000 servicemembers and their family members in 2005. In announcing the program, John Molino, then the deputy undersecretary of defense for military community and family policy, noted the wide use of payday loans within the

military has the potential to impact mission accomplishment.

“If you’re in debt, you have other things in mind,” he said. “You’re doing things other than concentrating on the mission; maybe you’re taking on other employment. The effects are long-lasting and go deep into a person’s performance. It affects unit readiness.”

In addition to educating military members about the dangers of payday loans and familiarizing them with ways to put themselves on a sound financial footing, the military is seeking better protections for its members, and Congress is taking heed. Among measures DOD wants to see instituted are:

- A requirement that lenders disclose information regarding the extension of credit in a uniform, unambiguous way;

- A federal ceiling on the cost of credit to all military borrowers, capping the annual percentage rate;

- A ban on lenders extending credit to servicemembers and family members without regard for their ability to repay the debt;

- A prohibition on loan contracts that require servicemembers and their families to waive their rights to take legal action and on contract causes that require them to waive any special legal protections afforded to them; and



MACH METER FILE ILLUSTRATION

Pressure is mounting on lawmakers to address the interest rates lenders can charge servicemembers for loans. Last year 13 to 19 percent of military people took out high-interest, short-term loans at rates as high as 780 percent.

- A ban on states discriminating against servicemembers and families stationed within their borders, and on lenders from making loans to servicemembers that violate the state’s consumer protections.

The U.S. Senate passed an amendment in June that establishes a 36-percent cap on annual percentage rates on loan to military members and their families. The bill is now in conference committee with

the House of Representatives.

In addition to DOD and members of Congress, Paul Leonard from the Center for Responsible Lending expressed hopes the amendment will pass.

“We’re hoping Congress will stand up to the payday industry,” he said. “Our service people deserve far better than financial ruin – or trying to survive in a war zone while they’re fretting about how they’ll pay next month’s bills.”

## Financial seminar reduces debt

The Chapel is sponsoring a 13-week Financial Peace University starting Sept. 13.

The course meets from 6:15 to 7:45 p.m. weekly at the chapel. In Financial Peace University the average family eliminates \$5,300 of debt while saving \$2,700.

There are 13 slots available for this course.

Interested individuals should only sign up if they plan to attend all 13 lessons. For more information call 784-2507 and ask to speak with Chaplain (Don) Bridges..



## Energy-Saving Tip of the Week

During the summer, turn the thermostat up to 75 F at both home and office. For each degree you raise on the thermostat during warmer weather, you can save up to 2 percent on total air-conditioning costs. When an area is unoccupied (nights, weekends and holidays), set the thermostat to 85 F.



## FEATURE



58th Rescue Squadron pararescuemen and combat controllers assigned to the 414th Combat Training Squadron, Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., jump out of a C-130 Hercules Sept. 1, over Lake Mead in support of Red Flag Exercise 06-2.

PHOTOS BY MASTER SGT. KEVIN GRUENWALD

Pararescuemen from the 56th Rescue Squadron and combat controllers assigned to the 414th Combat Training Squadron, Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. leap into Lake Mead during Flag Exercise 06-2.

## Airmen take Red Flag plunge into Lake Mead waters

By Airman 1st Class Andrew Dumboski  
99th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

**N**ELLIS AIR FORCE BASE, Nev. – Parachutists from around the Air Force took a plunge Sept. 1 into the local Lake Mead drop zone in support of Red Flag 06-2.

U.S. Air Force C-130 and Singapore Air Force CH-47 Chinook crews provided Red Flag airlift operations in support of the jumps.

Nellis Airmen also supported the mission by providing parachutists from the 820th RED HORSE Squadron, Red Flag Combat Search and Rescue and Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape specialist augmenters, as well as various units world wide that require airborne proficiency.

“The jump was a blast,” commented Master Sgt. Michael Elliot, SERE program manager at Hickam AFB. “Everything went off without a hitch.”

Following the initial jumps from a C-130, the Chinook performed a helocast with similar success. Singapore CH-47 pilots in upgrade training are attached to a Grand Prairie, Texas Air National Guard unit. This international unit participates in Red Flag to gain training and proficiency in areas that they seldom see in their home unit.

**T**o perform a helocast, the helicopter hovers at about ten feet over the water with about a 10-knot forward airspeed and deploys swimmers directly into the water.

“It’s just another way to deploy units into action,” said Sergeant Elliot. “They’ll hover just over the water and the swimmers will jump directly off the back ramp.”

After landing in the water, the jumpers were picked up by a Zodiac inflatable raft and brought to shore.

“The jump went well,” said Tech. Sgt. Jon

Reed, 414th Combat Training Squadron CSAR Operations NCO in charge. “The winds were higher than originally expected, but we were within limits. It was a good learning outcome for everyone involved.”

For the jumpers, the exercise provided proficiency training, which means none of them were new to water jumps. They periodically parachute to remain proficient.

“The jump was really for the Red Flag airlift participants more than the jumpers,” said Sergeant Reed. When a unit signs on for a Red Flag, they bring with them a list of training requirements. This was one of the requests on the C-130’s and CH-47’s contract.

**T**he aircrews and maintainers fulfilled these requirements and everyone involved really benefited from the training and lessons learned during the Red Flag exercise, officials said.

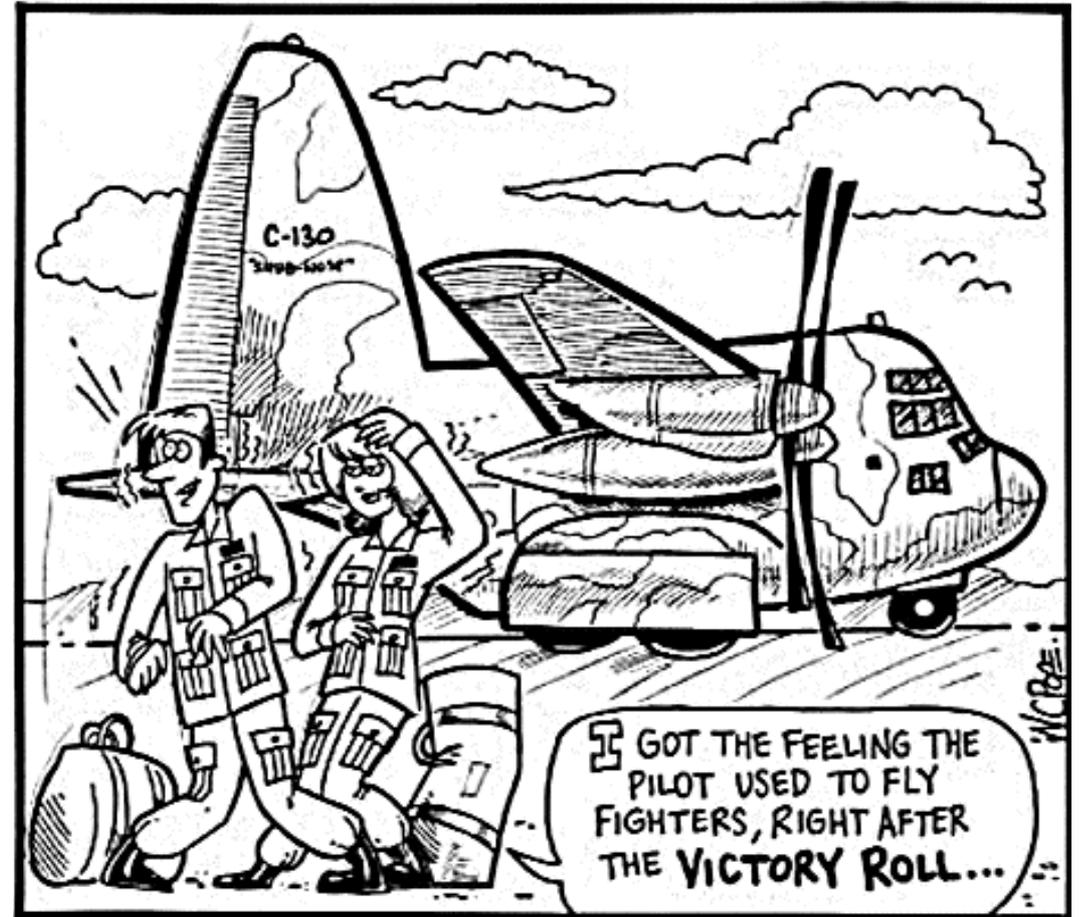


THE LIGHTER SIDE



ANSWERS TO SEPT.1 PUZZLE

Pope's Puns





# Unit Spotlights



## Congratulations to Cannon's Safety Award winners



PHOTOS BY TECH. SGT. SCOTT MCKAY

Col. Scott West, 27th Fighter Wing commander, presents Lt. Col. Todd Fingal, 522 Fighter Squadron commander, with a flight safety award Tuesday.



Col. Scott West, 27th Fighter Wing commander, presents Capt. Nathaniel Karrs, 522nd Fighter Squadron, the July Flight Safety award Tuesday.



Col. Scott West, 27th Fighter Wing commander, presents Capt. Nick Johnson, 27th Operations Group, the July Flight Safety award Tuesday.

### CATHOLIC

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is at 8:30 a.m. Sundays and 4 to 4:30 p.m. the third Sunday of the month.

- Sunday Mass 9:30 a.m. and 5 p.m.
- Weekday Mass 12:05 p.m. M,W,F
- Religious Education (grades K-6) 10:45 a.m. Sunday
- LifeTeen youth ministry (grades 7-12) 6 p.m. Sunday

### PROTESTANT

- Traditional 8 a.m.
- Contemporary 11 a.m.
- Inspirational 12:30 a.m.
- Sunday School 9:15-10a.m.

For more information about other programs or other faith groups, call the chapel office at 784-2507.

## At the Movies

The Cannon Movie Theater is located on the corner of Torch and D.L. Ingram. Movie prices are \$3.50 for adults, \$1.75 for children and \$1 for all viewers on Thursdays.

### Miami Vice

Today, Saturday and Sunday at 7 p.m.

**Description:** Tubbs is urbane and dead smart. He lives with Bronx-born intel analyst Trudy, as they work undercover transporting drug loads into South Florida to identify a group responsible for three murders. Crockett is charismatic and flirtatious, until-while undercover working with the supplier of the South Florida group – he gets romantically entangled with Isabella, the Chinese-Cuban wife of an arms and drugs trafficker.

**R:** strong violence, language and some sexual content

**Running time:**135min.

### The Ant Bully

Saturday and Sunday at 4 p.m.

**Description:** A 10-year-old boy embarks on a remarkable journey. New in town, friendless and tormented by a neighborhood bully, young Lucas Nickle has been taking out his frustration on the innocent ant hill in his yard. But one day the ants retaliate. Using a magic potion, they shrink Lucas down to ant size and sentence him to live like an ant in their colony. In this strange, new world, Lucas will learn important lessons about friendship, get a whole new perspective on life and ultimately find the courage to stand up for himself.

**PG-** some mild rude humor and action

**Running time:**88min.



**SPORTS SHORTS**

Turn slip in to the Public Affairs office by 4:30 p.m. today. They are located in Bldg 600, suite 1099.

The participant who picks the most winners will win a free large one-topping pizza from the End Zone. The name will be announced next week.

**Sunday Week 1 Schedule**

|                           |           |     |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----|
| Baltimore at Tampa Bay    | 11 a.m.   | CBS |
| Atlanta at Carolina       | 11 a.m.   | Fox |
| Denver at St. Louis       | 11 a.m.   | CBS |
| Buffalo at New England    | 11 a.m.   | CBS |
| Philadelphia at Houston   | 11 a.m.   | Fox |
| New Orleans at Cleveland  | 11 a.m.   | Fox |
| Seattle at Detroit        | 11 a.m.   | Fox |
| NY Jets at Tennessee      | 11 a.m.   | CBS |
| Cincinnati at Kansas City | 11 a.m.   | CBS |
| Chicago at Green Bay      | 2:15 p.m. | Fox |
| Dallas at Jacksonville    | 2:15 p.m. | Fox |
| San Francisco at Arizona  | 2:15 p.m. | Fox |
| Indianapolis at NY Giants | 6:15 p.m. | NBC |

**Monday**

|                         |           |      |
|-------------------------|-----------|------|
| Minnesota at Washington | 5:00 p.m. | ESPN |
| San Diego at Oakland    | 8:15 p.m. | ESPN |

Total Monday points (tie breaker)



Football Genie

Circle your winners and turn this into the Public Affairs office by 4:30 p.m. today. The participant who picks the most winners will win a free large one-topping pizza from the End Zone.

Name/Unit/Phone

**Cannon Lanes**

**9-Pin No Tap Night** — Try for the prizes 6 to 9 p.m., Saturday. Bowl for \$10 for three games. Half of the cost will go towards the prize fund. There will be men's and women's categories.

**Moonlight and Music** — 6 to midnight, Sept. 16. Bowling will cost \$1.75. Bowl late into the night with lively music all around.

**Whispering Winds Golf Course**

**Evening Scrambles** — Two-person teams where players may select their partners will compete in a nine-hole scramble Monday. Handicaps will be used. Sign up by 3 p.m.

**Senior Days** — Senior golfers 50 years and older receive \$2 off daily green fees and 50 percent off electric carts Monday and Tuesday.

**Retiree Wednesdays** — Golfers with a retired military ID card receive \$2 off daily green fees and 50 percent off electric carts on Wednesdays.

**Member First discounts** — 10 percent discount off annual, quarterly and monthly greens fees. Half off club rentals. \$2 off cart rental for 18 holes.

**Fitness center**

**Punt, Pass, Kick** — Try to get the best score at 9 a.m. Saturday with one punt, one pass and one kick. Scores are based on both distance and accuracy. Participants final score is his/her cumulative for the three individual events.

**Strong Man/Woman Competition** — Cannon's finest will compete at 9 a.m. Sept. 16. There will be a best all-around score for the "Big Three" areas; bench press, squat and deadlift.

**Outdoor Recreation**

**White Sands Star Party** — Sept. 23-24. Cost is \$70 per person. Gaze at stars with astronomy equipment / Included is a visit to White Sands park to try to sled on the dunes. Camp out under the stars at Oliver Lee State Park.

Included in price is all camping gear and fees, snacks, transportation, three meals, admittance to the Space Museum.

Pre-trip meeting is 5 p.m., Sept. 18. Sign-up deadline is Sept. 18.

Trip departs at 11 a.m. and returns at 6 p.m. For more information call 784-2773.

**End Zone**

**Football Frenzy** — Football Frenzy kicks off at 10 a.m. Sunday.