

First Look

Fitlinxx registration

Lajes military members are reminded to register at lajes.fitlinxx.com and log in all of their workouts as part of the Air Force fitness program. At a minimum, everyone should be working out at least three times a week.

Sign up for Portal

USAFE has directed all Airmen to register on Air Force Portal by April 30. To sign up, go to <https://www.my.af.mil> and click on "self-registration" link. Tutorials are available.

Mystery dinner

The "Luck of the Irish," mystery dinner is at 6:30 p.m., Saturday, in the Top of the Rock club ballroom. For more information, call Linette Hollandsworth at 2-6110.

Post Office help

The post office needs volunteers to assist with sorting mail, distributing packages and customer service. Visit the post office for more information, or call 2-3625.

Construction

The 65th Civil Engineer Squadron SABER contractor will be installing new water mains to feed Beira Mar Housing. The construction will affect Beira Mar Housing Gates 1, 4 and 5. The work will begin Monday, and the road will be reduced to one lane of traffic.

Preflight

- Days since last DUI 40
- DUIs since Jan. 1 one
- Current AEF Silver (5&6)
- Current FPCON Alpha
- Guest DJ Stay tuned
- Next Strong Patriot today
- **Combat Nighthawk:** Capt. **James Palmer**, 65th Civil Engineer Squadron; Capt. **Chad Raper**, 65th Medical Operations Squadron; Master Sgt. **Trevis Peterson**, 65th Operations Support Squadron; Master Sgt. **Thomas Wade**, 65th Logistics Readiness Squadron.

Space-A travel policy

European Command families of deployed service members can upgrade to Category III travel. Page 5

Azorean command changes



Gen. Manuel Jose Taveira Martins, Portuguese Air Force Chief of Staff, presents the Portuguese flag to Maj. Gen. Antonio Carlos Mimoso e Carvalho, the new commander of Azores Air Zone, during the change of command ceremony Tuesday. (Photo by Guido Melo)

3AF leader visits Lajes

People, mission important



General Wooley said he's proud of Lajes' people and accomplishments. (Courtesy photo)

by Staff Sgt.
Olenda Kleffner
Crossroads editor

The commander of the 3rd Air Force said the people at Lajes have a great attitude making this a great place with a great mission.

Major Gen. Michael Wooley made the remarks during a visit here Sunday and Monday. He was here to present the Legion of Merit award to Portuguese Maj. Gen. Jorge Manuel Antunes De Andrade, who retired Thursday.

"Lajes is a pretty important piece of real-estate," General Wooley said. "With the global

war on terror and all the things that are going on as we move fighters back and forth in our Expeditionary Air Force scheme, Lajes is very important."

According to the general, Lajes is important for more than one reason.

"Every A-10 that transits from the U.S. going into the area of responsibility has to come here to Lajes," he said.

"That alone is a very important aspect of what the Lajes mission is. If we ever get denied overflight clearance by any of a hundred countries in Europe,

See MISSION, Page 4

Partnered for pride



Guido Melo, 65th Communications Squadron, picks up litter near his workcenter Monday during March's Combat Pride Day. Melo, a local-national employee, partnered with hundreds of other local-national employees and Airmen across the wing to clean up the grounds of the base during the monthly event. (Photo by Ted McGinley)

Focus Notes

College grads

Listed below are the graduates for the Customer College Course, Class 04-08, Feb. 27.

Distinguished Graduate: Senior Airman **Glenn Hauptmann**, 65th Communications Squadron

Staff Sgt. **Ross Holmes**, 729th Air Mobility Squadron; Staff Sgt. **Eveline Kown**, 65th Medical Operations Squadron; **Leland Livingston**, 65th Civil Engineer Squadron; **Ann Moody**, 65th Logistics Readiness Squadron; **William Novobilsky**, 65th CES; Staff Sgt. **Eric Ross**, 65th Services Squadron; **Dioleciano Silva**, Army and Air Force Exchange Service; Airman **Melissa Smith**, 65th SVS; Senior Airman **Jeremiah Yount**, 65th LRS.

CLEP switchout

The current series of CLEP tests has been called back by the college board in preparation for a new set of 14 tests. The education office will stop giving the current tests on March 31. The new tests should arrive around April 15. Students needing to take a CLEP test should schedule tests before March 31. For more information, or to schedule a CLEP, call the education center at 2-1115.

X-Box challenge

A St. Patrick's Day X-Box challenge is 6 p.m., Wednesday, at the community activity center. Registration deadline is Tuesday. Ages 17 and above. Prizes and refreshments. For more information, call Sheryl Bush or Marco Rocha at 2-4135.

Combat Fitness Web site provides hub of info

by Tech. Sgt. Bob Purtiman
USAFE News Service

■ More fitness, see Page 10.

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany -- As the Combat Fitness program kicks into high gear, Airmen worldwide are improving their physical fitness to meet the demands of the Air Force combat culture.

Combat Fitness is one of fourteen United States Air Forces in Europe Combat and Special Interest Programs that provide for the training, morale, health and fitness of USAFE personnel and their family members in preparation to

maintain and sustain required readiness levels to meet peacetime and wartime taskings.

Air Force members stationed in Europe now have a Web site that is the source of current fitness and sports information throughout the entire command. *Combatfitness.org* went live in January.

"If judged by the number of hits, *combatfitness.org* is a huge success," said Debra Ponzio, USAFE Fitness and Sports man-

ager. "We had 64,040 hits in January and 85,371 in February.

"*Combatfitness.org* is a consolidation of fitness information from the Air Force chief of staff level to our USAFE programs to local initiatives," she explained. "It also provides a central hub for our USAFE FitLinxx initiative."

USAFE has the largest sports championship program in the Air Force and the site contains the most up-to-date information on each sport.

Schedules, results, and application information for all sports from USAFE to

AIRNORTH Championships, Air Force training camps to Armed Forces, National and CISM championships, are listed on the site.

"The whole package of opportunity has people excited to take part," Ms. Ponzio said. "In this age of technology, it fits with our busy lifestyles. People can use this site to access fitness information and to log in fitness activities from home or work, anytime day or night."

(Note: To access the Lajes FitLinxx site, go to <http://lajes.fitlinxx.com>)

Legion of Merit



Maj. Gen. Michael Wooley, 3rd Air Force commander, greets Maj. Gen. Jorge Manual Antunes de Andrade, Commander Azores Air Zone, and his wife, Camila, before presenting General Andrade with the Legion of Merit in a ceremony Monday. General Andrade was commander here from June 11, 2002, until his change of command Tuesday. He retired from the Portuguese Air Force Thursday. The general's leadership, exemplary foresight and ceaseless efforts resulted in significant contributions to the effectiveness and success of the 65th Air Base Wing and the more than 3,000 Department of Defense aircraft transiting through Lajes Field each year. (Photo by Guido Melo)

Bus shuttles to more stops

Crossroads staff

A new base shuttle route adds more stops, runs longer and will service more people when it's needed, according to the 65th Logistics Readiness Squadron.

First Lt. Craig Dutton said the bus now makes nine stops across the base. The bus will run one hour, 45 minutes in the morning; three hours, 15 minutes at lunch and one hour, 45 minutes in the afternoon Monday through Friday.

The new schedule started Monday. Drivers use a 15-passenger van and a bus to perform the scheduled stops.

Dutton said bus schedules would be available at each stop. Some will also be located on stanchions outside a designated building, the building itself and at the front counter of the lodging office.

The bus' southernmost stop is Bldg. T-100, the wing headquarters building. It's northernmost stop is Bldg. T-815, the security forces headquarters building.

MISSION, from Page 1

Africa or anywhere in that region, Lajes will become even more important than it is today."

Although the mission here is very important, the general emphasized it couldn't get done without the people at Lajes.

"It doesn't matter whether you're wearing the uniform of our nation's country, whether you're a guardsman or reservist or a spouse or even a child of a military member that is stationed here in the Azores, each and every one of you plays a very important part for the defense of our nation," General Wooley said. "I want to thank you all for that and tell you how proud I am to be associated with you."

He always enjoys coming to Lajes because of the environ-

ment and the people, he said.

"This is a great family atmosphere with a wonderful mission focus. Just keep that focus and things will get even bigger and better as we progress, transform and go about our nation's business," the general said. "Take time to be with your family, whether you're blessed to have your family here on the island with you, or whether you are with your extended family. Everybody that wears this uniform is a part of that family."

The general said it was a great joy on his part to be associated with the folks here at Lajes and the 65th Air Base Wing.

"This is an important time in the history of the United States. This is tough business fighting the war on terror," he said. "Keep up the hard work, but

About 3rd AF

Third AF is responsible for all Air Force operations and support activities in Europe north of the Alps, and in Africa south of the Sahara desert.

take time out and reflect on what we're all about and what our mission is."

General Wooley became the 3rd Air Force commander June 7, 2002, at Royal Air Force Mildenhall, England.

The numbered air force is responsible for all Air Force operations and support activities in Europe north of the Alps, and in Africa south of the Sahara desert.

Service begins full-scale assault review

by Master Sgt. Scott Elliott
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON -- Allegations of sexual misconduct at the Air Force Academy and Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, have prompted the Air Staff to direct an Air Force-wide review of its policies, procedures and victim programs.

Officials at each Air Force major command have formed sexual-assault integrated-process teams to survey and assess the activities at each of their bases, said Maj. Gen. John Speigel, director of personnel policy at the Pentagon.

"The (officials) put their teams together to go out and assess each of their bases and look

Hotline available

The DOD announced last week that an additional toll-free telephone number has been established for people who want to contact or provide information to the DOD Task Force on Care for Victims of Sexual Assault.

The number, (800) 497-6261, is staffed 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday.

at procedures to ensure we have the right mechanisms and policies in place," he said.

Deployed locations will also be surveyed. "We are concerned about the medical sup-

port that's available ... to ensure that victims are taken care of in a timely and caring manner," the general said.

The teams have until April 9 to turn in their findings, General Speigel said. Those results will then be compiled into a "game plan" for presentation to the Air Force's four-star generals at the Corona conference in May.

"Sexual assault is a crime. It also breaks down teamwork, unit cohesion and morale," General Speigel said. "All of that (affects) our readiness, and that's why we find this such a troublesome issue."

The Air Force is not immune to sexual assault because it is reflective of the American society where this too is a problem, the general said.

'We happy few'

Tyrus Lemerande, from Air Force entertainment, acts during "A Little Touch of Harry," an adaptation of Shakespeare's Henry the 5th play at the Community Center Sunday. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Michelle Michaud)



At Their Best

Medical awards

U.S. Air Forces in Europe recently announced the 2003 USAFE-level, out-of-cycle, Air Force Medical Service Awards.

Staff Sgt. **Andrea Hill**, 65th Medical Operations Squadron, won Outstanding Bioenvironmental Engineering Noncommissioned Officer and the 65th Medical Group won the Medical Information Systems Small Team. All USAFE winners will now compete at the Air Force level.

Correction

In the March 5 issue, the Crossroads staff left out the First Sergeant of the Year winner, Master Sgt. **Rudy Montez**, 65th Communications Squadron.

Space-A travel policy Upgrade helps families of deployed

by **Capt. Heather Healy**
3rd Air Force Public Affairs

An exception to policy for Space-Available travel makes traveling easier for family members of European Command service members who are serving a deployment scheduled for more than 120 days.

The exception to policy allows family members to upgrade from Category V travel to Category III travel for one round trip without their sponsor.

"They don't have to compete with Category V travelers who are command sponsored," said Cindy Rothenbach, Air Mobility Command's Patriot Express program manager. "It allows them to move up to Category III, which is the same as an active duty member on leave."

This exception to policy applies to Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps family members who are stationed along with their sponsors within the

EUCOM area of responsibility.

Family members can use Space-A travel only for travel plans that keep them within the EUCOM AOR or take them to/from the continental United States and EUCOM AOR.

According to Lt. Col. Chris Pike, European Command Logistics and Security Assistance Directorate, this is not a new policy, but one that was put into effect back in 1998 when General Wesley K. Clark was the EUCOM Commander-in-Chief.

"The point of this policy is that we can do something for people who are separated from their spouses for an extended period of time," said Colonel Pike.

"If they need family support they can get a one-time trip back to the U.S. or within the EUCOM AOR to visit their extended families," he said.

This exception to policy also applies to family members whose military sponsor is on a 90-day deployment

that is extended to 120 days.

In each case, the sponsor's unit commander or rear detachment commander provides the authorization memorandum for the family members who plan to take advantage of this special opportunity.

The memorandum must include the sponsor's name, social security number, date assigned to unit, name of deployment, and effective date of employment.

The memorandum must also include a signed and dated statement from the travelers indicating they understand this exception to policy is only available once during their sponsor's 120-day deployment.

Family members should carry a copy of the memorandum on them while traveling and present the memorandum when signing up for the Space-A travel.

"[The policy] has never been rescinded, so we just want to make sure people are aware of it," said Colonel Pike.

The three letters shaping change

by Lt. Col. Timothy Fay
65th OSS commander

AEF. These three letters represent the heart of the organizational transformation of our Air Force, yet somehow this ever-growing and evolving Air Expeditionary Force construct is often misunderstood by many of our own Air Force's air and space power warriors. With another AEF rotation on short-final, this is a great time to review the fundamentals of the AEF concept and what it means to us as Air Force warriors.

While a bit daunting at first, I quickly discovered what any good Professional Military Education student can tell you is the answer to all of life's problems—go to Air Force link and look it up. Right on the home page is a hot link to the Air Force's Transformational Flight Plan, perhaps the best summary of the AEF concept I have seen.

It describes the AEF as a wealth of capabilities. This "bucket" is how the Air Force presents its forces to combatant commanders. Comparing it to a sister service, the Navy has long presented its forces in carrier battle groups. Every commander in every service understood that each carrier battle group could steam so far, so fast and put "X" many weapons on target over "Y" many days. It was a known quantity of capabilities.

We've done the same with the Air and Space Expeditionary Force. Each force package is composed of roughly the same capability of air and space power for combatant commanders to call on to help fight and win our nation's wars.

Each AEF is a combination of combat air forces, mobility air forces, expeditionary combat support, and low density/high demand assets. Together, this synergistic basket of capabilities is wrapped into one AEF package.

Right now, our Air Force is divided into 10 AEFs. We pair two of these AEFs together, so in total we have five AEF rotations. This means that if things are steady in the world, each expeditionary Airman must be ready to deploy during their regular AEF vulnerability



An A-10 sits on the flightline during a recent CORONET East movement sending troops into the theater. (File photo)

window for 90 days every 15 month period.

What does this mean to the warriors of Team Lajes? First and foremost, we are all part of the AEF and must be ready to go when needed. This means all of our readiness "ducks" must be in a row.

This ranges from medical to training readiness, to personal and family readiness issues. Each of your units has a readiness officer or NCO that ensures we all remain prepared, but

each one of us is ultimately responsible for keeping ourselves as ready as possible at all times.

Of course when we have a major operation like Iraqi Freedom, the Air Force must do what's needed. The regular rotation schedule may be modified or extended to win the war.

Why do we do things this way? The Air

Force chief of staff wants to make our lives better. If we know when our AEF "turn" is coming and how long it will last, then we can plan our personal and professional lives and prepare to fight.

It adds stability to our lives and predictability to our deployments. The AEF also helps solve our Air Force's problem of how to prepare to fight in a chaotic world. We no longer know from who or where the challenges to freedom will come from in the world, so we must be ready to go anywhere, anytime—ready to fight and win. The AEF rotation gets and keeps us ready.

In addition to deploying, this means that the regular AEF rotation we see in the form of iron on the ramp moving forward to the fight was, is, and will remain a key part of Lajes' mission contribution to the warfighter. We provide the best en route support for expeditionary forces in the world, and your efforts continue to ensure that this will always remain the case.

This, then, is our Air Force's AEF—the way we are now organized to fight and win.

First and foremost, we
are all part of the AEF ...



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Lajes Field Editorial Staff

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'Ladies first, airmen second': Air Force women in earlier years

Retired Chief Master Sgt.
Anne O'Connor

MOUNTAIN HOME AIR FORCE BASE, Idaho — I entered the Air Force twice — the first time Jan. 10, 1971, the second Nov. 7, 1981.

The first time I was a pampered novelty: a woman in the Air Force. Ten years later I was a valuable commodity: a prior-service Airman.

American values had shifted, marking significant changes for women in the Air Force. Before the history of "the good old days" is lost, I'll record with some fondness the values of the 1967 to 1972 era and the impact those values had on me and others.

In 1967, President Johnson signed Public Law 90-130, lifting grade restrictions and strength limitations on women in the military. That was the first major policy change affecting

service women since the Armed Forces Services Integration Act of 1948.

In 1972, Roger Kelley, assistant secretary of defense for manpower and reserve affairs, asked all services to "take action to eliminate all unnecessary distinctions in regulations applying to women and, where appropriate, recommend legislation to eliminate any inequities which are now required."

Action was taken, but between 1967 and 1972 we were special. Femininity influenced everything about women in the Air Force.

Women weren't recruited like men. I had to submit a package with references and four pictures: front and side, full-length, and head-and-shoulders views. Had I been under 21, I would've needed parental consent; men only needed parental consent if they were under 18.

I had to have a high school diploma; for men, the Air Force considered a high school diploma "desirable" (almost all had one). Married women or those with children could not enlist, while married men could enlist but needed a waiver for more than one dependent.

Basic military training reinforced both feminine values and the feeling that we were special. In a 1993 interview, retired Senior Master Sgt. Theresa Picarro told me about her memories of basic training in 1967.

She remembered having to carry lipstick and perfume in her "ditty bag" at all times. Many times she heard her instructor say, "You are ladies first and Airmen second." She was required to have two girdles — one on, one in the drawer. There was no obstacle course, weapons firing or guard duty.

Not much had changed when I went to basic training in January 1971. At 23, I was

older than most and had been on my own for some time. I had never worn makeup and did not think of myself as particularly "feminine," but the Air Force set out to fix that.

The learning center presented a personal development course with a variety of tips for women. There were four hours about skin and hair care, two hours on etiquette and office manners, six hours about makeup, and a one-hour manicure and pedicure course.

The howling favorite was a two-hour block about posture and movement. According to the course syllabus, it was designed to "include definition and purpose of good posture with emphasis on grace in motion."

We were instructed in many aspects of good posture: climbing and descending stairs, removing and donning coats, and the all-important manner of crossing one's legs. The most startling of the instruction was an exhibition of how

to "walk like a lady again."

The instructor said that marching for six weeks of basic training had ruined our walk. Touching the inside of each of her wrists, she showed us how to "bump" our hip against the wrist, evoking a fairly substantial bump-and-grind motion as she sallied up the aisle between the ranks of 55 awestruck young women. We were sent back to the dorm to practice the newest of our grace-in-motion traits.

Things changed tremendously fast after 1972. Although values didn't change overnight, change had been in the wind for several years and the overprotective umbrella was gone. Paternalism was dying. No longer were we decorations or little princesses.

Equality became a core value in American and military culture. The military was so successful in making equality a part of its culture that when I returned to active duty in 1981, I entered an Air Force far different from the one I first entered.

The shift in values is reflected in many ways, not the least of which is how the media portrays issues. News of women in the Air Force in 1971 saw a number of "firsts" and Jeanne Holm's selection as the first female general was touted by Airman magazine with an article entitled "The Lady Is a General."

Twenty years after Assistant Secretary Roger Kelley put out the order for elimination of inequities, Dr. Sheila Widnall's selection as the first woman secretary of the Air Force engendered the November 1993 Airman magazine's nine-page article that only mentioned the fact she is a woman twice. (Courtesy Air Combat Command News Service)

Women's History Month

Lajes events:

March 17: 5K Walkathon at 8:30 a.m. Meet in front of Chace Fitness Center. A women's health care exhibit will also be held in the lobby.

March 24: A Ladies' Night Out is 9 p.m. - 1 a.m. in the Top of the Rock club lounge. There will be a guest DJ and giveaway prizes at the door.

March 30: A Women's History Observance Month luncheon is 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. at the Top of the Rock club.

For more information on any of these events, call Tech. Sgt. Cristina Dixon at 2-3415, or email her at cristina.dixon@lajes.af.mil.



Everyday Hero

Fatima Drumonde

65th Logistics Readiness Squadron

Duty Title: Transportation Assistant

Job description: I am a transportation agent for the Traffic Management Office. I provide travel services and perform Quality Assurance Evaluator duties for the Commercial Ticket Office.

How long have you worked for the Air Force: I have been working at the Traffic Management Office for 18 years

How long have you been at Lajes: I'm a local national so all 18 years

What's the best aspect of your job: Being able to assist and help customers with all their official travel arrangements.

Spouse/children: Husband, Carlos and Son, Victor

Life goal: To be happy
Best Air Force Experience: The Best Experience I've had working at the Traffic Management Office has been forming relationships with coworkers throughout the 18 years I've worked in my section.

Hometown: Sao Sebastiao
Hobbies: Reading, listening to music and watching movies

Favorite food: Pizza
Pet peeve: Unorganized work area

Civilians: pay increase soon

RANDOLPH AFB, TEXAS -- Air Force civilian employees will soon see extra money in their paychecks after an executive order was signed by the President March 3 authorizing a pay adjustment retroactive to Jan. 11.

Officials here will begin loading new pay tables into the system beginning March 11. But as in 2003, not all employees will receive the retroactive pay at the same time.

Most general schedule employees will see the increase plus a retroactive lump-sum in their paychecks by May, said personnel officials. It may take longer for employees who have personnel actions -- like a promotion or step-grade increase -- since Jan. 11 to see the money.

Medical Special Rate employees records will be updated beginning March 19.

Federal Wage System and Non-appropriated Fund schedules are not yet published. Those updates will be processed as soon as pay schedules are available, said personnel officials.

The increase is from .9 to 1.7 percent depending on locality.

Officials said they will announce more information as it becomes available. (AFPC News Service)

Web-only services

AIR FORCE PERSONNEL CENTER - Starting Monday, Airmen will no longer have to stand in line to accomplish a personnel records review or several other common tasks.

In fact, confident from successes with last year's move of the Record of Emergency Data to the web, officials have decided to make six different personnel services available only on the web. Military Personnel Flights will point customers toward the internet if they want to:

- Apply for a change to an assignment or change a Report Not Later Than Date

- Apply for certain curtailments of Date Eligible for Return From Overseas

- Accomplish a Humanitarian or Exceptional Family Member program application

- Request for a 'proof of service' letter, often needed for home loans

- Make simple updates to common information like home address, home telephone number, religious preference, race, ethnic group, foreign language self-assessment, duty and personal e-mail addresses.

Questions can be answered

Daddy's Home



DAVIS-MONTHAN AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz. -- Airman 1st Class Ryan Bryson hugs his son, Chad, for the first time in four months. Airman Bryson returned from Iraq on March 6 where he supported Operation Iraqi Freedom. He is assigned to the 355th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron here. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Lanie McNeal)

for people transacting these services 24 hours a day online or by a toll-free call to the Air Force Contact Center. (AFPC News Service)

Medal Criteria

One year after President Bush signed an order creating two new medals for U.S. military forces involved in operations in the war against terrorism, Defense Department officials have spelled out the eligibility criteria for the awards.

On March 12, 2003, Bush signed an executive order creating the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, which is for military personnel supporting operations against terrorism anywhere in the world; and the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, for those who deploy to designated combat areas.

Military members can receive and wear both medals as long as they meet the criteria, but only one award of each may be authorized for any individual, so no multiple-award devices will be prescribed.

Moreover, members can't use a single qualifying period of service to justify both awards -- they need to establish a unique deployment period for each medal. Battle stars for both medals may be applicable for personnel who were engaged in actual combat against

the enemy "and under circumstances involving grave danger of death or serious bodily injury from enemy action," the criteria say.

To learn more, see http://www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,FL_medals_030604,00.html

Gifts from the homefront available

As a way to say thank you to the men and women in the armed forces for serving their country, the Navy Exchange Service Command now has "Gifts From the Homefront" gift certificates available for purchase. These gift certificates can be redeemed at any military exchange around the world, including those supporting Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom.

A Gifts From the Homefront gift certificate can be sent directly to the home of an individual active-duty military member or their family.

For those who want to send a gift certificate to anyone in the armed forces, gift certificates can be purchased and sent to either of two nonprofit military organizations who will distribute them to those in need: the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society -- a private, charitable organization that supports America's Sailors, Marines and their families; and the Fisher

House Foundation, Inc., which supports military personnel wounded in action and those who are seriously ill.

To learn more, see http://www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,usn6_030404,00.html.

To learn more on how to support the troops, see http://www.military.com/Content/MoreContent1/0,,support_troops,00.html

Earning 10 percent

A Department of Defense program helps deployed troops tuck up to \$10,000 of their income away and earn a guaranteed 10 percent interest on their savings annually.

Troops can participate in the Savings Deposit Program if they are assigned outside the United States and receiving Hostile Fire and Imminent Danger Pay. Service members must serve 30 consecutive days in that assignment before making deposits into the fund.

Nearly 10,000 Soldiers are currently participating in the program, said Roger Castillo, the program manager for the Savings Deposit Program.

To learn more, see http://www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,usa4_030404,00.html Or visit the DFAS Website at <http://www.dfas.mil>

Santa Maria is beautiful, affordable

Editor's note: This is the first of a series of articles on all of the nine islands that form the Azorean archipelago, located in the middle of the North Atlantic approximately 900 miles from the coast of Portugal and 2,000 miles from America.

The Azores were reputedly discovered by the Portuguese navigator Diogo de Silves sometime in 1427. No traces of previous inhabitants or visitors were found on any of the islands when they were discovered.

The archipelago has a total land area of approximately 868 square miles and is formed by the following islands: Santa Maria, São Miguel, Terceira, Graciosa, São Jorge, Pico, Faial, Flores and Corvo. Currently, this autonomous region has a population of approximately 243,000 inhabitants.

Island of Santa Maria

The island of Santa Maria, located 55 miles south of São Miguel, was the first one to be sighted by the Portuguese navigators and it is the most southern and eastern of the islands, closest to the European continent and the first one to be settled.

Its history revolves around small farming communities whose main concern was to defend themselves against pirates that attacked the island from time to time. In fact, Christopher Columbus and his men were suspected of being pirates in 1493 when they sought refuge from a storm in the Bay of Anjos. They were held prisoner for a few days until the islanders could be sure it was safe to release them.

The biggest and most important change for the island occurred in 1944 with the arrival of the U.S. Armed Forces and construction of a large airport by those same forces.

The Americans and the airport brought

new life to the island, and introduced a more progressive lifestyle than the island had previously known.

Following World War II, however, the Americans departed for the island of Terceira, turning the airport and its supporting facilities over to the Portuguese government. Until construction of airports on the other islands was complete, Santa Maria remained - for many years - as the gateway to the Azores. Much has changed since then, and Santa Maria has lost much of its prominence; though none of its charm.

The island's capital and municipal seat is Vila do Porto, the first town in the Azores. Most of the island's hotels, restaurants and businesses are located there.

Like the other islands of the archipelago, Santa Maria has many tourist attractions. Vila do Porto features the Fort of São Brás (an old Portuguese fortress), a museum and several churches.

When I toured the island, I particularly enjoyed the view from Pico Alto, the island's highest point at 1,925 feet. From there you have an excellent view of the whole island. Other points of interest worth visiting are Praia Formosa, a beautiful sandy beach. This is the site of the internationally renowned music festival called "Maré de Agosto" (August Tide), which is held annually during the second week of August.

São Lourenço Bay, located on the island's northeast side, features hillsides covered with vineyards — it is an extraordinary panoramic view, particularly before the grapes are harvested.

The Bay of Anjos is a charming little village that features a small chapel where supposedly Christopher Columbus' men prayed during their port call, when returning from having discovered the Americas.

Another of the island's characteristics that caught my attention was the round shape of the chimneys. They reminded me of those in Algarve on mainland Portugal, probably because the first settlers came from that southern Portuguese region.



Santa Maria attracts tourists mainly because of its peaceful and bucolic nature and undulating, steeply sloped landscape. It is a slower, calmer paced environment, particularly suited for those who need a break from the stresses of work.

The climate is different - not radically, but different - from the other Azorean islands, as well. It's drier in Santa Maria, and summer is more temperate. Ocean lovers will find the island's blue waters a true paradise for water-skiing, windsurfing, sailing, fishing and snorkeling. Big Game fishing is a recent activity that has been attracting many national and foreign tourists to the island.

Despite the beauty and abundance of Santa Maria, the island is lightly populated - only 6,500 or so inhabitants (people say there are more cows and sheep than people on Santa Maria.) The primary occupations and industry are farming and fishing.

There's only one way to get to the island during the winter: air travel. The regional airline, SATA-Air Azores, offers daily flights for approximately 160 Euros. In the summer you can look forward to taking a ferryboat to Santa Maria or one of the other islands.

Overall, such a trip is quite affordable. Food and lodging won't set you back much and mementos will be plentiful.

One challenge you may face, however, is a possible language barrier. Santa Maria hasn't had an American presence for decades, so you may not find many English-speaking locals. Take along a good phrase book, and a positive attitude, and you'll do fine.



Coastline of Maia Village in Santa Maria. (Courtesy photo)

Off and running!



Brianna Harvey, Bantam Lizard's player and daughter of Senior Airman Nathan Harvey, and his wife, Victoria, blocks Anthony McCarty, Bantam Blue Raiders player and son of Staff Sgt. Joshua McCarty and his wife, Jessie. As the defense tightens, Anthony protects the ball while he looks for a teammate to pass to. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Olenda Kleffner)

Disabled vets schuss down slopes

by Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Seven soldiers who lost legs during incidents in Iraq will get the chance March 5-8 to schuss down the slopes of Vail, Colo.

Vail Ski Association, with support from a broad range of local

and national donors, is providing the soldiers, their wives or girlfriends and their children an all-expense-paid visit to one of the world's premier ski resorts.

The Vail community and corporate sponsors will roll out the red carpet with free lodging, meals, lift tickets, ski equipment and lessons.

Cheryl Jensen from the Vail Ski Association said the weekend will allow soldiers to enjoy the exhilaration of skiing — something she acknowledged most probably thought they'd never experience again.

Five of the soldiers to attend the ski weekend have skied or snowboarded before, and most

rated themselves as accomplished skiers before losing their limbs. The other two soldiers have never been on skis.

Regardless of their experience on the slopes, Ms. Jensen said she expects the ski weekend to give the soldiers a renewed sense of freedom "and to make them feel as able-bodied as possible."

AFN Sports on TV

Friday

AFN-Sports

Men's College Basketball: ACC Championship Quarterfinals, 4 p.m.
ACC Championship Quarterfinals, 6 p.m.
CUSA Championship Semifinals, 8:30 p.m.
Big East Championship Semifinals, 11 p.m.

Saturday

AFN-Sports

Men's College Basketball: Big East Championship Semifinals, 1 a.m.
MWC Championship Semifinals, 4 a.m.
Southland Conference Championship, 7 a.m.
ACC Championship Semifinals, 9 a.m.
America East Championship, 3:30 p.m.
ACC Championship Semifinals, 5:30 p.m.
ACC Championship Semifinals, 7:30 p.m.
NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series: Easycare Vehicle Service Contracts 200, 10:30 p.m.

AFN-Atlantic

Men's College Basketball: CUSA Cham-

ampionship, 3:30 p.m.

Big Ten Championship Semifinals, 5:45 p.m.

Big Ten Championship Semifinals, 8 p.m.
PAC-10 Championship, 10 p.m.

AFN-Pacific

Men's College Basketball: ACC Championship Quarterfinals, 1 a.m.

Mideastern Athletic Championship, 4 p.m.
Atlantic 10 Championship Quarterfinals, 10 p.m.

Big East Championship, midnight

Sunday

AFN-Sports

Men's College Basketball: Big XII Championship Semifinals, 1 a.m.
Big XII Championship Semifinals, 3 a.m.
Horse Racing: The Florida Derby, 5:30 a.m.
Men's College Basketball: WAC Championship, 7 a.m.
NHL: Teams TBD, 10 a.m.

Track & Field: IAAF Indoor Championships, 1 p.m.

NASCAR NEXTEL Cup Series: Golden Corral 500, 5 p.m.

Horse Racing: San Felipe & Tampa Bay Derby, 9 p.m.

Men's College Basketball: Patriot League Championship, 11 p.m.

AFN-Atlantic

Men's College Basketball: MWC Championship, 11 a.m.

SEC Championship, 5 p.m.

Big Ten Championship, 7:30 p.m.

NCAA Final 64 Selection Show, 10 p.m.

AFN-Pacific

Men's College Basketball: ACC Championship, 5 p.m.

Big XII Championship, 7 p.m.

Women's College Basketball: NCAA Women's Final 64 Selection Show, 9 p.m.

Closures/Shifts

Family Support: The family support center will be at minimum manning for training March 19. For questions, call the FSC at 2-4138.

Legal office: Closes at 4 p.m. every Monday, Wednesday and Friday for unit physical fitness training. For emergencies, call the command post at 2-4200.

Pass and Registration: Open 9 a.m.-noon every Friday in the Customer Service office, Bldg. T-112. Hours remain 8 a.m.-noon, Tuesday-Thursday and closed Mondays.

Veterinary clinic: Open from 3-8 p.m., March 24. Call for appointments. To screen for parasites, bring a sample of pet's stool at time of appointment. To sign up, call 2-3134.

Medical Group: The 65th MDG will close at 3:30 p.m., March 31, for a recognition ceremony. For questions, call Senior Master Sgt. David Montano at 2-2265.

Education

UMUC happenings: The University of Maryland's term four registrations are March 15-26, at the UMUC office. On-site schedules are now available. For more, call Melinda Casey at 2-4187.

Online courses: April 1 is the deadline to enroll for online graduate courses for the University of Oklahoma's summer term. For more, call Erika Golart at 2-3171.

Embry-Riddle: Registration for Aviation Law ends April 13. The course will be taught onsite April 19-25. For more, call 2-3375.

Classes

123 Magic: Free class teaches parents to help their children stop negative behaviors and start positive ones. The two-part class is 7-8:30 p.m., Wednesday and March 24, at the family support center. To register, call 2-4138.

Couples' course: Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program is a couples' communication course. Couples must commit to four sessions 2-5 p.m., March 19, 27 and April 1, 8. To sign up, call Staff Sgt. Fawne Cady at 2-5177.

Quilting class: Square Inside Square, 2-6 p.m., Saturday and March 27, at the community activity center. Cost is \$40. To register, call 2-3909 or 2-5255.

Painting class: Free beginning watercolor painting class, 6-8 p.m., April 7, at the family support center. All supplies are provided. Space is limited. To sign up, call 2-4138.

Personal prayer: Seven week course in personal prayer, noon, Tuesdays, at the base chapel. For more, call Chaplain (Maj.) Stan Pieczara at 2-4211.

Bible study: Protestant Women

of the Chapel bible study, 9 a.m., Wednesdays, at the base chapel. For more, call Chaplain (Capt.) Matthew Franke at 2-4211.

Organizations

PWOC meeting: Protestant Women of the Chapel meeting, 6:30 p.m., today, at the base chapel. For more, call Chaplain (Capt.) Matthew Franke at 2-4211.

CWOC meeting: Catholic Women of the Chapel meeting, 7 p.m., Tuesday, at the base chapel. For more, call Chaplain (Maj.) Stan Pieczara at 2-4211.

CMOC meeting: Catholic Men of the Chapel meeting, 6 p.m., Wednesday, at the base chapel. For more, call Chaplain (Maj.) Stan Pieczara at 2-4211.

School program: Before and after school program at the Lajes youth center, 7-8:30 a.m. and 2:15-5:30 p.m., for K-6th grade. Activities, field trips, and guest speakers. Cost is based on total family income. For more, call Ruth Hinojosa at 2-1197.

Events

Skate park: The skate park and skating rink alternate every weekend, 7-11 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays. Parties can be arranged, 2-6 p.m., Friday-Sunday. For more, call Melvin Moore at 2-2496 or Pam Darling at 2-6202.

Lent events: Mass/Stations of the Cross/Meager Meal, 5 p.m., Fridays during Lent, at the base chapel. For more, call Chaplain (Maj.) Stan Pieczara at 2-4211.

Mystery dinner: "Luck of the Irish," 6:30 p.m., Saturday, at the Top of the Rock club ballroom. For more, call Linette Hollandsworth at 2-6110.

Orphanage visit: Singles of the Chapel orphanage visit. Meet at 11:45 a.m., Saturday, at the base chapel. For more, call Chaplain (Capt.) Matthew Franke at 2-4211.

Nine-pin bowling: Nine-Pin No-Tap Bowling Tournament, 12:30-5 p.m., March 19, to benefit the 65th Mission Support Group Booster Club. 5-member teams cost \$60. To sign up, call Tech Sgt. William Davies at 2-6794.

Spring photos: Photos taken by Irislab benefit the base Honor Guard team, Saturday and Sunday, at the family support center. For more, call Staff Sgt. Jessica Dunn at 2-3685 or 295-549-9437 or 2nd Lt. John-Paul Arre 2-5026.

Bowling night: Chapel bowling night, 5 p.m., Sunday, at the base bowling alley. For more, call Chaplain (Capt.) Matthew Franke at 2-4211.

OSC dinner: Officers' Spouses Club dinner, 6 p.m., Thursday, at the Top of the Rock ballroom. The theme is "Lucky Squares." For reservations, call Stacy North at 295-549-196 by noon, Monday.

Movie night: Children and Youth

of the Chapel movie night, 7 p.m., March 19, at base chapel. For more, call Chaplain (Capt.) Matthew Franke at 2-4211.

Tiki party: 8 p.m.-3 a.m., March 20, at the Top of the Rock club. Dress as Tacky Tourists. Prizes for best dressed couples and singles, games and drink specials. For more, call Karen Warren at 2-3202.

Men's breakfast: 8 a.m., March 20, at the base chapel. For more, call Chaplain (Capt.) Matthew Franke at 2-4211.

Game night: For singles, 7 p.m., March 20, at the base chapel. For more, call Chaplain (Capt.) Matthew Franke at 2-4211.

Spring Bazaar: The Enlisted Spouses Club needs vendors and volunteers to help with the Spring Bazaar on April 3, at the Lajes youth center. To sign up, call Dana Reil at 295-549-597 or Mary Willis at 295-549-605.

Talent contest: USAFE Youth Talent Contest, 7 p.m., April 9, for ages 6-18. Registration deadline is April 5. Singers, actors, dancers, magicians, comedians, musicians, and specialty acts are all welcome. For more, call Melvin Moore at 2-3273.

Sports

LYP paintball: Lajes Youth Program paintball challenge, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., March 20, at the range. Cost is \$16, includes transportation and equipment. Eight-25 people, ages 13 and older. To sign up, call Melvin Moore at 2-3273 by Wednesday.

Sailing trip: 10 a.m.-2 p.m., March 20. To sign up, visit or call outdoor recreation by Wednesday. Cost is \$55 dollars per person. Six-10 people, ages five and above. For more, call 2-4140.

Volunteers/Jobs

Civilian positions: Fuel Logistics/Transportation Managers for a company in Iraq and Kuwait. Applicants must have prior military experience. Excellent salary. Package includes travel, housing, food, medical and life insurance, etc. Deploy immediately on single status. Send resumes by e-mail to clynch@theaimgroup.net.

WICO position: Women Infants and Children Overseas needs someone with a degree in Nutrition, Dietetics, Nursing or Home Economics and experience in prenatal, maternal or infant nutrition. For more, call Nora Blohm at 2-1440 or 295 549 465.

Part-time position: Thrift shop bookkeeper needed. Must be an Enlisted Spouse Club or Officers Spouse Club member. Applications available at the Thrift Shop, Bldg. T-400. For more, call 2-6371 or 2-3567.

Services positions: Recreation aids at the skating rink and youth center, a club operations assistant and an office automation clerk at the

veterinary clinic are needed. Applications available at the Non-appropriated Funds Human Resources Office, Bldg. T-112. For more, call 2-5200.

CAC attendants: Community activity center volunteers are needed to work at the front counter, to assist customers and provide administrative support. Weekend and evening hours are available. For more, call Sheryl Bush at 2-5216.

P.O. volunteers: The post office needs volunteers to assist with sorting mail, distributing packages and customer service. Visit the post office for more, or call 2-3625.

Skating rink: Volunteers needed to distribute skates, sell snack bar items, work the DJ booth, etc. For more, call Sheryl Bush at 2-5216 or 2-6143.

Family readiness: Volunteer assistant needed to help maintain a program dedicated to families of deployed troops. Requires a six-month minimum commitment. Free childcare is available. For more, call 2-4138.

Volunteers needed: Volunteers needed at family services for postal collection, data input, advertising, etc. Free childcare is available. For more, call 2-4146 or 2-4138.

AAFES theatre: Theatre supervisor position available. Experience in theatre operations and supervision is preferred. Must be able to work a flexible schedule. Applications available at AAFES stores or Human Resources office, Bldg. T-800. For more, call Nelia Faria at 2-3634.

Charities committee: "Chapel Charities", open 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Saturdays, in Bldg. T-426, needs donations for local orphanages and nursing homes. To volunteer for the committee and base chapel, call Tech. Sgt. Silvia DeJesus at 295-549-430 or 2-1304, or call 2-4211.

Miscellaneous

Lost/Found: Unclaimed items in the Skating Rink's lost and found will be donated to the Thrift Store, April 1. To pick up lost items, go by from 7-11 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. For more, call Pam Darling at 2-6202.

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted via e-mail to news@lajes.af.mil. Ads are due by 5 p.m. Monday.

88 VW Fox, new muffler/exhaust, spark plugs/wires, brakes, battery and alternator. Inspection good until Jul 05. \$800, extremely reliable. Available next week, must sell. Call Tech Sgt. William Conley 295-549-334 evenings, day phone 2-3938.

For Sale: Used XBOX Games, Taz Wanted, \$10; World Series Baseball 2003, \$10; NCAA College Basketball 2003, \$10; Moto GP, \$20. If interested, call 295-549-565. Also willing to trade.