

# THUNDERBOLT

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## Back to School

Information guide  
for parents and  
students - begins page 12



**CUI - 66 days and counting: preparation tips, page 3**

# COMMANDER'S CORNER



## Gearing up for the 'big game'

Col. Robert Rocco

6th Medical Group commander

Recently, one of the world-class airmen I serve with at the MacDill clinic asked me what a Consolidated Unit Inspection feels like when the inspectors are on base. After sharing my thoughts, I saw it as an opportunity to share similar thoughts with my teammates outside the walls of the clinic. It is football season, so I thought I'd put it in football terms.

First off, it is an exciting time — not unlike the feeling you get before a big game. All the preparation is over and it is time for excellence validation provided to us from subject-matter experts. Instead of analysts breaking down our ability to execute our "Xs and Os" they'll want to see how we handle our Air Force Instructions!

Many of you experiencing this for the first time may get nervous around the inspectors. Try not to. They are Airmen, just like you. They want us to be successful and are here to validate positive expectations not try and bait us into mistakes. I once heard Peyton Manning, two time Superbowl-winning Quarterback Eli Manning's brother, says that nervous is what happens when you don't know what you're doing. Toward that end, if during the next few months you find yourself becoming nervous about our inspections, talk to your teammates about the reason why. Understand the areas you may need to brush up on and practice how you'll respond if asked to answer a question or demonstrate a capability. Football players practice — so do we; it's called training and we do it every day!

Good news — it's all an open-book test. What does that mean? Ever see a football player checking his wrist for plays? It's just like that. You too can review your section "playbook" for all the answers. Go ahead and put all of your notes, AFIs, and local policies into a tabbed guide or on a disk. When an inspector asks you to show them the reason (like a telecaster on Monday Night Football). Sure they may ask you to elaborate, but if you have the answers right there and understand them, heck, you'll have won the game even before the coin toss.

OK teammates, I'm sure one of you is wondering, "what if I make a mistake?" Well, they happen, the key is not to panic. Inspectors understand and appreciate it when we say, "I'm not sure, let me research that and get the correct answer."

Don't try and tap dance your way around a problem; confront it, ask for help, find the right answer and report back. Simple.

With football season here, I know about penalties... some are 5-yarders and some are 10-yarders. What are the 15-yarders — the big mistakes we most want to avoid?

- Safety - OK, in football, a safety is two points. For us, a safety violation can cost us combat capability, a jet, an ambulance, or worse, a teammate! Some of our fellow Airmen may allow themselves to think that during an inspection, we can slack off on safety. Not true; remember what I shared about this being an "open book test?" Safety is a big part of that open book — especially on, near, and around the flight line, in the clinic, in our office or when first responding. Safety is important, everywhere.

- Security - If we don't protect the ball, it could cause a turnover and possibly lose the game. If we don't practice good operational, communication or computer security, then we run the risk of losing much more.

- Communication - At half time, good teams make adjustments. They discuss lessons learned and adjust course so that they can execute better in the second half. We can do the same. If your squadron is looked at hard on day one, share with the rest of us what you learned. Inspectors notice when teams make adjustments (all good teams do) and will appreciate the effort. A well-timed adjustment is better than a 15-yard penalty any day.

Finally, it's all about readiness. My friend Col. Matt Molineux reminds us often that the reason we have inspections is not only to ensure we know what we are doing, but to demonstrate our capability to quickly, safely and effectively carry out the important business of Airpower! Being the finest Air Mobility Wing on the face of the planet is personal - proving it to an inspector demonstrates to our Air Force that when the time comes, the 6th Air Mobility Wing will be ready, willing and able to Fly, Fight and Win. Like the football team that demonstrates a giant effort to win, we too will appreciate our giant effort when we win this November.

Go get'em team... our championship is almost here!



### COMMANDER'S ACTION LINE

The Action Line provides two-way communication between the 6th Air Mobility Wing commander and the MacDill community. A 24-hour recording service is provided so personnel may submit questions, concerns or comments. Call the Action Line at 828-INFO (4636) or email [macdillwingcommander@us.af.mil](mailto:macdillwingcommander@us.af.mil)



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### MacDill Thunderbolt

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## Commentary

# Diversity makes a stronger Air Force

by Col. Rodney Bryan

927th Mission Support Group commander

The Air Force defines diversity as a composite of individual characteristics, experiences, and abilities, consistent with the core values and mission. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, personal experiences, geographic background, socioeconomic background, cultural knowledge, educational background, work background, language abilities, physical abilities, philosophical or spiritual perspectives, age, race, ethnicity and gender.



Col. Rodney Bryan

One of the strengths of our nation and the Air Force is this diversity, which includes and involves all of us. In Executive Order 13583,

President Obama stated, "Our nation derives strength from the diversity of its population and from its commitment to equal opportunity for all. We are at our best when we draw on the talents of all parts of our society, and our greatest accomplishments are achieved when diverse perspectives are brought to bear to overcome our greatest challenges."

As commander of a mission support group, I fully appreciate the importance of diversity. The nature of the various activities and operations directed and controlled by mission support groups worldwide make them the most diverse group within Air Force wings. Functions typically include personnel, logistics planning and readiness, civil engineering, security forces, communications and services. These disciplines are brought together under the mission support group to provide complete and responsive support to installations and the Air Force mission.

Diversity is vital to the successful accomplishment of the Air Force mission. The Sec-

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## Get CUI ready

- ◆ Ask for a staff assistance visit of your program.
- ◆ Cross talk with other bases, both before and after an inspection, to ensure

compliance.

- ◆ Be sure to review previous inspection discrepancies, as they have been noted and will be a go-to area for inspectors.

## Resiliency Region

### Nervous about being a new dad

**DEAR WING MA'AM:** It's finally happening!! I am about to embark on the most important mission of my life. I'm going to be a dad! My wife and I are extremely happy that our first child, a baby girl, is due this fall. My wife has been taking good care of herself and I have been doing everything I can to make sure she is comfortable. I'm nervous, and honestly a little afraid about all the things I need to do to be the best dad I can be; I'm nervous how to hold my baby girl, feed, clean, change, put her to sleep... everything. What can I do to be "mission ready?" ~Daddy to Be



Dear  
Wing  
Ma'am



**DEAR DADDY TO BE:** Congratulations to you and your wife! Just as the military trains you to perform your job and to deploy, you can get training to be prepared for the most important role in your life -- being a daddy! It is awesome that you care enough about the welfare of your baby girl to do everything you can to be ready. Try not to be so worried about what to expect, instead, get the training and learn what to do.

Try "DADS: The Basics Workshop." It is a free, voluntary class for men that coaches you on how to be a team-player with your wife and gain some tips on how to raise your new baby. The interactive class, taught by men, teaches new and expectant fathers important care-giving skills, introduces fatherhood roles and explains the development of your infant. Additionally, new dads will learn how to support the expectant mother before and after the delivery.

I encourage you to relieve some of the anxiety of being a first-time father by signing up for the workshop. Call Michele Rinearson, Family Advocacy Nurse, New Parent Support Program at (813) 827-9172.

*Dear Wing Ma'am is written by Capt. Christy Cruz, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Wing Ma'am works as the Resiliency Program manager and clinical therapist at MacDill*

*AFB. If you want to ask Wing Ma'am for advice, please send your questions to 6MDOS.sgoh@us.af.mil. Letters are kept anonymous. Rights are reserved to edit published letters for*

*style and length. Not every question can be answered. This column seeks to educate readers and should not be used as a substitute for seeking professional assistance.*

# WEEK IN PHOTOS



Photo by Airman 1st Class Michael Ellis

In the fabrication shop Airman 1st Class Tyler Treadaway, 6th Maintenance Squadron, heats a piece of metal to make it pliable at MacDill Air Force Base, Aug. 30.



Photo by Airman 1st Class David Tracy

Senior Airman Christopher Chambers, 6th Maintenance Squadron aircraft metals technology craftsman, welds a piece of aerospace ground equipment at MacDill Air Force Base, Aug. 30.

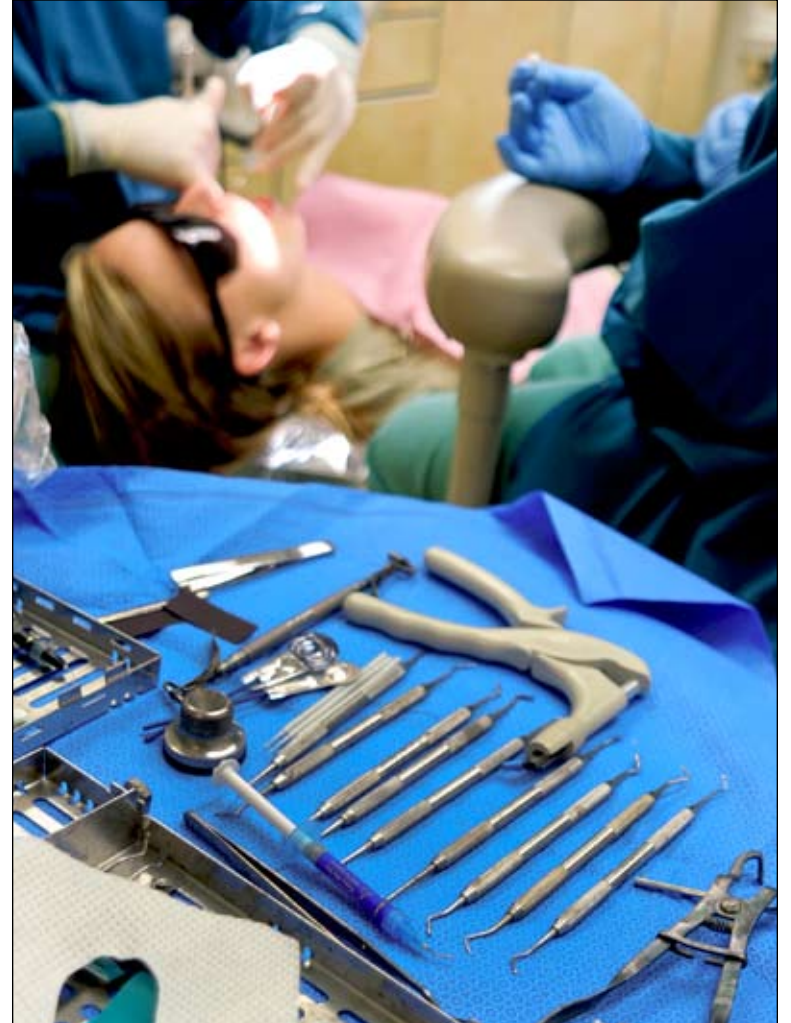


Photo by Senior Airman Melissa Paradise

A patient at the 6th Medical Group dental clinic receives an anesthetic injection prior to receiving dental work at MacDill Air Force Base, Aug. 27.



Photo by Airman 1st Class David Tracy

Staff Sgt. Dustin Harris, 6th Maintenance Squadron non-destructive inspection craftsman, analyzes x-rays taken of an aircraft part at MacDill Air Force Base, Aug. 30.





## ‘There I was...’ The quiet experts

by Lt. Col. John Glassell

6th Maintenance Group deputy commander

Deployments are a part of every Airman’s life, from the day they in-process at their first duty station until the day they leave the Air Force. At one point or another, virtually every Airman is on, returning from or preparing for a deployment. Last year, I joined the ranks of these deployed Airmen.

I deployed to an organization that impacts the day-to-day operations in the area of responsibility last August. This organization, the Air Force Central Command, was my home for the next six months, where I would act as the director of logistics forward staff.

The logistics forward staff is the deployed arm of the AFCENT logistics staff. They work with the AFCENT logistics staff at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., to coordinate the Air Force logistics

operations for the area of responsibility. Their staff consisted of Airmen from every logistics function, from air transportation and logistics planners to aircraft maintenance and vehicle operations.

Day-to-day tasks ranged from coordinating supply parts and repair actions for broken aircraft, ensuring the correct type and amount of munitions, to working with units to shut down operations and move out of Iraq. The people on the logistics forward staff were the experts who coordinated with both in-theater units and home station units.

The most interesting thing about the deployment wasn’t the mission but rather the people. Unlike most Airmen who deploy as part of a unit or team, these 25 folks deployed individually from bases around the world. Most did not know each other or the personnel with whom they would be working until they arrived. Every month, as deployments ended, two or three of these positions swapped out. The new “experts” received only a basic base orientation, a few days of turnover and then, without many people noticing, picked up where their predecessors left



Lt. Col. John Glassell

off without interruption or loss of production. Problems got solved, issues were resolved and the war effort continued without missing a beat.

While deployed with those Airmen, I watched them grow— increasing their personal knowl-

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## THERE I WAS

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edge, expanding professional skills, and gaining confidence while performing jobs essential to the success of the mission.

The air transportation career field is made up of several areas which include passenger service, cargo processing and load planning. I had the privilege of working with a technical sergeant who had a strong background in passenger service, but limited cargo processing experience. By the end of her rotation, she not only had expanded her cargo processing skills, but she became such a valuable asset to the team, she was requested by name to attend planning meetings. In the six short months of her deploy-

ment, she went from being unfamiliar with cargo processing to one of the “go-to” experts and gained invaluable career experience. Would she have gotten the same experience at home station? Possibly, but not at the same pace as she experienced deployed.

Being an aircraft maintenance officer and former C-130 crew chief, I know the U.S. Air Force has the finest maintainers in the world. During this deployment I watched an aircraft mechanic with an extensive background in F-15s and F-16s coordinate the parts and repairs for a C-130 aircraft involved in a mid-air collision. This “fighter” guy was fixing a “heavy” aircraft and learned the C-130 lingo well enough to communicate from the repair team to the depot engineers. Over the course of four months,

the aircraft went from a heavily damaged aircraft sitting at a forward operating base to flying home safely. Additional repairs were needed once it arrived at its home station, but the important part was that it was going home under its own power. No sooner had this aircraft recovery been completed when this mechanic started to lay the ground work for another, larger and more complicated aircraft recovery that would have to be completed by his successor.

These are just two examples of how our well-trained Airmen rose to the challenge and evolved as part of the AFCENT logistics forward staff. It was a privilege to work alongside them. They are the quiet experts. Few know who they are or where they are located, but everyone counts on their expertise and support.





# Team MacDill welcomes new Airmen

The following first term Airmen have arrived to MacDill directly out of technical school. Welcome to the team.

## **6th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron**

Airman William Long, Walhalla, S.C.  
Airman 1st Class Jacob Warner, Duncan, S.C.

## **6th Civil Engineer Squadron**

Airman 1st Class Craig Bein, Sterling, Conn.  
Airman 1st Class Michael Hitchcock, Atlanta, Ga.  
Airmen 1st Class Ronald McManus, Waterloo, Iowa

## **6th Contracting Squadron**

Airman 1st Class Yitzchak Baum, Highland Park, N.J.  
Airman 1st Class Jesse Coulombe, Berlin, N.H.  
Airman 1st Class Andre Gallman, Jacksonville, Fla.

Airman 1st Class Nicholas Litchfield, Buckfield, Maine  
Airman 1st Class Royce Macintyre, Jamestown, N.Y.  
Airman 1st Class Neftali Santos, Ponce, Puerto Rico  
Airman Ryan Starke, Riverside, Calif.

## **6th Medical Operations Squadron**

Airman 1st Class Luke Cyphers, Aurora, Colo.

## **6th Medical Support Squadron**

Airman Raven Hicks, Panama City, Fla.

## **6th Operations Support Squadron**

Airman Robert Fielden, Ringgold, Ga.

## **6th Security Forces Squadron**

Airman Alexis Alamo, Milwaukee, Wis.  
Airman 1st Class Aston Gardner, Inglewood, Calif.

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## **Newest ALS grads**

Congratulations to the newest Airman Leadership School graduates!

## **373rd Training Squadron**

Staff Sgt. Joel Miranda Roman

## **6th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron**

Staff Sgt. Justin Rosen

## **6th Communications Squadron**

Staff Sgt. Steven Arthur II  
Senior Airman Scott Larson

## **6th Dental Squadron**

Senior Airman Lenore A.B. Spearman

## **6th Force Support Squadron**

Senior Airman Timothy Creech Jr.  
Senior Airman Solomon Saunders

## **6th Logistics Readiness Squadron**

Senior Airman Michael Britt

Staff Sgt. Adam Cassidy  
Senior Airman Dustin Holler  
Senior Airman Aaron Lovett

## **6th Maintenance Operations Squadron**

Senior Airman Joy Day

## **6th Medical Support Squadron**

Staff Sgt. Kevin Jackson

## **6th Operations Support Squadron**

Staff Sgt. Roger Brannam  
Staff Sgt. Helen Henkens

## **6th Security Forces Squadron**

Senior Airman Andres Alvariza  
Staff Sgt. James Ravenscraft III  
Staff Sgt. Andrew Townson  
Senior Airman Xavier Wilsonmorris

## **927th Aeromedical Staging Squadron**

Senior Airman Brandon Christ

## **Operating Location Juliet**

Staff Sgt. Anthony Rodriguez

## **United States Coast Guard**

Petty Officer 2nd Class Thomas Carter  
Petty Officer 2nd Class Sean Eversole

## **United States Special Operations Command**

Staff Sgt. Ramon Torres



# Back to School



Keep encouraging literacy at home. Read frequently with children and make frequent trips to the local library.



Many middle school-aged children feel there is too much homework. Emphasize how homework helps them learn. Do homework with them and make it fun. Applaud their learning and achievements.



Take short breaks frequently during study time. The information studied at the beginning and the end is easier to retain than in the middle.



Help high school students manage stress. Also, find time for the whole family to participate in physical activities together.







# BACK TO SCHOOL



## Important Hillsborough school dates to remember

|   |   |
|---|---|
| ◆ End of 1st grading period -   | Thursday, Oct. 18   |
| ◆ Non-student day -   | Friday, Oct. 19   |
| ◆ Veteran's Day Holiday/Non-student day -                               | Monday, Nov. 12   |
| ◆ Fall break/schools and district offices closed -                      | Monday – Friday/Nov. 19-23                                |
| ◆ Students return to school -   | Monday, Nov. 26   |
| ◆ Winter break/schools and district offices closed -                    | Monday – Friday/Dec. 24 – Jan. 4                          |
| ◆ Students return to school -   | Monday, Jan. 7  |
| ◆ End of 2nd grading period (End of 1st semester) -                     | Friday, Jan. 18   |
| ◆ Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday/schools and district offices closed - | Monday, Jan. 21   |
| ◆ Non-student day -   | Tuesday, Jan. 22  |
| ◆ Florida State Fair Day/Non-student day – West Hillsborough County -   | Friday, Feb. 8  |
| ◆ Strawberry Festival/Non-student day – East Hillsborough County -      | Monday, March 4   |
| ◆ Spring break/schools and district offices closed -                    | Monday – Friday/March 11-15                               |
| ◆ Students return to school -   | Monday, March 18  |
| ◆ End of 3rd grading period -   | Thursday, March 28  |
| ◆ Non-student day -   | Friday, March 29  |
| ◆ Memorial Day holiday/schools and district offices closed -            | Monday, May 27  |
| ◆ Last Day of school/end of 4th grading period (End of 2nd Semester) -  | June 7  |
| ◆ End of grading periods -  | Oct 18, 2012; Jan. 18, 2013; March 28, 2013, Jun. 7, 2013 |
| ◆ Report card distribution dates  |   |
| Elementary -  | Nov 2, 2012; Feb. 1, 2013; April 12, 2013; June 7, 2013   |
| Secondary -   | Nov 8, 2012; Feb. 12, 2013; April 18, 2013; IV Qtr mailed |





# BACK TO SCHOOL



## Schools get graded along with students in Florida system

by **Nick Stubbs**  
*Thunderbolt* editor

Good grades in school are important, but in Florida it isn't just students who are graded. Public schools get report cards, as well.

The grading system is based on performance and learning gains exhibited by students, along with other components, including level of participation and performance in accelerated curricula, graduation rates, college readiness based on SAT and other scores, and other factors. A complete description of how schools are graded can be viewed at <http://schoolgrades.fl DOE.org/pdf/1112/Guidesheet2012SchoolGrades.pdf>.

"The rating system is very helpful to MacDill parents," said Nelly Richards, MacDill's school liaison officer.

Hillsborough County schools, along with any other public school in Florida, can be tracked through an interactive website at <http://schoolgrades.fl DOE.org/default.asp>. The site also includes a link explaining how schools are graded.

The information can be used by parents and student to evaluate how their school is doing, and help them make decisions about what school best meets their needs.

Application deadlines to attend an out-of-area school, as well as applications for magnet

and charter schools have passed for the 2012 to 2013 school year, but Richards said application periods for the 2013 to 2014 year will begin in stages starting in January 2013.

"It is important to make decisions and apply early," said Richards, who added that several factors, including space available, academic achievement and parental hardship factors are considered.

The Hillsborough County school system application and school choice web page is <http://www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/choice/>.

Parents who track school performance should

See **GRADES, Page 22**

## Education center ready to assist Airmen

by **Staff Sgt. Brandon Shapiro**  
6th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs

Education plays an important role in society and the MacDill Air Force Base education center is prepared to help Airmen and their families reach their educational goals.

Equipped with multiple colleges, the academic counselors are available to guide prospective students on countless career paths and opportunities, as well as educating them on benefits available at MacDill.

Whether pursuing a degree for personal reasons, strengthening a career or completing a branch-specific degree such as a Community College of the Air Force associate degree, the education office can assist.

"It doesn't matter which school you approach here, we will direct you towards the one that best fits you," said David Skaer, Ph.D., Saint Leo University academic advisor.

See **ED CENTER, Page 22**

## Resources, things to know for parents

◆ Nelly Richards, MacDill school liaison officer, has collected many links to useful information on her web page. Visit her page at [http://www.macdillfss.com/images/AllImages/pdfs/ChildrenandYouth/SchLiaisonInfo\\_23Aug2012.pdf](http://www.macdillfss.com/images/AllImages/pdfs/ChildrenandYouth/SchLiaisonInfo_23Aug2012.pdf). Call her at 828-0146. Email [nelly.richards@us.af.mil](mailto:nelly.richards@us.af.mil).

◆ For information on home schooling, visit the MacDill Homeschool Connection group on the web at <http://www.macdill.blogspot.com/>.

◆ Military parents will receive an important card Sept. 17, and filling it out and returning it can make a big difference in the quality of education Hillsborough students receive.

The Enrollment of Federally Connected Pupils card must be returned to school by Oct. 8. The data collected can amount to from \$500 and \$1,000 per student in extra funding for schools.

For more information, contact Hillsborough County Public Schools District Pupil Accounting Department at 272-4085.

See **RESOURCES, Page 22**







## EVENTS

### Friday

#### Surf's Edge Club

Membership Breakfast from 6:30 to 9 a.m. Club members FREE; Non-members: \$6.95.

#### MacDill Lanes

Senior Day – bowl for half the regular price.

#### Boomers Bar & Grill

Friday Bash! 3 to 7 p.m. Bar snacks and drink specials! Guaranteed \$100 club card drawing, Bar Bingo, and DJ!

### Saturday

#### Base Library

Single Airmen Gaming from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Playstation, Wii, & X-Box gaming equipment and games provided. You may bring a guest; they MUST be 18 or older.

### Sunday

#### MacDill Lanes

Football Frenzy – Come out and watch the games from 1 to 8 p.m. Register to win prizes, club members receive \$10 in food vouchers, food, drink and bowling specials!

### Wednesday

#### Airman & Family Readiness Center (MacDill)

Bundles for Babies from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Class addresses everything from diaper changing to feeding, handling crying, and colic.

#### Arts & Crafts Center

Canvas & “Cocktails” from 4 to 6 p.m. Cost: \$10 per person or Free for Single Airman. Call 828-4413 to sign up.

#### Bay Palms Golf Complex

Wednesday Night Scramble from 5 to 7 p.m. Two person scramble with shotgun start on front or back nine alternating weekly. For more info all 840-6904.

## BRIEFS

### Hispanic Heritage Committee

The Hispanic Heritage Committee meets in Building 6, Room 102 (AFE training room) every Wednesday at 3 p.m. For more information, contact Master Sgt. Eliezer Huertas 828-8833.

### Internship program

Applications for the Military Extension Internship Program Spring 2013 are now being accepted until Sept. 28. Internships are for college students or recent graduates and will take place on military installations across the U.S. and around the world. Interns

## COMMENTARY

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retary of the Air Force Michael B. Donley stated, “Across the service, we represent a broad range of diverse missions, family situations, ethnicities, faiths, races and educational backgrounds. Yet together, this rich tapestry forms the world’s finest Air Force, drawn from the best talent that America has to offer.”

The Air Force must attract, recruit, develop, mentor, and retain the best possible talent to stay effective. Embracing each Airman’s strengths, perspective, and capabilities will help build and sustain a diverse culture that strengthens our service. To gain the most from diversity, Airmen must understand they are valued and have the opportunity to reach their full potential while contributing to the Air Force mission.

Air Force capabilities and war-fighting skills are

## ALS

From Page 10

The following grads received special recognition:

#### Commandant Award

Staff Sgt. Roger Brannam

#### Academic Achievement Award

Staff Sgt. Anthony Rodriguez

will have the opportunity to gain first-hand experience in military child and youth programs. Please visit [www.ydae.purdue.edu/military](http://www.ydae.purdue.edu/military) for more information about the internships.

### Girl Scout opportunities

Girl Scouts of West Central Florida is seeking adults to volunteer for various positions as positive role models for girls. For more information on volunteering with GSWCF visit [www.gswcf.org/volunteer](http://www.gswcf.org/volunteer). For specific questions about current volunteer needs contact Kristie Wiley at 262-1765.

enhanced by diversity among its personnel. Diversity provides the total force a collection of strengths, perspectives and capabilities that transcend individual contributions. Personnel who work in diverse environments learn to make the most of and combine individual strengths, abilities and perspectives for the good of the mission.

Lastly, diversity is a leadership issue. We who are leaders must be committed to building an Air Force reflects the best of our nation. In addition, we must create an environment that promotes mutual respect and trust while promoting the development and mentorship of Airmen with different backgrounds and perspectives. The message must be effectively communicated that diversity is integral to Air Force core values and enhances mission readiness.



## CHAPEL SCHEDULE



#### Protestant services

Sunday - 11 a.m. - Contemporary Service

#### Islamic services

Friday - 1:30 p.m. - Muslim Prayer Service

#### Catholic services

Saturday - 5:30 p.m. - Mass

Sunday - 9:30 a.m. - Mass

Call the chapel at 828-3621 for more information or visit the chapel web site at <http://www.macdill.af.mil/macdillchapel>

## ED CENTER

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From Page 18

In addition to St. Leo, MacDill's education center offers face-to-face classes at Hillsborough Community College, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, and Learey Technical Center.

When striving to achieve education goals, figuring out what is needed can be overwhelming. The counselors at the education center specialize in helping service members and their families navigate the right educational path. They continue guidance until those goals are met.

Many have heard of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, tuition assistance, and the certification program—which funds one certification during a military career. These three programs assist funding education for military members and possibly families.

"Tuition assistance has allowed me to further my education while serving in the military without the fear of being inundated with thousands of dollars in student loans," said Airman 1st Class Michael Ellis, 6th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs. "Before joining the military I had to fund the cost of my education, which resulted in me only attending part-time or skipping the semester due to finances."

Counselors can show military members how to obtain up to a master's degree, paid for without touching their Post-9/11 GI Bill, according to Jacqueline DeRocco, 6th Force Support Squadron education center academic counselor.

The base education center offers monthly classes on educational benefits, as well as one-on-one counseling to tackle any questions.

For more, visit the MacDill education office in the base library or call 828-3115.

## GRADES

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From Page 18

be aware that lower grades for some schools this school year may not indicate falling performance, according to a recent letter issued by Gerard Robinson, Florida's commissioner of education.

"As grades for elementary, middle and many combination schools become available, you may notice that some schools have lower grades than last year. That does not necessarily mean that the schools, teachers or students are not doing as well as they were before. There were a number of changes to the state's accountability system this year that impacted the results," Robinson wrote, adding that, "The state has been moving to higher academic standards, new assessments that measure students' progress toward meeting the standards, and higher achievement levels for subjects such as reading and math. These new standards, assessments, and achievement levels are being used to determine school grades this year."

For questions about school grades, visit [www.floridapathtosuccess.org](http://www.floridapathtosuccess.org) or call 1-866-507-1109. To receive periodic email updates about this topic and related issues, sign up here: <http://parents.fldoe.org/home>.

## RESOURCES

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From Page 18

◆ To help improve the quality of education for military children, parents living in Harbor Bay on base are being asked to complete a survey about the schools their children attend. The survey can be found at <https://www.research.net/s/SchAgeSurvey> and must be completed by Sept. 11. For more information, contact [nelly.richards@us.af.mil](mailto:nelly.richards@us.af.mil) or 828-0146.