



Jax Air News

A CHINFO AWARD-WINNING NEWSPAPER

TOUCHING BASE



Traffic alert for commuters

The Yorktown Gate (Main Gate) at Naval Air Station Jacksonville will be under construction from Jan. 19 through June 6. In an effort to reduce traffic congestion, traffic pattern change notices will be posted along U.S. Highway 17 on both the north and southbound lanes near NAS Jax. Travelers and visitors to NAS Jax are encouraged to use caution and adhere to traffic pattern changes during this construction period.

Traffic pattern changes at the Yorktown Gate will occur as follows between Jan. 19 and June 6:

During the weekday morning rush hours (4 a.m. through 8:30 a.m.), traffic will be reduced to two inbound lanes and outbound traffic will be detoured to the Commercial Gate. During weekday mid-day hours (8:30 a.m. through 2:30 p.m.), the traffic will be reduced to two-way traffic, one lane in and one lane out.

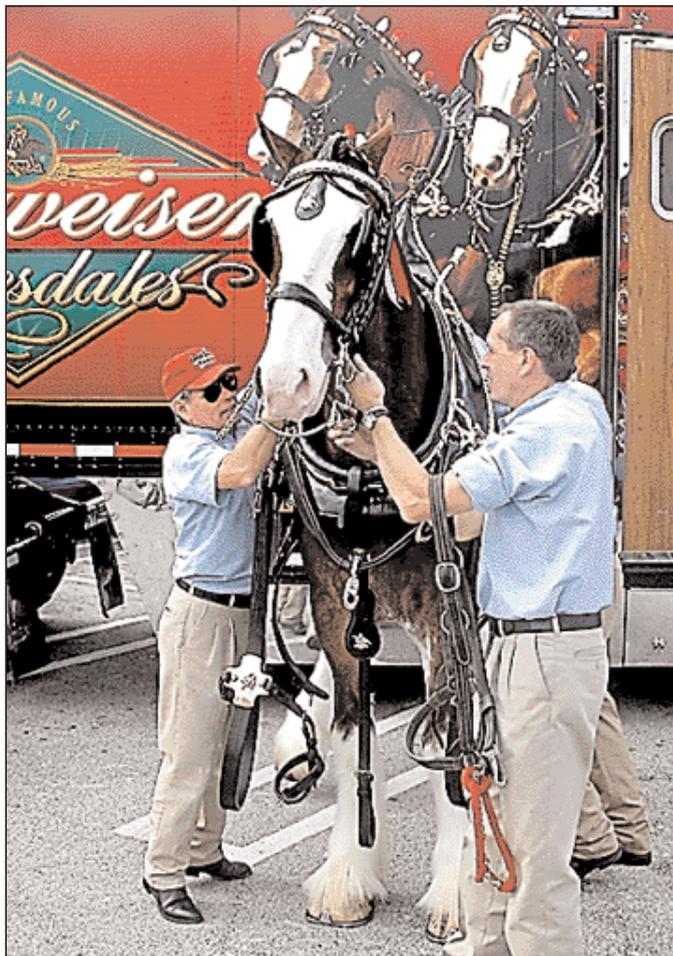
During the weekday afternoon rush hours (2:30 p.m. through 6 p.m.), traffic will be reduced to two lanes outbound with the inbound traffic being detoured to the Birmingham Gate (except for access to Bldg. 9 and 13). Traffic during weekday evenings and nights (6 p.m. and 4 a.m.) and weekends and federal holidays will be two-way, one lane in and one lane out.

For further information, call Sue Brink at 542-5031, Ext. 2130.



Special observance set

A special observance to celebrate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. will be held Jan. 14 at noon at the All Saints Chapel. The event is sponsored by the NAS Jacksonville Multi-Cultural Awareness Committee. Everyone is welcome to attend.



Photos by Miriam S. Gallet

Duke, a feisty five-year-old, 2,000-pound Clydesdale horse makes his first public appearance during the Dec. 29 visit to the NAS Jacksonville Navy Exchange by the Budweiser Clydesdales Horses. Handlers Dale Lawson (left) and George Armstrong ensure he is ready for the crowd.

A regal breed

'Clydesman's horse' team visits NAS Jax

By Miriam S. Gallet
Editor

The popular equine mascots of the Anheuser-Busch Brewing Company of St. Louis, visited the NAS Jacksonville Navy Exchange (NEX) parking lot Dec. 29.

Since 1933, when the Clydesdales started to travel around the country celebrating the repeal of Prohibition, the World Famous Budweiser Clydesdales have been some of the most popular horses in the world.

NEX and commissary patrons watched as the eight Clydesdales were harnessed and hitched to the wagon and performed an eight-horse demonstration.

"These horses wear braided manes and tails adorned with ribbons and flowers and hand-made harnesses (valued at \$5,000 a piece) made of imported leather, silver and brass, weighing in excess of 130 pounds," explained Lead Driver and Trainer Manny Reaber.

"I'm so excited to be here with my three children," said an elated Betty Pitts. "We love horses and my children have never seen the Budweiser Clydesdales. This is a treat for us."

The eight-hitch team of powerful Clydesdales travels more than 100,000 miles each year to appear in parades, festivals and other special events. The team arrived for the appearance in three, state-of-the-art semi-trucks directly from their home in St. Louis. Trainers, handlers and Doc, the Dalmatian dog, accompanied them. Dalmatian dogs are the traditional stable companions for the Clydesdales. On March 30, 1950, the first Dalmatian dog began riding on the Clydesdale hitch to commemorate the opening of the Newark Brewery.

According to Handler Jim Young, to qualify for one of the eight hitches a Budweiser Clydesdale must be a gelding at least four



years of age. The horse must stand 72 inches from head to hoof when fully mature, weigh between 1,800 and 2,300 pounds, be bay in color, have four white stocking feet and a blaze of white on the face, and have a black mane and tail.

"The Clydesman's horse," as this noble breed became known in native Scotland, was originally bred to be used as warhorses and for farm work. They take their name from their homeland's Clydesdale River that flows through the rustic plains of Scotland. They were introduced in the United States as farm animals soon after the Civil War.

The names of the eight Clydesdales horses are Andy, Baron Realization, Bill, Buck, Captain, Commander, Dean, Duke, Jake, Mark and Sammy. An essential part of the eight-hitch team is the three-ton red Studebaker wagon originally made in 1905 and later adapted by Anheuser-Busch Brewing Company for beer delivery. The horses are all trained to perform precision docking maneuvers with the wagon.

"This visit was made possible by the generosity of North Florida Sales, a local vendor of Budweiser products. I am very appreciative of their generosity," said NEX General Manager Marsha Brooks. "This is awesome. Just look around, young and old, everyone is enjoying their presence."



Photo by Miriam S. Gallet

From left, NAS Jax Fleet and Family Support Center Community Service Program Coordinator Dianne Parker, NAS Jax Executive Officer Capt. Charles King and NAS Jax Supply Department Leading Chief Petty Officer SKCM Rufino Delacruz, proudly display the Crystal Eagle Award presented to the command by the Monique Burr Foundation, Inc. during the "Holiday in the Hamptons" benefit dinner Dec. 13. Over 20 culinary specialists from NAS Jax and Naval Hospital Jacksonville prepared the gourmet dinner for the event, which raised \$330,000.

Navy chefs, culinary specialists lend a hand during special gala

By Dianne Parker
FFSC

To thank the Navy for their support of our nation and the Jacksonville community, this year's annual Monique Burr Foundation for Children, Inc. (MBF) "Holiday in the Hamptons Gala" was a tribute to the Armed Forces.

The event was held Dec. 13 at the Golf Club at South Hampton in Jacksonville. The gala featured the culinary delights of various chefs and culinary specialists from NAS Jacksonville Galleon Galley and Naval Hospital Jacksonville including Florida Community College Jacksonville (FCCJ) Chef Instructor Deborah Gordon. Gordon has been teaching at the FCCJ Culinary Arts Program at NAS Jax Galley since last April. These two groups, under Gordon's creative guidance, joined forces to prepare and serve an elegant and delicious meal, for more than 300 guests who traditionally attend this exciting holiday event.

"We volunteered for this event because it gave us the opportunity to give something back to the community. They needed someone to cater this event so we offered our assistance. Not only did we get to help the foundation out, but also we were able to display our talents and expertise. Working at the barracks, many of our Mess Specialists don't get to cook much. We spent hours preparing, cooking and serving the meal," said MSCS(SW) Jimmie McKnight, NAS Jacksonville Combined Bachelor's Quarters leading chief petty officer.

"Last year, all we did was help with valet parking, which we also did this year. But, we were much more

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A special donation



Photo by PH3 (NAC) Doug Harvey

From left, Vidalia (Georgia) Onion Festival Chairman Andy Kimbell, acting on behalf of the Vidalia Chamber of Commerce, presents a \$1,000 donation for the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS) Jacksonville to Capt. Lawrence Cotton, Commander, Navy Region Southeast chief of staff. Joining them are Lt. Franklin Hunt of Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department (AIMD) and NMCRS Director Dave Faraldo. "The Vidalia Chamber of Commerce wanted to recognize the support and efforts that NAS Jax and AIMD gave to our annual Onion Festival last year. Without them, there would have been no Blue Angels and many of the other aviation teams and displays. The best way to show our appreciation is to contribute to the local Navy Relief," said Kimbell.

NAS Jax Strategic Business Plan update

By **CMDCM Chuck Lawson**
NAS Jax Command Master Chief

“We enable naval aviation war fighting readiness.” That’s the motto for the NAS Jax Strategic Business Plan FY04. One of the many purposes of the Strategic Business Plan is to better serve the aviation warfighters and all service members.

Today we’ll discuss Goal 4 of the NAS Business Plan, a goal established in the business plan to continually improve quality of life and service to the customer (service member). In order to accomplish this, the following business plan objectives have been

- established:
- MWR Strategy** - Our goal is to be the leader in quality in service by providing best value, customer focused, recreational facilities and programs creating a military hometown environment.
- Fleet and Family Support Center** - To reinforce the services already provided to the Sailors and their families, to help elevate the difficult stresses of Navy life.
- Religious Ministries Strategy** - To strengthen the spiritual lives of Sailors, Airmen, and their families.
- MentoringSailor Career Strategy** - To assist command personnel in link-

- ing an experienced person (or mentor) with a less experienced person (or protégé) to help foster the career development and professional growth of both the mentor and the protégé. Providing guidance and assistance to facilitate personal growth in both the mentor and the protégé.
- Sailor Support Program** - To ensure station personnel are afforded the highest customer and Sailor support service as possible.
- In order to accomplish and improve each individual goal of the Strategic Business Plan it will take the dedication and the hard work from each goalkeeper, with the help of station personnel.

ON THE HOMEFRONT

Bout with flu is swift treatment for ‘noncompliance’

By **Sarah Smiley**
Special Contributor

I don’t do drugs. Are you surprised? No, I didn’t think you would be; most smart, successful mothers are not also drug users. But I wasn’t talking about street drugs. I’m talking about medicine.

Yes, I’m one of those people doctors dread: the kind who takes the prescription but never fills it. They actually have a term for this. It’s called “noncompliance.” I know this because I’ve seen it written in my medical records and heard it whispered between doctors in reference to me.

There are many reasons I don’t take medicines, but the biggest is that I’m a control freak. If you don’t believe me, ask anyone I’ve lived with. From the time I could talk, I’ve always been someone who needs to be totally aware of anything and everything that is happening to me. Does this stem back to some psychological trauma? Probably. Can it all be explained with a lot of psychobabble, mumbo-jumbo? Absolutely. But why mess with perfec-

tion? I also don’t take medicine because if excessive yawning is listed as a side effect, as well as walking around and quacking like a duck, it will certainly happen to me. It is for this same reason I cannot watch shows like “ER,” and I’m forbidden from visiting medical Web sites.

Last month, however, I finally met my match: a Navy doctor who said, “You need to trust me as a doctor so you can get better and take care of those kids.” Here’s what happened: My children and I went to get our flu shots on a Friday. Come Monday, all three of us were sick with the flu (by some fine-print-loop-hole about the vaccine taking two weeks to become effective). Tuesday we were bedridden, and by Wednesday night I was in the hospital for dehydration and a major headache caused by a sinus infection.

I allowed the nurse to give me fluids through an IV, but began my usual protests at the mention of drugs that would relieve my headache and help drain my sinuses. The doc-

tor, however, wouldn’t listen. After a lot of coaxing and reassuring, I finally let him give me the medicine.

Ten minutes later, my worries faded to the background as the medicine took effect, and I rested for the first time in nearly a week. I can’t remember if I fell asleep or not, but it didn’t matter, for about an hour I was calm and relaxed.

Then slowly the medicine began to wear off, and as it did, all my troubles came back: “I need to pack Ford’s lunch . . . clean the kitchen . . . mail Mom’s package . . . pay that bill . . . call Leslie . . . write my column . . .”

Eventually I unhooked myself from the IV and much to my doctor’s dismay, began chasing him around the ER begging, “You’ve got to sign me out of here; I’ve got so much to do!”

He shook his head in defeat. “I can’t make you stay,” he said, “but I hope the medicine helped a little.”

“Mothers,” I told him, “are not made to feel that good until their children are 18 years old, at least!”

And with that I swept out of the emergency room and returned to my busy life.

But no, I haven’t forgotten what he told me. My bout with the flu taught me just how awry things can get when Mom isn’t taking care of herself.

Two days after coming home from the hospital, I dared to venture into my kitchen (a room I had not seen in nearly a week). Besides the unidentified sticky substance in a puddle on the counter, and the cold grilled-cheese crumbs in the baby’s booster seat, there was actual mold growing on the bread and (gasp!) a shoe on the dining room table!

Yes, it is very important to take care of “Mom” so that she can keep everything (and everyone) else up to standard. Sometimes, I guess, you have to give up some control to yours back.

Just don’t go getting any funny ideas, dear doctor, the next time I’m sick . . . I’ll still “Just Say No.”

Sarah Smiley may be reached for comments at www.sarahsmiley.com.



Meet A Sailor...

TM2(SW) JARROD THOMPSON

Job title/command:
NAS Jax Weapons

Hometown: Austin, Texas

Family Life: Single

Past Duty Stations: USS Oscar Austin (DDG-79)

Career Plans: To make rate and go to college.

Most Interesting Experience: Doing VBSS boarding in the Persian Gulf.

Words of Wisdom: Stay true to yourself.



Meet A Civilian...

TOM THOMAS

Job title/command:
Explosive Safety Officer

Hometown: Catasauqua, Penn.

Family Life: Single

Past Duty Stations: Naval Base Norfolk, Va.

Career Plans: To excel as far as possible in my position here.

Most Interesting Experience: Working day-to-day with the great people at NAS Jax.

Words of Wisdom: When you are put in charge, be in charge.

Naval Hospital Pastoral Care offers separation, divorce support

Divorce and separation hurt. Find help at Divorce Care. This is a Christian-based program incorporating group support along with video clips by experts discussing different topics.

Themes include anger, depression, loneliness, kids, forgiveness, reconciliation, and new relationships. The first meeting will be held at Naval Hospital Jacksonville’s Pastoral Care office Jan. 15 at 3 p.m. Subsequent meeting times are to be decided by the group participants.

To register or for more information, call 542-7531/2.

New facility opens

Commander Navy Region Southeast Rear Adm. Annette E. Brown, NAS Jacksonville Commanding Officer Capt. Mark Boensel and Navy-Marine Corps Intranet Site Manager Ed O’Keeffe, cut the ribbon at the Navy-Marine Corps Intranet Center Monday. The new \$10-million facility will provide tens of thousands of servicemembers and DoD civilians with secure Internet service.



Photo by PH3(AW/SW) Jamar Perry

HEY, MONEYMAN!

Hey, MoneyMan:

Well, again this year my wife and I overspent for Christmas. Every year we try to cut back, but it never works out that way. Now we have all these credit card bills and I don’t know if we will ever catch up. Help please!

MoneyMan Sez:

The beginning of a new year is a great time to make lifestyle changes and get things going in a new direction.

Are you looking for a magic formula that will make you financially healthy? Here it is! Spend less than you make each month.

It is just that simple. So, what do we do about these credit card bills? Pay them off Now! The average person carries more than \$4,000 in credit card debt. That is why the average person will never be financially stable.

In order to get rid of your debt, first stop charging! Secondly, try to consolidate the debt into the card or cards with the lowest possible interest rates. That way, more of your monthly



You can do it! It is just a matter of making it a top priority!

More questions? Call Hey, MoneyMan! at 778-0353.



Sunday Services

You are invited to the following Base Chapel Worship Services this Saturday and Sunday:

- Saturday** - 5 p.m. - Catholic Mass
- Sunday** - 8:30 a.m. - Holy Eucharist Episcopal
- 9:30 a.m. - Catholic Mass
- 11 a.m. - Protestant Worship
- 6:30 p.m. - Contemporary Service

“The Leading Edge,” Hangar 749 at the Base Chapel Center.

Children’s Sunday Class - Protestant Sunday School program is at 9:45-10:45 a.m., and Catholic CCD is 10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Jax Air News

NAS Jacksonville Commanding Officer _____ Capt. Mark S. Boensel
Public Affairs Officer _____ Charles P. “Pat” Dooling
Deputy Public Affairs Officer _____ Miriam A. Lareau
U.S. Naval Air Station Jacksonville Editorial Staff
Editor _____ Miriam S. Gallet
Assistant Editor _____ JO2(SCW) Eric Clay
Staff Writer _____ JO2 Mike England
Civilian Staff
Manager _____ Ellen S. Rykert
Staff Writer _____ Kaylee LaRocque
Design/Layout _____ George Atchley, Kaylee LaRocque

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Deadline for all routine copy is close of business the Friday before publication. Deadline for Classified submission is noon Monday. Questions or comments can be directed to the editor. The Jax Air News can be reached at (904) 542-8053 or by fax at (904) 542-1534 or write the Jax Air News, Box 2, NAS Jacksonville, Fla., 32212-5000. All news releases should be sent to this address.

The Jax Air News is published by The Florida Times-Union, a private firm in no way connected with the U. S. Navy under exclusive written agreement with the U. S. Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida. It is published every Thursday by The Florida Times-Union, whose offices are at 1 Riverside Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32202. Estimated readership over 32,000. Distribution by The Florida Times-Union.

Advertisements are solicited by the publisher and inquiries regarding advertisements should be directed to:

Jax Air News
Ellen S. Rykert, Military Publications Manager
1 Riverside Avenue • Jacksonville, FL 32202
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Hospital delivers its first baby of 2004

By Loren Barnes
Naval Hospital Jax Public Affairs

Naval Hospital Jacksonville welcomed its first new baby of the new year when Jennifer Greuling, wife of AT1 (SW/AW) Rob Greuling, delivered Cooper Charles Greuling Jan. 1 at 11:28 a.m.

He weighed in at 6 lbs. 8.3 ounces. He was delivered by Cmdr. Robert Morales, obstetrician, and Lt. Vanessa McNair, a resident at Naval Hospital Jacksonville.

The proud parents were presented with a gift bag including a hand-knitted blanket and sweater from the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society.

Also included were



Photo by HM2 Michael Morgan

Naval Hospital Jacksonville Commanding Officer Capt. John Sentell (right) presents AT1(SW/AW) Rob Greuling and his wife, Jennifer, a certificate of congratulations for delivering the first baby of 2004 at Naval Hospital Jacksonville. Cooper Charles Greuling was born Jan. 1 at 11:28 a.m.

coupons and a \$50 Navy Exchange gift certificate from the NAS Jacksonville Morale, Welfare and Recreation Department and two \$25 gift certificates

from the hospital Nurse's Corps Association and Chief's Association.

AT1 Grueling is stationed aboard NAS Jacksonville and works in the Aircraft

Intermediate Maintenance Department (AIMD).

The Gruelings have two other children, Robert and Evan.

A surprise arrival



Photo by JO2(SCW) Eric Clay

On Dec. 19, the students of Little Creek Elementary School in St. Johns County, Fla., were surprised during a fire drill by Santa Claus arriving aboard a HS-7 helicopter.

Wanted: Tax Preparers!

Here's your chance to serve your country in a new way

From Navy Legal Service Office

Volunteers are urgently needed to help our tax season continue to be a resounding success! With so many of our forces deployed, the pool of active duty volunteers is smaller than in previous years, so we are seeking retirees and family members of active duty and retirees to assist. Please consider volunteering for this very worthwhile program. You don't need to be a tax expert - we'll train you. Tax return preparation training will be provided Jan. 12-16 at NS Mayport and Jan. 20-23 at NAS Jacksonville.

The Navy Income Tax Assistance and Electronic Tax Filing Program for the 2004 income tax season will provide federal income tax preparation and filing assistance. Success of this valuable quality of life program depends upon not only the local commands, but also upon the volunteer efforts of our retirees and family members.

Tax return preparation is often perceived as a complicated and time-consuming activity. As a result, many in the military community often pay commercial tax preparers to prepare their tax returns for them, rather than preparing their own. Additionally, some of those who pay private companies for assistance also opt to receive "instant refunds," which amount to short-term loans, typically at exorbitant interest rates. Finally, many who do prepare their own taxes fail to claim legitimate deductions and credits. Since 1994, military families have been able to have their returns prepared correctly for free, and those electing to file their returns electronically could receive their refunds sooner than would otherwise be possible. We need your help to make this happen this year!

Last year, Navy Tax Assistance volunteers prepared more than 15,292 federal and state tax returns for Southeast Region military families. Our Sailors received over four million dollars in refunds - that was an increase of \$500,000 from the previous year. The value of tax preparation fees saved was over \$1,500,000, money that our military families were able to keep, rather than pay to commercial preparers. The continued success of this program depends entirely on hard-charging, dedicated volunteers to support this valuable quality of life program. Without additional support from our military community, services may have to be curtailed. Help keep it alive this year, contact LN1 Wanda Miller at 542-2565, Ext. 3103 or LNC Teri Hartford at 270-5445, Ext. 3010 if you are interested.

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AW1(AW/NAC) Michael Johnson

VP-45 selects 2003 Senior Sailor of the Year

By Lt. Rick Foster
VP-45 PAO

Cmdr. Will Fitzgerald of VP-45 takes great pleasure in announcing AW1(AW/NAC) Michael Johnson as the squadron's Senior Sailor of the Year for 2003.

The award reflects Johnson's exceptional performance during the past year as assistant commander, Task Group 67 operations officer and safety lead petty officer.

Johnson has been in the Navy for over 17 years and has spent most of his time in Jacksonville. After his initial aircrew training, he reported to VP-24 in Jacksonville as a non-acoustic sensor operator until the squadron was

disestablished. He also served with the Pro's Nest at VP-30 where he was a non-acoustic sensor operator instructor.

After his instructor tour, he was stationed at the Tactical Support Center in Sigonella, Sicily, Italy and arrived at VP-45 in June of 2000. Johnson currently serves as the non-acoustic sensor operator on Combat Aircrew Three and instructs junior non-acoustic operators. His next duty station keeps him in Jacksonville as he completes a second instructor tour with VP-30.

Johnson has been married to his wife, Lisa, for 10 years and is the son of Jim and Patsy Johnson of Salisbury, N.C.

VP-45 'Pelicans' take part in maritime interdiction exercise

By Lt. Rick Foster
VP-45 PAO

A P-3 surveillance aircraft from VP-45 operating out of Sigonella, Sicily, Italy, recently joined the guided missile frigate USS Nicholas (FFG 47) and naval assets from seven other nations participating in BASILIC 03, a multilateral maritime interdiction training exercise in the Mediterranean.

The exercise conducted Nov. 25-28, was part of a collaborative effort to take active measures against trafficking in weapons of mass destruction and related materials. Assets from the United States, Spain, France and Italy contributed assets to BASILIC 03 while other countries – Japan, German, the United Kingdom and Portugal – participated as observers for the exercise.

VP-45 conducted two

flights in support of the exercise, during which they covertly located and tracked a merchant ship suspected of trafficking weapons of mass destruction.

Plane Commander Lt. Kyle Twenter and Tactical Coordinator Lt. Sven Sharp led the Combat Aircrew eight during the indispensable flights. Other airborne assets included French and Italian Atlantiques that performed similar duties.

Although participants are capable and ready to execute interdiction operations against such trafficking today, the 11-partner nations have agreed to a series of interdiction training exercises to improve their capabilities and interoperability.

Six other exercises are currently being planned for the remainder of 2003 and the first few months of 2004, in which P-3s will undoubtedly play a similar role.

VP-16 seeks community improvement with Habijax

By Lt. j.g. Joshua Guerre
VP-16 PAO

Over the past few months, the Sailors of VP-16, have been seen with hammers throughout Jacksonville working with Habijax, a local extension of Habitat for Humanity.

Habijax coordinates with local churches and community service centers to build affordable housing for local citizens in need. The results of this community involvement have been dramatic with over 1,000 houses built in the Jacksonville area over the past 15 years.

The adoption of a community-based program like Habijax helped VP-16 in their continual effort to reach out and assist the City of Jacksonville. The squadron has increased its involvement with community-based organizations over the last year. According to Lt. Cmdr. Dan Morio, VP-16 command services officer, this involvement in the community is an effort to return the support that the community has shown us over the years. Following their upcoming deployment, the members of VP-16 hope to continue their involvement with the City of Jacksonville and organizations like Habijax.



Photo courtesy of VP-16

VP-16 Sailors lend a hand as Habijax builds affordable housing for local residents.

Habijax was founded in Jacksonville in 1988 as an outgrowth of Habitat for Humanity. The organization has worked throughout the world since 1976 to eliminate poverty housing and homelessness. In December 2002, Habijax celebrated the con-

struction of 1,000 houses in Jacksonville. Since then, building has continued at the rate of over 200 houses per year. With over 10,000 volunteers and employees, Habijax has emerged as the most successful affiliate of Habitat for Humanity.

HS-11 rescues Enterprise Sailor

By Lt. j.g. Ryan Vest
HS-11 PAO

"Dragonslayer" 610 was spinning on the deck of USS Enterprise in the late afternoon of Nov. 14, for a crew switch and hot refueling (taking on fuel with the rotors still spinning).

The Arabian Sea was calm as the crew strapped in for a routine Surface Search and Control (SSC) mission. The calm was broken as the radio crackled to life with the air boss's voice, "610, we might have some real world tasking for you, stand by." Moments later, the boss came back with the call, "man overboard, port side!"

Within 90 seconds of getting the call, crews had unplugged the fueling hose, pulled the chocks and chains, and had the aircraft ready to lift. Pilot Lt. Brian Sanderson and co-pilot Lt. j.g. Michael Dutton along with AW2 Chris Dondelinger

and AW3 Brent Blackwell lifted off, and began searching along the ship's wake for the man in the water. They quickly spotted two life rings that the ship's lookouts had thrown, but were unable to find the survivor. They circled the life rings for several minutes before continuing to search down the wake, with no success. After five miles, they turned around and came back toward the ship.

"The sun was in our eyes going away from the ship, which may be why we didn't see the survivor on the first pass, but coming back toward the ship, near the first life ring, I spotted a small dot on the water, and knew we had found him," Sanderson reported. The survivor was in a T-shirt and jogging shorts with no flotation. Only his head was visible in the wake as he was treading water.

"Finding someone in the water with no flotation or

signaling devices is very difficult. You're flying 300 feet off the water, looking for their head, something smaller than a basketball, floating on top of the water, and the ocean is a big place," added Dondelinger.

The crew immediately threw out a smoke to mark the spot where they saw the survivor and to assess the winds. "It was important that we knew where the winds were, because we had just taken on five thousand pounds of fuel and we were pretty heavy," explained Dutton.

Sanderson brought the helicopter into the wind on top of the survivor and deployed Blackwell, the rescue swimmer, from a 15-foot hover.

"We got there just in time," Blackwell recalled, "He was going under for the last time when I got there. I had to reach down

and grab him by the shirt and pull him back up to the surface."

The survivor was in a state of panic when Blackwell pulled him to the surface. He grabbed on to the rescue swimmer to stay afloat. Blackwell fitted the survivor with his own personal flotation device, inflated it to keep him from going under again, and calmed him down before signaling for the helicopter to move into position for hoisting.

Within 20 minutes of getting the call, the crew of Dragonslayer 610 had the man overboard safely back aboard USS Enterprise, where the survivor was treated by the ship's medical officers.

As the sun set on the Arabian Sea, Dragonslayer 610 lifted off to finish the day's scheduled mission.

'Pelicans' excel in NATO exercise

By Lt. Rick Foster
VP-45 PAO

A recent international exercise gave VP-45 another chance to prove their excellence in anti-submarine warfare and surface search and command control.

The exercise, conducted in the waters around

Turkey, spanned over a week last November.

Working in conjunction with Turkish, British and Spanish forces, the aircrew flew multiple missions in support of the exercise. Led by Patrol Plane Commander Lt. Bruce Jennings, and Tactical Coordinator Lt.

See PELICANS, Page 5



'Diamondcutters' work around clock to finish out year

By Lt. J.g. Jack Garcia
VS-30 PAO

The VS-30 "Diamondcutters" were busier than usual this fall as they kicked off workups for their 2004 cruise. This is the final deployment for VS-30 after 51 years of service as the squadron is scheduled to be decommissioned in 2005.

From hosting alumni functions to the Sea Control Advanced Readiness Program to the Conventional Weapons Technical Proficiency Inspection, Team Diamond was as busy as Santa's Elves throughout October, November and December.

"The maintenance department worked almost around the clock to prepare for the upcoming workups. The squadron has undergone several major maintenance evolutions including the induction and receipt of several aircraft to the Integrated Maintenance Concept," said Lt. Cmdr. Christopher Cruz, VS-30 maintenance officer.

These accomplishments are readily apparent and the maintenance workcenter's actions speak for themselves. The ordnance shop recently completed its Conventional Weapons Technical Proficiency Inspection (CWTPPI) that culminated in the dropping of several thousand pounds of ordnance.

Led by CWO2 John Ket-terer, AOC Mike Rock and AO1 John Schumm, the "ordies" received valuable training from the Sea

Control Weapons School. They put the training to good use when they received a thorough administrative inspection and timed weapons loading evolutions. This completed the last CWTPPI in Diamondcutter history. Thanks to the aviation ordnancemen, it was a complete success.

As the ordnance workcenter was busy with these inspections, the aircrew was undergoing a harsh regimen of classroom studies and simulators, culminating in numerous flights, which successfully tested their skills in various dynamic tactical environments.

Assistant Training Officer Lt. Jeffrey Farmer, was satisfied with what VS-30 achieved in such a short period of time adding, "We will be the tip of the SUW spear for CVW-17."

He was not alone in his enthusiasm as the Diamondcutters continue their push into the New Year.

As if those projects were not enough, VS-30 took on some extra duties as they completed a successful shakedown of the Navy's newest aircraft carrier, the USS Ronald Reagan (CVN-76). During this period, the Airframes workcenter was highlighted as they gave it their all when the tail hook of aircraft 705 received severe damage during an incident with the ship's arresting gear.

Because of dedicated Sailors such as AM1 Rily Suiter, AM1 Peter Cunningham, AM2 Meeder, AM3 Scott Gordon, and AMAN



Members of the VS-30 Ordnance Workcenter get ready for the Conventional Weapons Technical Proficiency Inspection. Photos courtesy of VS-30

Andrew Haaf, the discrepancy was expeditiously repaired and the aircraft was returned to a full up status in minimal time.

The Diamondcutter S-3 demo team was as sharp as ever during the Jacksonville Sea & Sky Spectacular held at Jax Beach in October. The team stunned the crowd with the S-3 Viking's multiple tactical capabilities, agility and maneuverability.

The Diamondcutters will continue their schedule into the New Year as they look forward to their final deployment in 2004.



The VS-30 "Diamondcutters" stand tall in front of the Jacksonville skyline.

Adm. Massenburg visits Naval Air Depot Jacksonville

By Katherine Midyette
Public Affairs Specialist,
NAVAIR Depot Jacksonville

On Dec. 1, the United States Senate confirmed Vice Adm. Walter Massenburg as commander, Naval Air Systems Command.

On Dec. 17, Massenburg visited the Naval Air Depot Jacksonville to address sen-

ior leadership, supervisors, and artisans and explain his plan. One of the admiral's top priorities is advising the Naval Air (NAVAIR) community about his vision and goals for the command's future. Massenburg's goals are well defined: Balance current and future readiness; reduce the cost of doing business; improve agility;

ensure alignment; and implement fleet-driven metrics. These goals are directly aligned with those of the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), and will guide NAVAIR in future efforts to support the fleet and the warfighter.

Massenburg's vision for NAVAIR is: "We provide cost-wise readiness and dominant maritime combat

power to make a great Navy/Marine Corps team better," supporting Sea Power 21. CNO Adm. Vern Clark's vision of the Navy

and naval power for the 21st century

He stated, "For the next three years, that's all this organization is going to be

about. That will be the vision today, the vision a year from now, the vision when I leave. It will not change."

NAVRIP process actively engages fleet at Jax

By NAVRIIP
Communications Action Team

NAVAIR Depot Jacksonville recently applied the Naval Aviation Readiness Integrated Improvement Program (NAVRIP) process to isolate specific issues and solutions to improve the reliability of for the T-56 engine.

Following the NAVRIIP methodology, NAVAIR Jacksonville intermediate level depot activities revealed processing, manpower, capability and training issues that contributed to the low reliability of the reduction gearbox assembly (RGA) of the T-56 engine. In the past, maintainers identified quick fixes or potential fixes for near-term and long-term reliability improvements.

"It was not until the NAVRIIP process was introduced to the T-56 engine maintainers that a structured and disciplined approach was used to identify and implement the most effective solutions," said Martha Irene, Fleet support team engineer at the depot.

NAVRIP is the comprehensive program designed to make fundamental process changes to the way the Navy provides manpower,

equipment and training to stateside Naval Aviation commands between deployments. NAVRIIP's focus is to meet the fleet's objectives of "aircraft ready for training and operations" by development and implementation of solutions to cost-wise readiness barriers.

The barrier removal team (BRT) began with the identification of a readiness degrader and the lowest reliability module developing from the T56 engine.

The team found the RGA to be the module with the lowest reliability. Data obtained from fleet databases, such as aircraft engine management system decision support system (AEMS DSS) and logistics management decision support system (LMDSS), revealed a high number of RGA rejections with a very low time since repair (TSR). A high number of RGAs were being rejected with less than 500 hours TSR.

By including fleet members on the BRT, maintainers were able to completely understand the problem by addressing different factors such as manpower, material, processes and training. The BRT used cause-and-effect diagrams to address all factors contributing to

low RGA reliability.

The team collaborated the efforts and expertise of the T-56 engine program managers, fleet support team and fleet members working on the engine to allow for discussion of possible solutions. The team approached the readiness degraders and solved the problem by eliminating the barrier completely. The BRT also addressed interim solutions and solutions which had not been previously considered.

"The NAVRIIP process helped to accelerate implementation of improved cleaning procedures for the RGA, and assisted with improving the procedures for oil draining and magnetic plug inspection," Irene said. "The team also developed a proposal to update the NATOPS (Naval Air Training and Operation Procedures Standardization) which will avoid future mission aborts."

"Overall, the use of the NAVRIIP BRT allowed us to follow a disciplined and structured approach to solving a readiness issue. It also incorporated the fleet as active participants in the process and facilitated their acceptance of some of the change and improvements introduced," Irene added.

PELICANS: VP-45 shines at NATO exercises

From Page 4

Cmdr. Scott Sherman, the men and women of Combat Aircrew Six successfully located and tracked both surface ships and submarines during the exercise.

Though the detachment proved to be operationally busy, the crew did get enough time off to allow a few of the men and women to enjoy some of the local culture in Dalaman, Turkey. One of the flight

engineers, AME2 Jeffery Adkins, played guitar along with a hotel staff member who was playing folk songs on a Turkish lute.

The exercise provided an excellent opportunity for the crew to hone their skills by working in a coordinated operations environment. The crew performed flawlessly during the exercise, showing the prowess of VP-45 on the international stage yet again.

Chapel In Action



Chaplain Lt. Kurt Michaels performs a baptism at the All Saints Chapel.



Chaplain (Lt.) Kurt Michaels (back right), hosts Table Talk Fellowship at Barracks 822, every Tuesday night at 7:30 p.m. for single Sailors.



NAS Jax Chaplain (Lt.) Douglas Bryan offers some remarks to the more than 200 people who attended the first Thanksgiving Interfaith Service Nov. 23 at the NAS Jax Chapel.

NAS Jax Chapel Where Sailors and families worship, have fun

By Chaplain (Lt.) Mylon Pope
NAS Jacksonville Chapel

Seeking to respond to the rich diversity of religious traditions and spiritual practices represented among the military community, the Chapel Center at NAS Jacksonville offers a comprehensive multi-faith religious program that fills many needs aboard the station.

It is a place where Sailors, civilian employees, retirees and their families worship and find solace in time of peace or war.

The multi-faith program centers around a vision in which all faiths are celebrated and in which dialogue about common moral, ethical and spiritual issues is encouraged.

The Chapel Center's first area of responsibility is to provide and facilitate the commanding officer's Command Religious Program for every person associated with NAS Jax.

"The chaplains and the entire Command Religious Program is here to support the religious and spiritual needs of our Sailors," explained Cmdr. John Lyle, command chaplain, who is also responsible for the oversight of the entire chapel program and also serves the Roman Catholic congregation.

"We are trying to provide a very vigorous flight line ministry, a ministry of presence, where we are available to the Sailors 24/7. We want them to see chaplains in the workplace, in the hangars and the shops," he added.

"Just as Sailors need to train in

their rate and be prepared, we want to make sure they are spiritually prepared. Right now we are in combat, at war and people need that spiritual dimension. Today, more-than-ever, we need to be physically, mentally and spiritually prepared. We, at the NAS Jax Chapel, are trying to do that for our Sailors. Our commanding officer is very supportive of our very vigorous flight line ministry," said Lyle.

Support for the religious and spiritual needs of our Sailors and other parishioners are offered through a series of programs and daily masses.

Catholic services are Saturdays at 5 p.m. with a Roman Catholic Mass at St. Edwards Chapel and a Sunday Mass at 9:30 a.m. The chapel also offers daily Catholic masses at 11:35 a.m. Monday through Friday. These services are very well attended and the parishioners represent a wide array of people aboard the station.

Protestant services are offered Sunday mornings at 8:30 a.m. with a Liturgical Service designed to meet the needs of Sailors and other worshippers who come from Episcopalian, Lutheran, Orthodox and various other Protestant traditions that follow the liturgies in the Book of Common Prayer. This service is led by Lt. Cmdr. Dedra Bell, deputy command chaplain and Chaplain (Lt.) Mylon Pope.

Another general Protestant service is offered 11 a.m. It is usually led by Chaplain (Lts.) Kurt Michaels and Troy Todd, and is

See CHAPEL, Page 7



Students enjoy a music class at the NAS Jax Chapel's 2003 Vacation Bible School last summer.



Guests enjoy a potluck meal after the first Interfaith Service at the NAS Jax Chapel.

Chapel In Action



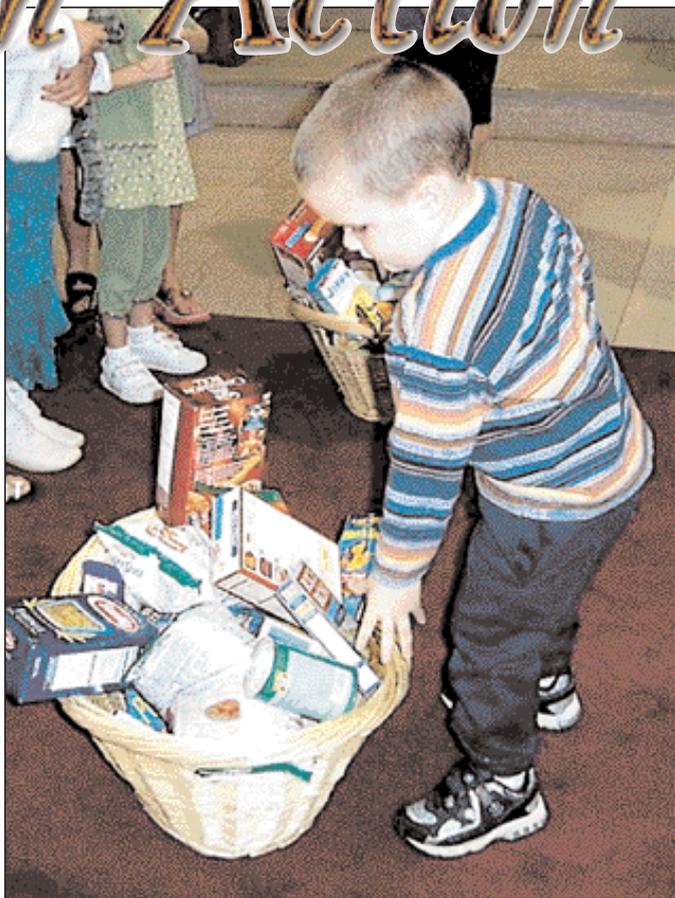
One of several 2003 Vacation Bible School classes enjoy outdoor activities at the NAS Jax Chapel.



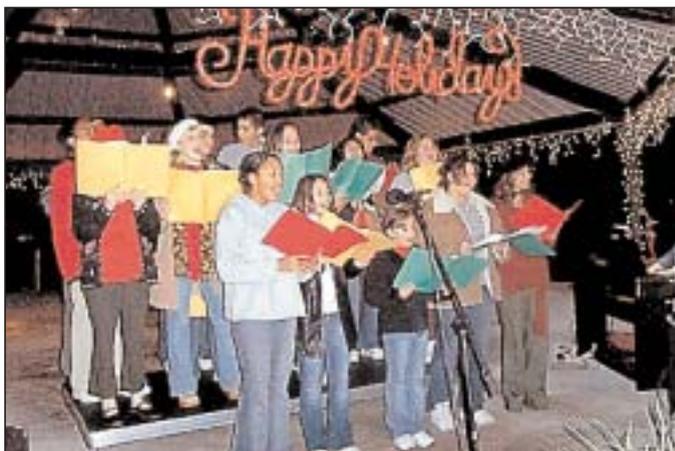
Children's Sunday school classes donated items to the Base Food Locker during a Sunday Protestant Worship Service in November.



The NAS Jax Chapel Youth Group collected food in support of the Base Food Locker in November.



Children at the NAS Jax All Saints Chapel learn the meaning of sharing at an early age. The goods collected were donated to the Base Food Locker.



The NAS Jax Chapel Youth Choir performs some Christmas songs at the Christmas tree lighting Dec. 5.

CHAPEL: Activities ongoing throughout the year

From Page 6

designed for Protestants who come from less liturgical backgrounds like Baptists, Methodists and Pentecostals. Bryan usually leads a final service on Sundays at 6:30 p.m. in the Religious Education Building 749. It is a contemporary service designed to meet the needs of Sailors and other worshippers who want a laidback worship service that allows a greater sense of intimacy without all the traditional trappings of worship.

Another part of the Command Religious Program are the Sunday Morning Christian Education programs for both Roman Catholic (Christian Catechumenal Doctrine) and Protestant (Sunday School) children led by Directors of Religious Education Lou Caron and Grace Heaffner.

One extremely successful program the Chapel Center offers is Vacation Bible School each July. Last July, over 100 children registered, and this program has grown immensely over the last several years.

A Table Talk Fellowship program for Sailors is offered each Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. in the new barracks. It is designed to be a great time of fellowship (there is always plenty of pizza) and an informal time to discuss any needs you might have with a chaplain who is there to listen and help. Everyone is welcome.

Additionally to these services, chaplains also facilitate worship for anyone who is seeking it. The base has a great relationship with the Jewish and Muslim communities in Jacksonville, in fact, last November, the NAS Jax Chapel hosted a Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service that was co-led by the station chaplains, a local Jewish Rabbi, and Muslim Imam.

A very important support program aboard NAS Jax is the Base Food Locker. The Chapel has been very instrumental in supporting this program, and has contributed over \$30,000 within the last year. Incidentally, all monies received at the Chapel are distributed to charities, all of which play an important role in supporting

our Sailors and Marines, and the community around us.

The chaplains also offer counseling on just about any topic. They also offer premarital counseling, and the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) to better prepare couples for their new marriage. If you are interested in being married at the chapel, remember, the PREP course is required. This February, the chapel will host an important service in conjunction with Valentine's Day to allow couples to renew their wedding vows. This service has been very successful in the past, and is always well supported.

Chaplains are always available for any issue you have . . . 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We are happy to talk to you about any problem you are having, and encourage you to contact us before the problem gets to the crisis point.

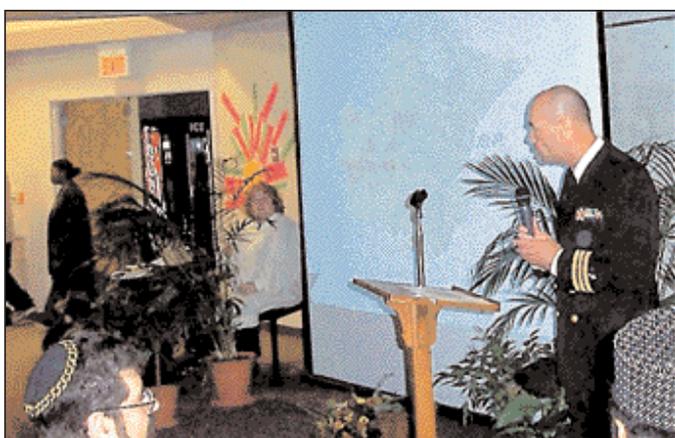
The chapel also practices regular outreach to the Sailors and Marines on the base with one-on-one ministry. Every command and tenant command has a chaplain assigned who are regulars in their workspaces. Our goal is to be as visible as possible and to talk to people right where they are. We believe that the ministry of the chapel goes far beyond the confines of the Chapel Complex, and our goal is to be a part of each community.

The Chaplain Corps and Religious Personnel (RPs) are closely related, working as a Religious Ministry Team, so when you come to the chapel, the staff plays a vital role in the services provided.

The office secretary here is Catherine Preston. RPCS Victor Koon, is the leading chief petty officer and RP1 Nick Enlow, RP2 Chelboni Singleton and RP2 Jason Jack support him.

The goal at the chapel is to support our community in any way possible. We are always there to listen, and help. We offer ministry, advice, and a haven when there seems to be nowhere else to turn. We consider it an honor to serve with you and we hope that you will give us the opportunity to serve you with any need you have.

To reach a chaplain or for more information, call 542-3051.



NAS Jax Command Chaplain (Cmdr.) John Lyle, welcomes parishioners to the first Thanksgiving Interfaith Service Nov. 23. Special guests included NAS Jax Commanding Officer Capt. Mark Boensel and his wife, Carole; Protestant Senior Chaplain (Lt. Cmdr.) Dedra Bell; NAS Jax Chaplain's (Lts.) Mylon Pope; Kurt Michaelis; Troy Todd; Rabbi Daniel Mehlman of Beth Shalom Congregation, Jacksonville; and Imam Muhammad Zaid Malik of the Islamic Center of North Jacksonville.

Photos courtesy of NAS Jax Chapel

Rabbi Daniel Mehlman from the Beth Shalom congregation, Jacksonville, reads the Torah at the first Interfaith Service at the NAS Jax Chapel.



Bush signs servicemembers relief act

By the House Committee on Veterans Affairs

President Bush has signed the "Servicemembers Civil Relief Act," new legislation to help ease the economic and legal burdens on military personnel called to active duty status in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Author by Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Chris Smith, the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act updates and strengthens current civil protections enacted during World War II. In addition, the new law contains dozens of provisions to assist soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines to help manage their financial and legal obligations while they are away from home in Iraq, Afghanistan and other locations around the world.

"Servicemembers called to active duty or deployed to new duty stations often find it difficult to meet their personal financial and legal obligations in a timely manner," said Chairman Smith. "The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act will help these brave men and women, as well as their families back home, by strengthening and expanding the current civil relief statute," he said.

"For example, servicemembers deploying to new duty stations



President George W. Bush will have the ability to terminate automobile leases without having to pay any early termination penalties," Smith said. "Furthermore, it will prevent personal property (such as automobiles) from being repossessed without a specific court order in order to take into account their military duty status," he said. "In addition, it is often difficult for servicemembers to be physically present during civil court proceedings when they have been called up to active duty or deployed to new duty stations," Smith said. "To protect their rights, H.R. 100 will provide ser-

vicemembers with automatic 90-day stays in civil proceedings. Furthermore, if an additional stay is subsequently requested but denied, the court will be required to appoint a counsel to protect the servicemember's rights while he remains on active duty," he said.

"The new law will even allow the possibility of servicemembers reopening default judgments rendered against them when the failure to appear was caused by military service. And the civil protections under this law will now also be applied to administrative proceedings, such as licensing and zoning matters, which are much more common today," said Smith.

"For Guard and reserve members called to active duty – especially for extended periods such as Operation Iraqi Freedom – the reduction in income can place significant economic pressure on them and their families," Smith said. "The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act recognizes that these men and women need and deserve special relief to meet a number of financial obligations and liabilities, such as rent, mortgages, installment contracts and leases," he said.

Now that it is enacted into law, H.R. 100 will also:

Expand current law that protects servicemembers and their families from eviction from housing while on active duty due to nonpayment of rents that are \$1,200 per month or less. Under the new provisions, this protection would be significantly updated to meet today's higher cost of living – covering housing leases up to \$2,400 per month – and then be adjusted annually to account for inflation.

Provide a servicemember who receives permanent change of station orders or who is deployed to a new location for 90 days or more the right to terminate a housing lease.

Clarify and restate existing law that limits to 6 percent interest on credit obligations, including credit card debt, for active duty servicemembers. HR 100 unambiguously states that no interest above 6 percent can accrue for credit obligations while on active duty, nor can that excess interest become due once the servicemember leaves active duty – instead that portion above 6 percent is permanently forgiven. Furthermore, the monthly payment must be reduced by the amount of interest saved during the covered period.

Update life insurance protections provided to activated Guard

and reserve members by increasing from \$10,000 to \$250,000 the maximum policy coverage that the federal government will protect from default for nonpayment while on active duty.

Prevent servicemembers from a form of double taxation that can occur when they have a spouse who works and is taxed in a state other than the state in which they maintain their permanent legal residence. HR 100 will prevent states from using the income earned by a servicemember in determining the spouse's tax rate when they do not maintain their permanent legal residence in that state.

"With hundreds of thousands of our military personnel stationed around the world today in the war on terrorism, it is imperative that Congress do all that it can to ease the burdens that they and their loved ones face back at home," Smith said. "Enactment of the 'Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act' strengthens current civil protections, as well as provides important new ones, to help prevent soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines defending our nation and our freedom from being negatively affected by their service," he said.

Internal Revenue Service helps military families with tax relief

From the Internal Revenue Service

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is helping taxpayers use a new law providing income exclusions for death benefit payments and certain home sales. Both provisions are retroactive, so some qualifying taxpayers must file amended returns to claim these tax breaks.

The IRS asks them to put the words "Military Family Tax Relief Act" in red at the top of such returns to speed processing.

The new law doubled the benefit paid to survivors of deceased Armed Forces members to \$12,000, made the entire amount tax-free and made the changes effective for deaths occurring after Sept. 10, 2001. Previously, only \$3,000 was tax-free. Recipients who already paid tax on benefits received for deaths after the effective date may file an amended return on Form 1040X, reducing their adjusted gross income by the \$3,000 they had reported as taxable. Those who receive such "gratuity" benefits in 2003 and future years will not have to report them on their tax returns.

Taxpayers may exclude gain on a home sale, provided they have owned and used the home as a principal residence for two of the five years before the sale. A reduced maximum exclusion may apply to those who satisfy part of the two-year rule. Military person-

Tax withholding information for military retirees

From the Internal Revenue Service

The federal tax law is a pay-as-you-go system, which requires you to deposit payments throughout the year as monies are earned or received. There are two ways to do that:

Tax Withholding - You can request federal tax be withheld from pensions, social security, wages and unemployment compensation by filing the following forms with the payer of the income:

W-4 for wages
W-4P for pensions and annuities
W-4V for social security and unemployment compensation

DD Form 2656, SEP 2001 Section VI for payment of retired personnel
Potential errors when filling out forms for a military retiree taxpayer:

Claiming the wrong number of dependents - The criteria for a military dependent is different than the

requirements for a tax exemption for a dependent. For more information about claiming a tax exemption for a dependent, you may visit www.irs.gov, or call toll free, 1-800-829-1040.

Double claiming allowances on W-4P when a taxpayer has multiple pensions or more than one income: You will be asked to complete a Form W-4 or W-4P by each pension payer or employer. To figure the number of allowances you may claim, combine allowances and income subject to withholding from all sources on one W-4P worksheet. If, after reading the Form W-4P worksheet, you decide you are entitled to claim one allowance, claim one allowance at the higher paying job and zero allowances at your other job. Do not claim the same withholding allowances at both pensions/jobs because not enough tax will be withheld during the year.

Estimated Tax Payments - If you

do not pay enough tax through withholding then you are required to make estimated tax payments directly to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). This can be done electronically through www.eftps.gov or by completing a quarterly payment voucher (1040ES) and mailing it to the IRS.

You can calculate your estimated tax payments electronically by visiting the IRS web site, using the search engine input the word "calculator". You may also use Publication 919, How Do I Adjust My Tax Withholding, to manually calculate the payment.

Penalties - By making appropriate withholdings, either by estimated tax payments or having it withheld at the source, you can avoid penalties and interest.

For additional information, you may visit www.irs.gov, or call toll free, 1-800-829-1040 or 1-800-829-3676 for forms.

nel often retain ownership of a home while away on duty but eventually sell it without returning to live in it, perhaps failing the use test completely.

The new law allows persons on qualified extended duty in the U.S. Armed Services or the Foreign Service to suspend this five-year test period for up to 10 years of such duty time. A taxpayer is on qualified extended duty when at a duty station that is at least 50 miles from the residence sold, or when residing under orders in government housing, for more

than 90 days or for an indefinite period.

This change applies to home sales after May 6, 1997. A taxpayer may use this provision for only one property at a time and may exclude gain on only one home sale in any two-year period. Although an amended return must usually be filed within three years of the original return's due date, the law gives qualifying taxpayers who sold a home before 2001 until Nov. 10, 2004, to file an amended return claiming the exclusion.

A taxpayer may use Form 4506, "Request for Copy or

Transcript of Return," to get an earlier year's tax return. This form and Form 1040X are available on the IRS Web site at www.irs.gov, or by calling 1-800-TAX-FORM (1-800-829-3676).

Here are four examples illustrating how the new home sale exclusion rule works:

Example #1 - Lt. Green owned a house in Georgia and lived there from December 1988 until deployed overseas in January 1991. When he returned to the United States in July 1999, he was stationed 90 miles from the

house. Preferring not to commute this distance, he sold the house four months later, realizing a gain of \$150,000. Because he had not used the house as his principal residence during the 5 years preceding the sale, he reported this capital gain on his 1999 return. Under the new law, he can disregard both the 87 years he was overseas and the 4 months after his return to

the States, since he was stationed more than 50 miles from old residence.

His five-year test period for ownership and use now consists of the 5 years before January 1991, when he went overseas. Since he owned and lived in the house for more than two years during this test period, he may exclude the gain on the sale. He must file an amended return by Nov. 10, 2004, to recover the capital gain tax paid on the 1999 return.

Example #2 - Assume the same facts as Example #1, except that when Lt. Green returned to the U.S., his duty station was 40 miles from the house. Only the time overseas may be disregarded, because his duty station after returning to the U.S. was within 50 miles of the old residence. His five-year test period for ownership and use now consists of 4 months in 1999 and the 56 months before January 1991, when he went overseas. Since he lived in the house for more than two years during this test period, he may exclude the gain on the sale. He must file an amended return by Nov. 10, 2004, to recover the capital gain tax paid on the 1999 return.

Example #3 - Col. White

Questions and answers on excused absence for employees returning from active duty

From CNRSE HRO

On Nov. 14, President George W. Bush directed the heads of agencies to grant Federal employees who are returning from active duty five days of excused absence from their civilian duties.

The president's memorandum is available from OPM's Web site at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/comp-memo/2003/2003-14b.asp>. The Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) memorandum and guidance on granting the five days of excused absence are available at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/comp-memo/2003/2003-14a.asp>.

The following questions and answers provide additional information to assist agencies in implementing the president's memorandum:

Q: When must an agency grant the five days of excused absence? Must an agency grant the excused absence as soon as the employee returns to civilian duty?

A: The intent of the president's memorandum is to grant five days of paid time off to employees returning to federal civilian service to aid in their readjustment to civilian life. Agencies must provide a returning employee with five days of excused absence upon his or her return to federal civilian duty. Upon receiving notification from an employee of his or her intent to return to civilian duty on a specific date, an agency must grant the employee five days of excused absence immedi-

ately prior to the employee's actual resumption of his or her duties. The commencement of the five days of excused absence represents a return to federal civilian employment, and the employee is obligated to report for work at the end of the five-day period.

If the employee had already returned to federal civilian service prior to Nov. 14, he or she may take the five days of excused absence at a time mutually agreeable to the employee and the agency.

Q: How does the five days of excused absence affect the time limits for restoring an employee to federal civilian employment under 5 CFR part 353, subpart B?

A: The five days of excused absence do not affect the time limits for exercising restoration rights, because the commencement of the five days of excused absence constitutes a return to civilian service. For example, an employee may take whatever grace period is allowed under part 353 and, in addition, is entitled to five days paid excused absence.

Q: We have employees who have returned to federal civilian duty, but are expected to be activated again. Can an employee receive five days of excused absence more than once?

A: No. Each employee is entitled to five days of excused absence when he or she returns from active military service in connection with Operation Noble Eagle, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, or any other military operation subsequently estab-

lished under Executive Order 13223. Each employee will receive five days of excused absence, regardless of the number of activations.

Q: Must a qualifying employee use his or her five days of excused absence all at once?

A: Yes. The intent of the president's memorandum is to provide returning employees with a continuous period of paid time off to spend with their families before returning to federal civilian duties.

Q: May qualifying employees return to federal civilian duty and then take the five days of excused absence at a later date?

A: No. The five days of excused absence must be granted as soon as the employee reports back for Federal civilian duty or notifies the agency of his or her intent to return to civilian duty. In the event that an employee had already returned to civilian duty prior to Nov. 14, the employee should be granted five days of excused absence at a time that is mutually agreeable to the federal agency and the employee. The five days of excused absence may not be "stockpiled" for use at a later date. In addition, the five days of excused absence is not to be confused with "credit hours" earned under a flexible work schedule or compensatory time off earned for overtime hours.

Q: If an employee was activated for military service in connection with Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom, or any other military operation subsequently established under Executive Order

13223, but was not deployed overseas, is the employee eligible for the five days of excused absence when he or she exercises return rights?

A: Yes, the president's memorandum applies to all employees who were called to active duty in support of the continuing global war on terrorism.

Q: If an employee who was activated was not a federal employee when his or her tour began, but has been hired by the federal government since his deactivation, is the employee entitled to the five days of excused absence?

A: No. The president's memorandum specifically addresses "returning federal civil servants who were called to active duty." A new employee who was not a federal civilian employee at the time of his or her activation does not qualify for the five days of excused absence.

Q: How do agencies compute the five days of excused absence for part-time employees or employees on uncommon tours of duty, such as federal firefighters? Do these employees receive five work days, 40 hours, or a prorated amount of excused absence?

A: All employees are entitled to the equivalent of one workweek of excused absence. The period of excused absence for an employee on an uncommon tour of duty or an employee on a part-time work schedule will be prorated according to the number of hours in the employee's regularly scheduled workweek.

Q: May the five days of excused absence be prorated depending upon the length of the employee's

deployment?

A: No. Each employee who was activated for military service in connection with Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom, or any other military operation subsequently established under Executive Order 13223 is entitled to one week of excused absence.

For further information, call HRO at 542-3143.

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GALA: Chefs and culinary specialists lend expertise to tribute

From Page 1

involved this year. It was a great honor to participate in this event. It turned out to be a huge success," he added.

Established in April of 2003, the Culinary Arts Program at NAS Jax Galley is a direct result of the Navy Personnel Development Command, "Task Force Excel Initiative." This program encourages innovation in training at Naval installations to meet the needs of the fleet.

Through an educational partnership between NAS Jax Food Service Division and FCCJ, Navy chefs and culinary specialists receive a comprehensive, challenging hands-on education in contemporary and traditional culinary arts. The program includes food preparation, culinary techniques, and hospitality and restaurant management. Upon completion of this program students acquire the skills necessary

to earn an associate's degree in culinary arts. This program also meets the American Culinary Federation (ACF) educational requirements to be a certified culinarian. When combined with additional on-the-job training, this program provides industry certification. Navy personnel that complete this Homeport Training Program, earn the same professional credentials as their civilian counterparts.

For the past four years, volunteers from NAS Jacksonville and its resident commands have helped the MBF, with its annual events. This year MBF raised over \$330,000 to help support local children programs and significantly impacted the lives of more than 16,000 children in Jacksonville and Northeast Florida.

The foundation was founded in 1997 and is a non-profit organization committed to the protection and aid of neglected and abused children in Northeast Florida.

Time running short for 2003 tax moves

From the Internal Revenue Service

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) reminded taxpayers they have less than eight weeks to make their final financial moves for the 2003 tax year.

Taxpayers can take the first step toward advance tax planning by reviewing tax law changes featured on the IRS Web site, www.irs.gov. A little advance planning now could save taxpayers time – and perhaps even money – later. For many families, tax planning means locating the IRS notice for their Advance Child Tax Credit.

For teachers, it means keeping those receipts for school supplies they purchase with their own money. For investors, it may mean deciding which stocks should be sold or purchased. This summer, nearly 24 million taxpayers received an Advance Child Tax Credit of up to \$400 per child because the credit was increased to \$1,000 per

child from \$600 per child. People got part of their Child Tax Credit in advance this summer, so they must subtract that amount when figuring the credit when they complete their 2003 taxes.

Taxpayers should have kept their IRS letter (Notice 1319) that notified them of the amount of the credit they were to receive. Forgot the advance payment amount? Check www.irs.gov under the "Individuals" section for the online tool, "Where's My Advance Child Tax Credit?" In addition, taxpayers who do not receive an Advance Child Tax Credit check by Dec. 31 may claim the increased credit on their 2003 tax return. Again, IRS.gov provides details on child tax credit eligibility.

End-of-the-year planning may be useful for educators who may claim up to \$250 for out-of-pocket classroom expenses, students who may deduct interest on college loans and spouses who make alimony payments. These items are among the

tax deductions that can reduce taxable income. Some taxpayers may benefit more by itemizing their deductions on Schedule A of Form 1040. Taxpayers should consider using Schedule A if their itemized deductions exceed the amount of the standard deductions.

For the 2003 tax year, the standard deduction is \$4,750 for taxpayers filing as single or married filing separately, \$7,000 for individuals filing as head of household and \$9,500 for taxpayers filing as married filing jointly. Among the common deductions itemized on Schedule A are state and local income taxes, real estate taxes and mortgage interest.

Charitable donations also are deductible on Schedule A and taxpayers should keep a record of their contributions. Certain medical expenses, such as laser surgery or obesity weight loss programs, are deductible if the total medical expenses exceed 7.5 percent of gross income.

In addition, for the 2003 tax year, taxpayers may make gifts of up to \$11,000 per person and exclude the amount from the gift tax. Those receiving the gift are not required to pay taxes on the amount received. Tax-free flexible spending accounts also can lower taxable income amounts and the IRS recently ruled medical spending accounts could be used to purchase non-prescription medication.

Again, taxpayers should keep receipts.

The maximum tax rate for most capital gains taken after May 5, 2003 has been reduced to 15 percent for most individuals and generally 5 percent for low-income individuals. Dividends also are taxed at a maximum rate of 15 percent and generally 5 percent for low-income individuals. In most cases, the expenditures must take place during the tax year in

order to be deductible.

However, taxpayers do have time next year to contribute to their Individual Retirement Accounts.

The maximum IRA contribution for the 2003 tax year is \$3,000. Taxpayers who are age 50 or over by Dec. 31 can contribute \$3,500. Taxpayers should consider seeking out additional information either through IRS.gov or a tax professional.

TAX RELIEF: IRS helps military families

From Page 8

owned and lived in her Ohio house for three years before being stationed overseas in January 1988. She was still overseas when she sold the house in January 2003. She may disregard only 10 of her 15 years overseas, so her 5-year test period consists entirely of years in which she did not live in the house, leaving her not eligible for the home sale exclusion.

Example #4 — Sgt. Brown owned and lived in a Virginia townhouse for 10 months before being deployed overseas in February 1991. She returned in 1995 and lived in the townhouse for 16 months before she was assigned to a Texas duty station in late August 1996. She married and when the couple returned to Virginia in July 1999, they bought a nearby house. In July 2001, they sold the townhouse.

Having lived in the townhouse only one month in the five years preceding its sale, they reported the capital gain on their 2001 return. Under the new law, they may disregard the time spent overseas and in Texas when determining the 5-year test

period, which would then consist of the two years from July 1999 to July 2001, when they lived nearby, the 16 months she lived in the townhouse in 1995-96, and the 20 months before the February 1991 overseas deployment.

During this test period, Sgt. Brown owned and lived in the townhouse for 26 months, so she may exclude up to \$250,000 of gain on its sale. Because her husband never lived in the townhouse, he does not qualify for any exclusion.

The Browns have until Apr. 15, 2005, to file an amended return claiming a refund of the capital gain tax paid on the excludable amount.

MWR NOTES

Golf Course events

Every Tuesday is free green fee day. All active duty members can play 18 holes for a card fee of \$10.

Matches Play Tournaments begins Jan. 15. Call 542-3249 for details.

Escape the ordinary on an I.T.T. trip

Have some fun with I.T.T. - take a trip or treat yourself to a show! Stop by our office located adjacent to the NEX, and sign up for a great trip. Our trips are open to all hands, so bring a friend! For more information call the office at 542-3318.

The following are upcoming I.T.T. trips:
Jan. 17 – Scottish Games. Transportation, and entrance to the games is \$27.75.

Jan. 31 – Mount Dora. Visit their art festival and a Civil War re-enactment for \$20.50.

Feb. 29 – Strawberry Plant Festival. Spend the day eating strawberry shortcake and see some shows including the band Lonestar. The cost is just \$25.

I.T.T. also has tickets for these upcoming events:

Jacksonville Barracuda's hockey game tickets are \$10 or \$12.

We also have Stars on Ice tickets for the Feb. 10 show. Cost is \$21.

Bowling specials

The NAS Jax Freedom Lanes is hosting a youth bowling party Saturday at 10:30 a.m. for youths ages 3-21. The cost is \$7 per person. For more information, call 542-3493.

Liberty happenings

The Liberty Cove Recreation Center is hosting an upcoming 3-on-3 basketball tournament. Call 542-3491 for more details.

Bingo Palace

Get your favorite daubers, come and pick your lucky seat and let the games begin. The night Bingo schedule is Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. Cards go on sale at 5:30 p.m. and warm-ups start at 6:30 p.m. Doors open for lunchtime Bingo at 10 a.m. and games start at 11:30 a.m.

Swimming activities

The indoor pool is available for family recreation and lap swimming Monday through Friday evenings from 4:30- 8 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from noon – 4 p.m.

Parents can work out with the Aqua Aerobics class from 5 – 6 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday while the kids play.

The Adult Fitness Swim Club is a coached program for novice to advanced swimmers wishing to improve their PRT time, swimming skills, and technique. The emphasis is on stroke mechanics. Interval training is introduced. Workouts are designed to improve technique and to develop

both speed and endurance. Workouts are scheduled on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:30-5:30 p.m. at the indoor pool. The sessions are free for active duty and reservist personnel. Retired military, DoD and dependents will be charged \$20 for eight workout sessions.

Mulberry Cove Marina news

The marina offers free kayak and canoe rentals for active duty Sailors on Thursdays. It's a great way to get acquainted with some of the equipment on hand and have some fun too. For more information on marina events, call 542-3260.

Auto Skills Center

Visit the Auto Skills Center for your professional or hobby car care needs. The center offers an array of services for the novice or professional auto enthusiast. There is an ASE qualified mechanic on hand to assist with questions and tips on servicing your vehicle. The center is open Monday, Thursday and Friday from noon to 8 p.m., Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and all holidays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.

The Auto Skills Center offers a shop orientation class on the third Thursday and Friday of each month. Reservations are required for the orientation. Call 542-3227 for information.

O'Club happenings

An all hands Reef & Beef Buffet Dinner is held the first Friday of each month from 6:30-9 p.m. at the O'Club. The buffet is only \$17 per person. Reservations are encouraged by calling 542-3041.

Youth Activities

Center happenings

Take advantage of the fun events at the Youth Activities Center. Tae Kwon Do classes are available at NAS Jax Youth Gym and Yellow Water Youth Activities.

If you are interested in registering your child stop by either center or give us a call at 778-9772 (NAS Jax) or 777-8247 (Yellow Water).

Free movies offered

Enjoy free movies at the base theater each Friday evening starting at 7 p.m. and every other Saturday at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. Bring your own popcorn, soda and snacks. Sit back and enjoy some of Hollywood's premier blockbuster hits. There are no alcoholic beverages allowed in the theater and persons under 17 are not permitted without adult supervision.

Friday, 7 p.m. – Matchstick Men (PG-13)

Jan. 16, 7 p.m. – Jeepers Creepers 2 (R)

Jan. 17, 5 p.m. – American Graffiti (PG)

Jan. 17, 7 p.m. – Grind (PG-13)

Visit MWR online at www.nasjax.navy.mil and look for the tab marked MWR this is your tab to unlimited fun. For questions or comments e-mail us at mwrmtg@nasjax.navy.mil.



Holiday horns

Members of Navy Band Southeast perform holiday tunes for the civilian employees and service members in Building 1 on Dec. 18.



Photo by JO2(SCW) Eric Clay

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

The Navy Wives Clubs of America, NWCA Jax No. 86 meets the first Wednesday of each month. Meetings are held in Building 612 on Jason Street at NAS Jacksonville at 7:30 p.m. The Thrift Shop is open Tuesdays and Thursdays and every other Saturday from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. For more information, call the Thrift Shop at 772-0242 or Pearl Aran at 777-8032.

The Navy Wives Club's DID No. 300 meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Oak Crest United Methodist Church Education Building at 5900 Ricker Road. For more information, call 387-4332 or 272-9489.

Clay County Chapter 1414, National Association of Retired Federal Employees, (NARFE) invites all retired and currently employed federal employees to their regular monthly meeting the second Tuesday of each month at 1 p.m. at the Orange Park Library. For more information, call 276-9415.

The Navy Jacksonville Yacht Club general membership meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the first Wednesday of every month at the clubhouse (Building 1956) adjacent to the Mulberry Cove Marina. The Navy Jax Yacht Club is a members only club open to all active duty, reserve and retired military, and active DoD personnel. For more information, call 778-0805 or email comodore@njyc.org.

The First Coast Black Nurses Association holds a monthly meeting the second Tuesday of each month at Shands Jacksonville Hospital. For more information, call 542-7748.

MOMS Club of Northeast Florida meets the second and fourth Thursday of every month from 10 a.m. to noon. The meeting is free and open to all at-home mothers and children who live in the zip code areas of 32206, 32218 and 32226. MOMS Club is a support group for moms wanting a variety of activities for you and your children. The chapter offers monthly meetings, newsletters, activity calendars, playgroups, field trips and serv-

ice projects. For meeting location or more information, contact Debbie at 751-0671 (debbiejkg@yahoo.com) or Kathi at 751-3400 (katdj28@aol.com).

Christian Fellowship Night is held behind the Chapel in Building 749 from 6:30 - 9 p.m. every Tuesday night. For more information, call 542-3051.

The Association of Aviation Ordnance-men's meeting is held the third Thursday of each month at the Fleet Reserve Center on Collins Road. For more information, call AOC Chris Johnson at 542-2168 or AOCs Erick Parmley at 542-8589.

The Westside Jacksonville Chapter 1984, National Association of Retired Federal Employees extends an open invitation to all currently employed and retired federal employees to our regular meeting held at 1 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of each month at the Murray Hill United Methodist Church, (Fellowship Hall Building) at 4101 College Street. For more information, call R. Carroll at 786-7083.

The National Naval Officers Association (NNOA) holds its monthly meeting on the third Thursday each month at 5:30 p.m. at the Jacksonville Urban League, 903 West Union Street. Interested personnel are encouraged to attend or contact Lt. Herlena Washington at 696-5005 or email WashingtonHO@matcombi.usmc.mil.

The Exploring Program will hold an open house Jan. 17 at 1 p.m. for teens (14-20) interested in military careers at 3728 Phillips Highway, Suite 229. For more information, call Stephanie Cain at 388-0591.

The Jacksonville Genealogical Society will hold their monthly meeting Jan. 17 at 1:30 p.m. at the Webb-Wesconnett Library at 6887 103rd Street. For more information, call Mary Chaucey at 781-9300.

FFSC offers educational and support programs

The NAS Jacksonville Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) Life Skills Education and Support Program is the foremost preventive measure for the avoidance of personal and family problems.

All FFSC workshops and classes are free and available to service members and their families, and civilian personnel aboard the base.

Pre-registration is required. If special accommodations or handicapped access is required, please notify FFSC upon registration. For further information or to register, call 542-2766, Ext. 127.

The following workshops are available in January:

Jan. 8, 8 a.m. - noon - Smooth Move Workshop
Jan. 8, 9-11 a.m. - What About The Kids?

Jan. 9, 9 a.m. - noon - Home Buying
Jan. 12-15, 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. -

Transition Assistance Workshop (separating)

Jan. 13, 1-4 p.m. - Money Management
Jan. 20, 2-4 p.m. - Written Marketing Tools (for spouses)

Jan. 21, 6-8:30 p.m. - Budget for Baby Workshop

Jan. 22, 9 a.m. - noon - Florida Family Law Information Seminar

Jan. 22, 6:30-8:30 p.m. - Ombudsman Assembly Meeting

Jan. 26-29, 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. - Transition Assistance Workshop (retiring)

Jan. 27, 8 a.m. - noon - Divorce Adjustment Workshop

Jan. 27, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. - Stress Management Workshop

Jan. 29, 8-11 a.m. - Anger Control Workshop

HELPING HANDS

HabiJax opportunities

HabiJax is always looking for volunteers for various construction projects. For more information, call Bonnie Golden at 798-4529, Ext. 253. The HabiJax Home Store also needs help coordinating donated materials and furniture. Call 722-0737.

Volunteers needed

Volunteers are needed to help children in our local community by donating a few hours per month to supervise visits between children and the parents that they have been separated from due to divorce, negligence, or abuse. If you would like more information on helping, please call Anita Sullivan, volunteer coordinator at Family Nurturing Center of Florida, at 389-4244 or e-mail at anita@fnclorida.org.

Jingling around NAS Jax

Annual run is a popular event

By Kaylee LaRocque
Staff Writer

With bells on their toes, 125 runners turned out for the annual NAS Jax Jingle Bell 5K Run Dec. 18. The event sponsored by the NAS Jax Morale Welfare and Recreation Department (MWR) Fitness Center, is a popular event during the holiday season. This year, even Santa Claus made a surprise visit and ran the distance without the help of a sleigh and his reindeers.

Each runner was given a set of jingle bells for their shoes and a T-shirt, courtesy of MWR. They also provided hams and turkeys to raffle off after the run.

This year's winners for the men's category were: Andrew Maixner coming in first with a time of 16:40, followed by Ensign Michael French of VP-30 at 17:35 in second and HM1 Shawn Reno of the Wellness Center placing third with a time of 19:10.

AW2 Dawn Dillon of VP-62 placed first in the



Andrew Maixner crosses the finish line first with a time of 16:40.

women's category with a time of 22:21, followed by Carol Kernan in second at 23:35 and her daughter, Sara Kernan in third just seconds later with a time of 23:41.

A special children's category also had a couple of winners. Ten-year-old Matthew Freedman placed first in the male category with a time of 30:13 and 12-year-old Mariana Mora-



AW2 Dawn Dillon of VP-62 finished first in the female category with a time of 22:21.

les took first in the female category coming in at 30:51.

The next run coming up is the annual Navy Run at NAS Jax slated for the first Saturday in April. Hundreds of runners are expected to turn out for this popular run. For more information, call the Fitness Center at 542-3518.



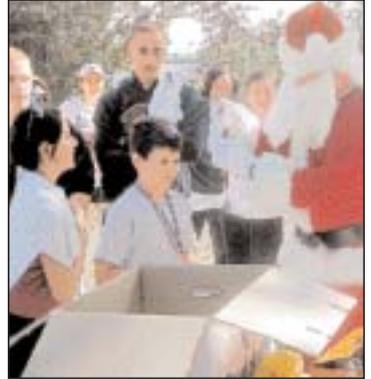
Photos by IO2 Mike England

A group of runners take off during the annual NAS Jax Jingle Bell Run Dec. 18.



(Above) Santa chugs across the finish line during the Jingle Bell Run.

(Right) Santa presents 10-year-old Matthew Freedman and 12-year-old Mariana Morales with awards for finishing first in the male and female child categories.



SPORTS AND STANDINGS

Tennis lessons now available

Tennis lessons are now being offered on base for private individuals or formed groups. Lessons are offered Fridays from 8 a.m. - noon and 3-7 p.m. and Saturdays/Sundays from 8 a.m. - noon. For more information on prices and to schedule a lesson, call 542-2910/3239.

Flag Football

League coming up

The 4-on-4 Flag Football League begins Jan. 26. All rosters are due by Jan. 22. Entry forms are available at the base gym. For more information, call Craig at 542-2930/3239.

Golfers needed

Anyone interested in participating in an upcoming 9-hole intramural golf league should stop by the base gym to pick up forms for rosters. Call Craig at 542-2930/3239 for details.

Navy Southeast

Regional Running and Triathlon Team

Represent the United States Navy in 5K, 10K, marathons, and/or triathlons. The Navy will showcase elite active duty men and women in regional races. Uniforms are provided as well as transportation, entry fees, and lodging costs. Interested runners must compete in sanc-

tioned (USA Track and Field, USA Triathlon Association, or Roadrunners Clubs of America) races and your time must be one of top 10 regional qualifying times. For more information, contact the NS Mayport athletic director at 270-5451.

Southeast Regional qualifying times:

5K - Men 19:00

Women 24:00

10K - Men 34:00

Women 46:00

Marathon - Men 3 Hrs. 30 Min.

Women 4 Hrs.

Triathlon - Men 2 Hrs. 30 Min.

Women 3 Hrs.

Triathlon time based on 1.5k swim, 10k run, 40k bike

Greybeard Standings

As of Dec. 11

Team	Wins	Losses
AIMD	1	0
NAMTRAU	1	0
CPRW-11	1	0
NCTS	0	1
VP-16	0	1
AIMD	0	1

Intramural Basketball Standings

As of Dec. 11

Team	Wins	Losses
BMC/NAR	7	0
MWR	5	1
VP-30	5	1
VS-22	5	3

AIMD	3	2
VS-30	3	3
Scouts	3	4
Mad Foxes	2	4
FACSFAC Jax	2	4
Air Ops	2	4
Eagles	1	6
NCTS	0	6

NADEP Basketball Standings

As of Dec. 12

Team	Wins	Losses
Prowlers	8	2
Hornets	8	2
Engine World	5	4
Shockers	5	4
P-3 Hurricane	4	5
TC'S Sonic Boom	2	7
Bad Boys	1	9

FARAH & FARAH, P.A.; 3c; 10.5"; Other Color; P/U 12/18 R028121 *Change ord/sz - dd 1/2

ARMED FORCES COMMUNICATIONS; 3c; 10.5"; Other Color; PU 12/18 R028766

In Gear

A weekly look at the automotive market

Riding the surf

Dodge Kahuna concept is 'bold and powerful'

By Dan Scanlan
Special

Sun, sand, and surf — it's what you need in Florida to have fun.

This year, Chrysler Design decided its stuff needed to be part of Florida's fun. So the company hit the surf with its latest concept cars, allowing automotive journalists from around the world to take on Miami Beach in them.

"These guys run; they are very expensive, and it is instant gratification for us," said Joe Dehner, Chrysler's director of exterior and interior design. "We get to see our dreams come true very quickly."

Concept cars are supposed to show the future of an auto company lineup, and can be thinly shaded versions of a production car already in the works, or wild dreams of fiction.

That latter sentiment seemed true with the Dodge Kahuna, a mix of minivan function and convenience meets Next Wave cool. The best way to describe the 185.6-inch metallic Point Break Blue vehicle is a six-passenger, all-wheel-drive surf buggy.

Designers say the exterior combines a Beach Boys Woody wagon with a hippies VW Van. Its classic bird's eye maple laminate on its flanks is accented with five alloy strips, between big rounded buggy fenders framing six-spoke alloy wheels and knobby 22-inch wheels front and rear.

"Kahuna means boss in Hawaiian, and that is the kind of image we wanted from this vehicle — something bold and powerful," said Kahuna product designer Alan Barrington. "We tried to combine the practicality and utility of a minivan and SUV and get the image away from the soccer mom."

The nose looks like a cross between the VW van and a Dodge Ram truck, its piercing eye-like headlights and alloy cross-hair grille plopped on a short nose. The roof is a see-through silver/gray water resistant canvas that power retracts to the top of the rear window. All the windows bar the big windshield disappear, and the outside comes in, shaded by two surfboards mounted overhead. We also like the tall taillights, that ran almost the full length of the arcing rear pillar, with twin exhausts popping out the bottom.

The result is a wide, Power Wagon kind of look.

"It gives it a real planted look on the ground with tires pushed out to the corners," Barrington said. "We tried to do a new technical take on the woodie using a different kind of wood with milled aluminum trim."



Dan Scanlan/special

The 2003 Dodge Kahuna concept is a combination minivan/all-wheel-drive beach buggy.

Inside, the "big wave" theme continues. Three buff alloy-rimmed gauges peek out from under the textured Pacific Blue cowl, the central digital/analog speedometer flanked by a small tach on the left and clock to the right, while the stereo and climate controls sit on the right. The Kahuna has a column shift, while the ebbing wave in front of the passenger forms a segmented package tray — neat.

Overhead, the open sunroof lets tropical breezes flow between the surfboards. Underfoot, sisal mats with tracks so all three rows of seating can move, some of which can be turned into tables if needed or removed. The back seats are easy to get to thanks to a wide-opening back door; and second and third rows offer decent room for adults because of the sliding track adjustability.

"We chose materials that you would think of when you look at the architecture of a beach house or fine yacht — something nautical," Barrington said. "We took some of the materials from the exterior into the interior. You can see the wood paneling and wood trim in the door."

The thinly padded, firm driver's seat was high, the three-spoke steering wheel low, and the view out the stubby nose somewhat bus-like. But urge the turbocharged 2.4-liter, 215-horsepower four-cylinder engine

forward with a burbling snarl, let the breeze flow in, and the drive under the palm trees was fun. Imagine what it would be like with the family on board bouncing to a beach party.

Another natural for hauling surfboards was the Chrysler California Cruiser.

Introduced at the Paris Motor Show in 2002, this surf wagon takes the nostalgic PT Cruiser's shape into the future with scalloped headlamps riding front fenders with a more definitive edge, flanking a chiseled satin chrome-accented grille with an integrated bumper. The hood gets some surface detail — subtle ridges that will soon become a trademark look on Chryslers.

The California Cruiser is a coupe, with long side doors accented in the satin silver body-side applique that looks like a California Woody wagon of the future. The classic fenders frame low-profile Goodyear radials on six-spoke 19-inch billet aluminum machined wheels.

Mike Nichols, who helped with the exterior design, said the California Cruiser is potentially the next wave for the PT Cruiser, using the upcoming two-door PT Cabriolet as inspiration.

"We are looking for a potential derivative, maybe using the Cabrio's doors and windshield. The wheelbase is the same, although it does look longer due

to the chopped top. We also want to see what is another statement for the car, which could potentially be an exciting two-door," Nichols said. "The inspiration was the surf wagons of the 1960s with the wood siding. This was an opportunity to do a more contemporary version of that with aluminum-look siding. We also have 19-inch billet aluminum wheels to echo the same feel. So it has a bit of nostalgic quality, but a very contemporary upscale look."

The squared-off rear roof line was done to make it look more like a surf wagon, and have interior utility despite a chopped top, Nichols said. They also wanted it to be an open-air car, so the glass roof and side-window panels lower or pivot to make a huge sunroof and open up the car.

"The whole roof is two glass panels, and that is another unique aspect of the car. The B-pillar is rearward of where it would be expected to create a big open area," he said.

Interior door panels repeat the silver exterior trim, while the production dash gets alloy-look and blue trim. The center console becomes a silver and blue leather spine that spears down the center between four gray and blue bucket seats, with chrome-trimmed cup holders fore and aft. All four seats fold flat, their blue backs accented with alloy ribs that form a perfect shaded beach bingo spot when parked.

Of all the concepts on hand,



Dan Scanlan/special

The oceanic blue dashboard flows like a wave in the Dodge Kahuna concept, while sisal mats clothe the floor.

the California Cruiser felt the most production-like, because it's based on the current PT Turbo. The ride was soft and comfortable despite the chopped suspension, although bumps made nasty noises as we drove.

Ultimately, Nichols said he hopes this concept becomes reality, as did the PT Turbo and the upcoming Cabriolet. That's why they drove the car down Ocean Drive and Collins Avenue during the press event to gauge public impact.

"At this point it's just a concept, but we are evaluating the potential," he said.



Dan Scanlan/special

The interior of the Kahuna boasts movable seating for six with plenty of storage room and open air driving.



Dan Scanlan/special

Two of Chrysler's latest concepts are perfect for the beach — the Dodge Kahuna in front, and the PT California Cruiser in back.