

When it comes to taking care of your children nothing but the best will suffice. The Child Development Center ensures that your children get the best care possible. Story on page 11.

BASILIC 03 maritime interdiction exercise completed

By Senior Chief Scott Fleming
U.S. Sixth Fleet Public Affairs

GAETA, Italy - The guided missile frigate USS Nicholas (FFG 47) and a P-3 surveillance aircraft from Patrol Squadron Ten (VP-10) operating out of Sigonella, Sicily, are joining naval assets from six other nations to begin BASILIC 03, a multilateral maritime interdiction training exercise in the Mediterranean.

The Nov. 25-28 exercise led by France, is part of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), a collaborative effort to take active measures against trafficking in weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems, and related materials to and from states and non-state actors of proliferation concern around the world.

In addition to France and the United States, Spain, and Italy are contributing assets to BASILIC 03 while other PSI BASILIC, page 10

VP-45 Visits local orphanage

By Lt. j.g. Jon Tasch

On Saturday, October 25th, the Pelicans of Patrol Squadron 45 visited the A&V Institute for Handicapped Children in nearby Pecarino. Their goal - make the day a little brighter for a group of children who have not been dealt the best hand in life.

The volunteers included a variety of officer and enlisted personnel from the squadron including pilots, naval flight officers, aircrew, maintainers, yeomen and Sailors from various other rates.

Lieutenant Jeremy Hankins, the visit coordinator, did a tremendous job bringing the visit together. Working with Mr. Papalardo of the institute, he gathered volunteers from within the command and brought a special day to the kids at Pecarino. It was not very difficult to fill the list with squadron volunteers; in fact, the sign up sheet was full within days of the event being announced. The men and women of VP-45 jumped at the chance to enrich the lives of the young orphans, if only for a short time on Saturday.

This was the first visit to the orphanage for the Pelicans this deployment, so the volunteers were given a tour of the facility followed by time spent with the children of Pecarino. The Sailors were happy to be there and gave out toys and candy while others played games with the children and read stories to the younger kids in the group.

The children were not the only ones to benefit from the visit. It was obvious that those who volunteered came away from the experience better for the opportunity to spend time with such a remarkable group of kids. "The children were very friendly and eager to interact with us." Many of the Pelicans were glad they could put a smile on a child's face and bring a little laughter to their VP 45, page 12

Team USA Volleyball squad stops by NASSIG



Two members of the U.S. Armed Forces Volleyball team face off during a drill conducted during practice in the NAS II Gym. The team trained in Sigonella for a week in preparation for the Military World Games currently taking place in the Catania area.

By JO1 Craig Coleman
Staff writers

Military athletes from 83 countries are competing in sports ranging from track and field to cycling.

The NAS II Gym was a much noisier place than usual on the day before Thanksgiving. The squeak of court shoes and the bumping, setting and slamming of a plethora of volleyballs announced the beginning of practice for the U.S. Armed Forces Men's Volleyball Team. The 12 military athletes and two coaches trained in Sigonella for the Conseil International du Sport (CISM) World Military Games, continuing through Dec. 14 in various venues in and around Catania.

James Baker, Sigonella MWR director, enjoyed hosting the team and thinks their time on base was well spent. "What's nice is that they get a chance to get acclimated," he said. "We set up matches with local teams." Prior to the competition the volleyball team mixed two hours of training at NAS II in the morning with practice matches

MWG Volleyball, page 9

STA-21 Program enables Sailors to move up

By AN Michelle Hartgraves
Staff writers

"I have always wanted to be an officer since I joined the military. After reading about the STA-21 program, I thought it was the best choice."

MA2 Jeremy Krider

Advancement rates got you down? Want to become an officer and take on new challenges, leaving advancement exams behind forever? Then the Seaman to Admiral (STA-21) program is for you. STA-21 is an enlisted commissioning program that gives Sailors the opportunity to move up to the rank of Admiral.

STA-21 was established in 2001 for enlisted Sailors interested in pursuing a commission. It combines eight of 14 existing commissioning programs and expands ben-

efits for Sailors, allowing them to remain on active duty while receiving full pay and other benefits while enrolled in the program. After graduating from a STA-21 commissioning pro-

gram from a respected university, candidates will be commissioned as an ensign in the U.S. Naval Reserve.

"I have always wanted to be an officer since I joined the military," said MA2 Jeremy Krider. "After reading about the STA-21 program, I thought it was the best choice."

Krider, who just got the word that he has been accepted for the program, aims to work in the EOD community. He will be commissioned after he has completed all

STA-21, page 10

Today's Hometown Weather

Retention Center
Hattiesburg, MS



Hattiesburg

High 55° F - Low 28° F
Windy



Direct Line

Capt. T.L. Davison
NASSIG
Commanding Officer

The holiday season is certainly in full swing. I have seen a lot of beautifully decorated homes in our neighborhoods over the last few weeks. It's great to anticipate all of the fun and good times we will have during the approaching festivities. Most of us, I would say, thoroughly enjoy the holiday season and the opportunities to be with family and friends.

I do want to encourage everyone to keep a watchful eye on each other. The holiday season can bring out frustrations and emotions that can push anyone over the edge. Some of our Sailors are here on their first tour away from home. Many of us are frantically searching for a parking space in the NEX lot or fretting over that perfect gift that's either too expensive or unavailable. It is important that all of us recognize the signs of depression or stress in our fellow Sigonellans and to become part of the solution, not part of the problem.

Depression is more than just feeling sad or a little under the weather. Depression is a mental state that can seriously affect a person's feelings, thought patterns, behavior and quality of life. More than five percent, or 15 million Americans, suffer from depression. At least one in six people will suffer from a depressive illness at some point in their lifetime.

According to the American Medical Association, there are several signs or symptoms of depression:

- Ongoing sad, anxious or empty feelings
- A loss of interest in activities that normally are pleasurable
- Appetite and weight changes (either loss or gain)
- Sleep problems (insomnia, early morning waking or oversleeping)
- Irritability
- A loss of energy and a sense of fatigue, or being "slowed down"
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness and helplessness
- Feelings of hopelessness and pessimism
- Difficulty in concentrating, remembering and making decisions
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts
- Ongoing body aches and pains or problems with digestion that are not caused by physical disease

Here are some ways that you can help cope with stress and depression during the holidays:

Keep expectations for the holiday season manageable. Try to set realistic goals for yourself. Pace yourself. Organize your time. Make a list and prioritize the important activities. Be realistic about what you can and cannot do. Do not put your entire focus on just one day (i.e., Christmas Day). Remember it is a season of holiday sentiment and activities can be spread out (time-wise) to lessen stress and increase enjoyment.

Remember the holiday season does not banish reasons for feeling sad or lonely; there is room for these feelings to be present, even if the person chooses not to express them.

Leave "yesteryear" in the past and look toward the future. Life brings changes. Each season is different and can be enjoyed in its own way. Don't set yourself up in comparing today with the "good ol' days."

- **Do something for someone else.** Try volunteering some time to help others.
- **Enjoy activities that are free,** such as driving around to look at holiday decorations; going window-shopping without buying; watching the smoke drift out of snow-covered Mt Etna; making a snowperson with children.
- **Be aware that excessive drinking will only increase your feelings of depression.** And a DUI or alcohol related incident will ruin your day, your career and possibly your life.
- **Try something new.** Celebrate the holidays in a new way.
- **Spend time with supportive and caring people.** Reach out and make new friends or contact someone you have not heard from for awhile.
- **Save time for yourself!** Recharge your batteries! Let others share responsibility for activities.

If you notice any of your Sailors, co-workers, family or friends during the holidays exhibiting some type of stress or depression, please talk with them. Make it point to be an active part of their lives. Feel free to contact the Chaplain's office at 624-2947/624-3975 or the Fleet and Family Service Center at 624-4291 for help.



Meet Dr. Jeff Dufault

Courtesy USNH Sigonella

Dr. Jeff Dufault is the resident podiatric surgeon at U.S. Naval Hospital Sigonella. His previous command was the Naval Hospital in Camp Pendleton, California. He states his goal of practice is to provide the highest standard of care so as to return our active duty patients to full duty and improve the quality of life for all. He earned his Bachelor of Arts from California State University followed by his Doctor of Podiatric Medicine at California College of Podiatric Medicine and a Masters in Education at Golden Gate College. He is Board Certified by the American Board of Podiatric Surgeons and the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons. Dr. Dufault's interests include scuba diving, biking, traveling and sports medicine.

SECURITY BLOTTER



CRIME STOPPER'S HOTLINE
624-6389
Nov. 24 - Nov. 30

The following incidents were reported and categorized as follows:

- Traffic accidents without injuries - 10
- Traffic accident with injuries - 1
- Car break-ins - 4
- DUI - 1
- DUI's 2003 - 52
- DUI's 2002 - 35

NJP Results

E-4 Violation of the UCMJ, Art. 86 (Unauthorized absence); Art. 92 (Failure to obey a lawful order); Art. 107 (False official statement); Art. 128 (Assault). Awarded restriction to the limits of U.S. Naval Air Station Sigonella (NAS II) for 60 days; forfeiture of \$764 per month for 1 month; and reduction to next inferior pay grade.

E-3 Violation of the UCMJ, Art. 92 (Disobeying a lawful order); Art. 128 (Assault); and Art. 134 (Drunk and disorderly.) awarded Restriction to the limits of U.S. Naval Air Station Sigonella (NAS II) for 30 days; extra duties for 30 days; to forfeit \$645.00 per month for 2 months; and reduction to next inferior pay grade (suspended for 6 months).

Debt collectors: what can they do to collect

From Naval Legal Service Office

If you use credit cards, owe money on a loan, or are paying off a home mortgage, you are a "debtor." Most Americans are.

A debt collector is someone, other than the creditor, who regularly collects debts owed to others. In other words, the original creditor has given up trying to collect the debt and has turned it over to a "professional."

You may never come into contact with a debt collector. But if you do, you should know that a law exists to make sure you are treated fairly. The Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, passed by Congress in 1982, prohibits certain methods of debt collection. While the Act is a law with application in every locale, many states also have enacted state laws covering the same subject. Of course, the laws do not erase any legitimate debt you owe.

What debts are covered? Personal, family, and household debts are covered under the Act. This includes money owed for the purchase of a car, for medical care, or for charge accounts.

A debt collector may contact you in person, by mail, telephone or telegram. However, a debt collector may not contact you at inconvenient or unusual times or places, such as before 8 a.m. or after 9 p.m., unless you agree. A debt collector may not contact you at work if your employer disapproves. The military services consider military supervisors or commanders to be "employers." Thus, a debt collector who contacts you at your installation, office or worksite, where your commander or supervisor prohibits it, is in violation of the law.

You may stop a debt collector from contacting you by writing a let-

ter to the collection agency telling them to stop. Once the agency receives the letter, they may not contact you again except to say that there will be no further contact. The debt collector is allowed to notify you that some specific action may be taken, but only if the debt collector or the creditor usually takes such action. If you have an attorney, whether a legal assistance attorney through the Naval Legal Service Office, or a private attorney, the collector may not contact anyone but the attorney. The debt collector may contact other people to find out where you work or live, but they may not tell anyone other than you or your attorney that you owe money.

If you believe you do not owe any money or that you do not owe the total amount alleged, send a letter to the collector within 30 days after you are first contacted setting out your position. Once you do, the debt collector may not continue to contact you (although he can begin collection proceedings if he sends you proof of the debt).

What types of debt collection practices are prohibited?

—A debt collector may not harass any person. He cannot repeatedly use the telephone to annoy someone, nor can he telephone an individual without identifying himself.

—A debt collector may not use any false, deceptive or misleading statements when collecting a debt. He cannot falsely imply he operates or works in a credit bureau.

—A debt collector may not say that you will be arrested if you do not pay your debt, nor can a debt collector threaten action against you that cannot legally be taken.

—A debt collector may not give false credit information about you to anyone, nor use any false names.

Yes, I did say to give something

By Chaplain
Wesely
Myhand
Command
Chaplain

giving. But that does not necessarily mean gifts. How about the giving of yourself? I mean giving of yourself in such a way that there is no intention of getting anything in return and having no strings attached. This may mean giving you time or talent to someone outside your social sphere. For example giving to orphans in the area or even spending time at a nursing home visiting the old forgotten people. What about a phone call to an old friend? How about offering your time to shipmates who could be depressed this season or just need someone to count on?

Yes, I did say to give something. Yourself. Your time. And by the way, it does cost! I believe you will find in giving of yourself it is far better to give than to receive. It might even take you by surprise. It may be the best gift you ever gave yourself. I will close with a quote from Tiny Tim in Charles Dickens Novel A Christmas Tale "God Bless Us Every One". May all of us have a blessed Christmas.



Thanksgiving is over and it is now the beginning of the Christmas season. How do we know it is the beginning of the Christmas season? Because of all the after Thanksgiving Christmas sales! You will find most everyone dashing to the stores, not only to save money but also to find the right gifts for friends and family. Usually we try to get gifts that our friends or family will enjoy and rightly so. On the other hand how do you handle the gifts from long distance relatives and friends? Gifts such as the Old Spice Christmas Collection, Brute cologne or my old time favorite soap-on-a-rope. This is when you learn to smile, to say thank you and quietly think of how you can get rid of this stuff.

I personally have a hard time getting gifts for people, specially those who have everything. I noticed during this time of year this causes me to lose focus of what Christmas is truly about. Christmas is not really about buying or receiving. Christmas is a lot about

NAS Sigonella Worship Opportunities

Catholic Mass
Saturday 5 p.m. Chapel (NAS II)
Sunday 9 a.m. Chapel (NAS I)
Sunday 9 a.m. in Italian 41st
Stormo Chapel (NAS II)
Sunday 11 a.m. Community Center (Mineo)

Protestant Traditional Worship
Sunday 9 a.m. Chapel (NAS II)

United Pentecostal Church, International
Sunday 12 p.m. Chapel (NAS II)

Protestant Worship
Sunday 9 a.m. Community Center (Mineo)
Sunday 11 a.m. Chapel (NAS I)

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
Sunday 1 p.m. Chapel (NAS I)

Church of Christ
Sunday 3:30 p.m. Chapel (NAS I)

Jewish Shabbat Service
Last Friday of the month 5 p.m. Chapel (NAS I)

Weekdays
Daily Catholic Mass 11:30 a.m. (NAS I & II Chapels)
Wednesday Protestant Bible Study
4:45 p.m. (NAS II Chapel)
For more details, call 624-4295 or 624-2947.

<p>Commanding Officer Capt. Timothy L. Davison</p> <p>Public Affairs Officer Lt. Steve Curry</p>	<p>Deputy Public Affairs Officer Alberto Lunetta</p> <p>Asst. Public Affairs Officer JO1 Craig Coleman</p>	<p>Staff Writers AN Michelle Hartgraves</p> <p>JO3 Steve Weaver</p>
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NAVY NEWS

Military Family Tax Relief Act of 2003 signed

From Naval Legal Service Office

On Nov. 1, the President signed the "Military Family Tax Relief Act of 2003" into law. This Act includes several very favorable tax provisions for servicemembers. This article reviews the four provisions likely to affect the most service members.

Capital Gains Tax Relief for Sale of a Principal Residence.

Until the passage of the MFTRA, under Section 121 of the Internal Revenue Code an individual taxpayer could exclude up to \$250,000 (\$500,000 if married filing a joint return) of gain realized on the sale of a principal residence if they owned and used the residence as a principal residence for at least two of the five years ending on the date of sale. A partial exclusion was available under certain conditions, most notably for servicemembers relocating due to PCS orders. Other than eligibility for this partial exclusion there were no special rules relating to members of the uniformed services (or the Foreign Service) whose absence from the former principal residence was due to orders.

Under the MFTRA, a servicemember may elect to suspend for a maximum of ten years the five-year period for ownership and use during certain absences due to their military service. If the election is made, the five-year period ending on the date of the sale or exchange of a principal residence does not include any period up to ten years during which the taxpayer or the taxpayer's spouse is on "qualified official extended duty." The term "qualified official extended duty" is any period of "extended duty" while serving at a place of duty at least 50 miles away from the taxpayer's principal residence or under

orders compelling residence in Government furnished quarters. "Extended duty" is defined as any period of duty pursuant to a call or order to such duty for a period in excess of 90 days or for an indefinite period. This election to suspend the two of five rule can be made for only one property per suspension period. **This change is retroactive and applies to sales after 6 May 1997. While normally a tax refund cannot be claimed more than three years after the closeout of the tax year, Congress has incorporated a one-year period (beginning on 11 November 2003) for taxpayers to claim refunds as a result of this provision that would otherwise be barred by the statute of limitations.**

a. What does this really mean? The bottom line is that any military taxpayer who sold a former principal residence since 6 May 1997 (the enactment date of the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997) MAY be entitled to a tax refund. A Section 121 Refund Package will soon be made available from the NLSO and at our Tax Center.

b. Who will qualify? If a servicemember sold their former principal residence (where they had lived for 2 or more years within the past ten years) after 6 May 1997, and moved more than 50 miles away or into government quarters, they will qualify for the full exclusion of capital gain up to \$250,000/500,000. Others may qualify for a partial exclusion. Some examples illustrate the effects of the MFTRA.

i. A full exclusion example: LT Rabb and his wife buy a townhouse in July 1994 in Alexandria, Virginia during an early assignment in the Navy. They live in the house until August 1996 when he is transferred to San Diego. Since San Diego is more than 50 miles from

Alexandria and since the move is a result of government orders, the Rabbs can elect to suspend the running of the Section 121 time period. They don't sell the townhouse, renting it out instead, since they expect to return to the DC area at some later time. The years pass and CDR Rabb, now with a family of five, is finally returning to an assignment in Falls Church, Virginia, but realizes that the townhouse will be a bit snug for his family. He wants to sell it but faces an enormous capital gain due to the run-up in housing prices in the DC area. Until the passage of the MFTRA the Rabbs would have had to move back into the house to re-start the own and occupy clock under Section 121 or else they would not qualify for the capital gain exclusion. Today, the Rabbs can sell the house and exclude up to \$500,000 in capital gain with no requirement that they buy another house. Their sale qualifies for the full exclusion under MFTRA since the Rabbs lived in the house for more than two years, suspended the time period from August 1996 until November 2003 (only a bit over 7 years), and the move from the home qualified under the new law. **Caveat:** the Rabbs will not be able to exclude the gain attributable to the depreciation of their rental home that they deducted each year (or should have!) since May 1997. Uncle Sam is generous, but doesn't want you to have two separate tax benefits from the application of Section 121. **[More information on this recapture of depreciation provision will be in the Section 121 Refund Package available soon.]**

ii. Another full exclusion example: In June 1990, First Lieutenant MacKenzie, USMC, buys a condo outside of Camp Pendleton during her first assignment. She lives there for nearly three years, PCSing to Okinawa in May of 1993.

Surface strike group deploys to Mediterranean

From Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet Public Affairs

NORFOLK, Va. (NNS) — More than 1,000 Sailors aboard the guided-missile destroyers USS Cole (DDG 67) and USS Gonzalez (DDG 66), and the Spruance-class destroyer USS Thorn (DD 988) departed Nov. 29 for a scheduled Mediterranean Sea deployment in support of the global war on terrorism.

As the USS Enterprise (CVN 65) Surface Strike Group (SSG), Cole, Gonzalez and Thorn will participate in regional exercises with allies, make diplomatic port calls and respond to any contingency, including those associated with the ongoing war on terrorism.

The SSG can operate independently or in conjunction

with other maritime forces. Their flexibility provides presence with a purpose, and strike power to support joint and allied forces afloat and ashore.

Cole's deployment will be its first since the October 12, 2000, terrorist attack in Yemen. The ship was repaired by the Navy's Supervisor of Shipbuilding, Repair and Conversion (SUPSHIP), Ingalls Shipyard, Pascagoula, Miss., for an estimated \$250 million.

Thorn's deployment will be its final one; the ship is scheduled for decommissioning in 2004 after more than 23 years of active Navy service.

For related news, visit the Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet Navy NewsStand page at www.news.navy.mil/local/surfant.

Rota rescue team receives high marks during NASA shuttle training

By J02 Tina Villalobos
Naval Station Rota Public Affairs

ROTA, Spain (NNS) — After three days of intense training provided by the Department of Defense (DoD) Manned Space Flight Support Office to the Rota Space Shuttle Medical Support Team, an emergency NASA space shuttle landing drill took place Nov. 20 on the tarmac at Naval Station Rota.

The hand-picked support team, consisting of 40 members from U.S. Naval Hospital Rota, along with 20 other team members from the Fire Department, Air Terminal and Emergency Medical Team, worked together to provide assessment and rescue of the space shuttle crew.

In this simulation, a main gear collapse forced an emergency landing on the Rota flight line. A small C-12 propeller plane, representing the space shuttle Atlantis, taxied down the runway and parked on the tarmac with its pseudo astronaut and flight crew suffering from various simulated injuries.

The situation was set up to provide conditions that might closely resemble an actual NASA emergency abort landing.

Beyond any medical interactions with the simulated victims could occur, they had to be carefully extracted from the "space shuttle." The narrow confines of the C-12 plane made the effort cumbersome. The value of practical experience along with classroom training became more apparent.

Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 3rd Class (AW) James O. Quinn, Rota Fire Department, took charge of the extrication of the shuttle crew. When his team slowed just momentarily, he encouraged more urgent action.

"Let's go! Let's move!" he yelled. "We need to get this guy out of here!"



Members of the Space Shuttle Medical Support Team transport Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Johnny Stewart, to the treatment area after extrication from a C-12 Huron representing the space shuttle Atlantis during a NASA drill held aboard Naval Station Rota, Spain

The entire crew employed their training, working quickly and confidently. Important details had been covered prior to the drill — such as how to properly remove the astronaut's helmet while supporting their head and spine, and methods of dealing with chemical exposure from toxic gases and other elements.

"We have a lot of different people and a lot of new people," said Lt. Helen Thomas, emergency room staff nurse. "Even though you can tell them and explain in the classroom what you have to do, it doesn't really hit you until you are out there having to do it. Hands-on experience puts things in better perspective. Preparation is key. It is all about being ready, but you have to practice."

Sexual Assault Victim Intervention

SAVI offers a Sexual Assault Hotline staffed with trained Advocates who man the SAVI Hotlines 24/7. The number is 335-642-8312 or 335-606-6146.

NAS II pass and ID service

NAS II Pass and ID will have limited services for approx 45 while the office goes through renovations. NAS I pass and ID will be doing all Ramp Badges, guest passes, employee/contractor base passes, and ration cards. NAS II Pass and ID will only do rental passes, encoding of Ramp Badges, and NAS I/NAS II memos. The hours of operations for both offices are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. We apologize for the inconvenience.

Holiday Safety: Christmas Lights

Courtesy of Safety Department

Christmas lights are going up already and some houses have lots and lots of lights. Each year, holiday lighting is responsible for injuries caused by electrical shock, falls and fires. The fires caused by holiday lighting annually cause property damage in excess of \$16 million. Follow these tips to best protect yourself.

- Take out your strings of light, and carefully untangle them.
- Verify that each string of lights carries the official Underwriter's Laboratories *UL label.

- Take time to inspect your lights before plugging them in. Check for cracks in cord insulation or socket. Look for places where the wires are bare or broken.

- Throw away suspect or damaged strings.
- Plug safe-looking strings into an electrical wall socket for 15 minutes and check for signs of melting or smoking wires.

- Verify that all strings designated for outdoor use are weatherproofed lights and wires. If an extension cord is needed, wrap the connection junction tightly with electrical tape and keep suspended off the ground.

- When possible, point the lamp sockets down to avoid moisture buildup and do not operate light strings with missing bulbs.

- Do not overload walk sockets. Be aware of power drains from extra appliances and common circuits. Use different sockets around the house to plug in multiple lights to balance the load.

- Do not use indoor lights outdoors or visa-versa. If extension cords are required for outdoor lights, use those designed for outdoor use with three-prong plugs. Never use an indoor cord or a cord without the third prong.

- Do not overload extension cords, and do not connect more than three sets of lights to one cord. When connecting outdoor lighting, be careful not to create a maze of extension cords, plugs and wires that all come from the same electrical outlet.

- Outlets should be readily accessible for quick disconnection if necessary.

- Set lights to a timer system so that they turn on and off, or be certain to shut off lights when you are asleep or not at home. Limit continuous usage of lights to avoid overheating.

- Hang lights and lamps so that they are not in contact with branches, paper, ornaments, decorations, or other flammable items.

New reserve drill option open to HM and DT ratings

From Cmdr. Karen Kreutzberg
Medical Reserve Recruiting Program

BETHESDA, Md. (NNS) — A new program is now offered to Hospital Corpsman (HM) and Dental Technician (DT) drilling Reservists who are interested in pursuing a Baccalaureate in Nursing Degree (BSN). This new drilling option allows a drilling HM or DT to earn drill pay and credit for attending school.

Interested Selected Reservists (SELRES) must be U.S. citizens and have a letter of acceptance or be enrolled in an accredited baccalaureate-nursing program (verified by www.nlnac.org or www.aacn.nche.edu) and be enrolled for a minimum of six credits/semester or session.

This program is offered to Program 32 (Military Treatment Facility) and Program 46 (Fleet Hospital) units. Participation is limited to a maximum of three years.

To apply, SELRES will need to have a letter of endorsement for approval from their unit commanding officer. While in the program, the student must maintain a GPA of 2.5 or better. If at any time the SELRES stops taking courses, they must muster and drill with their unit in the traditional manner.

While in school, the SELRES must drill with their unit twice annually (four drills) in order to complete all required reserve unit and Naval Reserve Activity (NRA) or reserve center administrative requirements. This includes the twice-annual Physical Fitness Assessment (PFA) test. While in this program, the HM or DT is eligible for mobilization, but may request a deferment from BUPERS.

News Briefs

Scholarship Time

The Scholarship for Military Children Program for 2004 is now open. Go to the website www.militaryscholar.org for more information. Applications are due by Feb. 18.

Exchange Cellular Shop

Your Navy Exchange is happy to announce the opening of our new and improved Cellular Phone Shop! You will find a vast selection of cellular phones, accessories, and computerized re-charge options. The new Cellular Shop is in the Main Store and collocated with the Optical Shop just inside our front entrance.

Instructors Needed

Central Texas College is looking for instructors experienced in the areas of Early Childhood Professions, Criminal Justice and Emergency Medical Technology (EMT). Call Carly at x6407 or e-mail ctc_sig@hotmail.com.

Photos with Santa

The Navy Exchange is hosting a "Photos with Santa" Holiday Event. Meet with Santa in between the Commissary and your Navy Exchange on Saturday, Dec. 6, 13 and 20 from Noon to 2 p.m. Photos are only \$2 and include a "2003" Commemorative card!

New MWR Website

MWR has a website to find out about upcoming special events. Visit the website at www.afneurope.net/signella/events.asp

Stay Updated

Don't miss out on MWR updates! To get on our email distribution list, send your request to jarotom@messig.sicilynavy.mil

Christmas Celebration

Join Us At The Chapel on Dec. 7 at 6 p.m. for a wonderful 90 minutes featuring:

- A Christmas Cantata presented by Isidoro Cavallaro, Eleonora Traviata and a choir of 25 singers

- A Christmas Recital by Dario Arico and Thea Burke.

- A Christmas Pageant presented by the Children of the Chapel

A nice way to begin the holiday season!

A freewill offering will be taken and donated to the HC-4 College Fund for the children of those who died in the air mishap this past July.



By Alberto Lunetta
Signature Staff

Italian News

Sicilian culture and lifestyle

Santa Lucia celebrations in Belpasso and Siracusa

On Dec. 13, the communities of Belpasso and Siracusa will pay tribute to Santa Lucia (Saint Lucy), their patron saint. These vivid religious *feste* (feasts) will offer visitors parades, entertainment, fireworks and traditional food.

Life of Saint Lucia

According to tradition, Lucia, whose name means "light," was born in Siracusa to a rich and noble family in 283 AD, and was raised a Christian. Her father died while she was a child. Although Lucia consecrated herself forever to Jesus, her mother Eutychia, pressed her to marry a pagan nobleman. As Eutychia had been suffering from hemorrhage for several years, Lucia took her on a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Agata in Catania where she prayed for her healing. That evening, Lucy had a vision of St. Agata who assured her that because of her strong faith, her mother had been cured. As a result of this miraculous cure, Lucia told her mother of her desire to give their properties to the poor and the sick. Thus, Eutychia allowed Lucia to pursue her desires. But this decision angered the man to whom she was betrothed who denounced Lucia as a Christian. She was brought before Paschasius, a pagan governor, but she refused to give up her faith. Therefore, the cruel governor ordered Lucia to be severely punished. According to tradition, several miracles occurred during her torture. Soldiers tried to set her on fire but she did not burn. Paschasius then planned to force her into prostitution, but when guards went to drag her away, they could not move her. According to a legend, Lucia's eyes were plucked out during her torture and God miraculously restored her sight. This explains why she is represented as a maiden with her eyes in a dish, on a book, or in a shell and also why she is invoked



Picture courtesy of the Siracusa St. Lucia web site

In Siracusa, the feast of St. Lucia, with its vivid processions draws large numbers of people who turn the streets into an immense sanctuary where popular religiosity is displayed.

against blindness and eye diseases. Saint Lucia is also protector against fire, and the patron of people suffering from infection, hemorrhage and sore throat. Eventually, Lucia was beheaded on the 13th of December in the year 304 AD.

Saint Lucia body's remained in Syracusa for many years, until 1039 when, Byzantine general Maniace

transferred her to Constantinople (Istanbul) and then to Venice where she is still preserved in a glass-enclosed sarcophagus behind the altar of SS. Geremia e Lucia Church. Some of her relics are scattered in churches throughout Europe. A portion of her arm is kept inside the cathedrals in Siracusa and Belpasso.

Saint Lucia is also venerated on Dec. 13 in Sweden. Christians in Scandinavia celebrate *Luciadagen* (Saint Lucia's Day) as a festival of "light" symbolizing the end of the darkness. According to tradition, on Dec. 13, a girl dressed in white (usually the youngest daughter) and wearing an evergreen wreath on her head with lit candles awakens the family and offers them coffee and cakes. During the festival, a contest to elect as Lucia Bride or "Saint Lucia" is also held. Unlike what it is commonly believed, Lucia Bride is not chosen among the most beautiful girls but among the ones committed in volunteer work. On Dec. 13, a procession of young girls walks through the farms, house, or school, singing the Lucia song. Each girl holds a candle in her hand, while the "bride" who also carries candles in her hair heads the procession.

The "Swedish Lucia" is also usually invited in Sicily to take part in the celebrations held in Siracusa.

Celebrations in Siracusa

On Dec. 13, the festival begins at 10 a.m. with a solemn Holy Mass celebrated at the cathedral. During the Mass, religious chants are performed.

In the afternoon around 3:30 p.m., the carriage, weighing 14 tons, and the saint's holy relics, on top of which a silver statue of Saint Lucia is placed, are carried in procession for seven hours from the cathedral to the church of *Santa Lucia al Sepolcro*. Three groups of 48 men wearing green berets alternate carrying it. Many devotees, who also come from the neighboring cities, follow the procession barefoot.

During the festival, the blessing and the free distribution of the *cuccia* (cooked wheat) takes place in

several houses and churches. *Cuccia* is a typical food that is prepared for the Saint Lucia celebrations. Tradition says it was first cooked in Siracusa in the 17th century as Santa Lucia worked a miracle during a terrible famine in the 17th century. One story says that Siracusa's bishop gathered the starving people in the cathedral to pray and implore St. Lucia for a miracle. Suddenly, a dove flew down from the sky and roosted on the bishop's shoulders. At the same time, a ship loaded with wheat sailed into the harbor. Right after, the wheat was boiled and eaten by the Siracusa people. Today, the *cuccia* is served as a delicious porridge enriched with ricotta cheese, chocolate and candied fruits.

For more information and detailed schedule call the Siracusa Tourist Office at 0931-481232.

Celebrations in Belpasso

On the pagan side, the main attractions of the festival are undoubtedly the parades of the 50-foot tall *Carri* (mechanized floats), featuring scenes telling of the life of Santa Lucia, which tour the city's historic center on the religious festival eve's evening (Dec. 12) at 8 p.m. The tradition of building floats originated in the 19th century as the local *Mastri* (craftsmen), wanted to express their special devotion to the saint.

On Dec. 13, religious celebrations begin at 9:30 a.m. with a Holy mass that follows the unveiling of the saint's relics at the main church.

Later in the morning, a procession, beginning at 11:30 a.m., during which the 18th century silver statue depicting Saint Lucia and her relics, tours the historic center.

On Dec. 14, the Catania archbishop celebrates a solemn Holy Mass at the cathedral at 10:15 a.m. After the procession beginning at 6 p.m., fireworks and music shows are performed starting at 11 p.m. For more information and detailed schedule call Belpasso City Hall at 095-7912183-79121000.

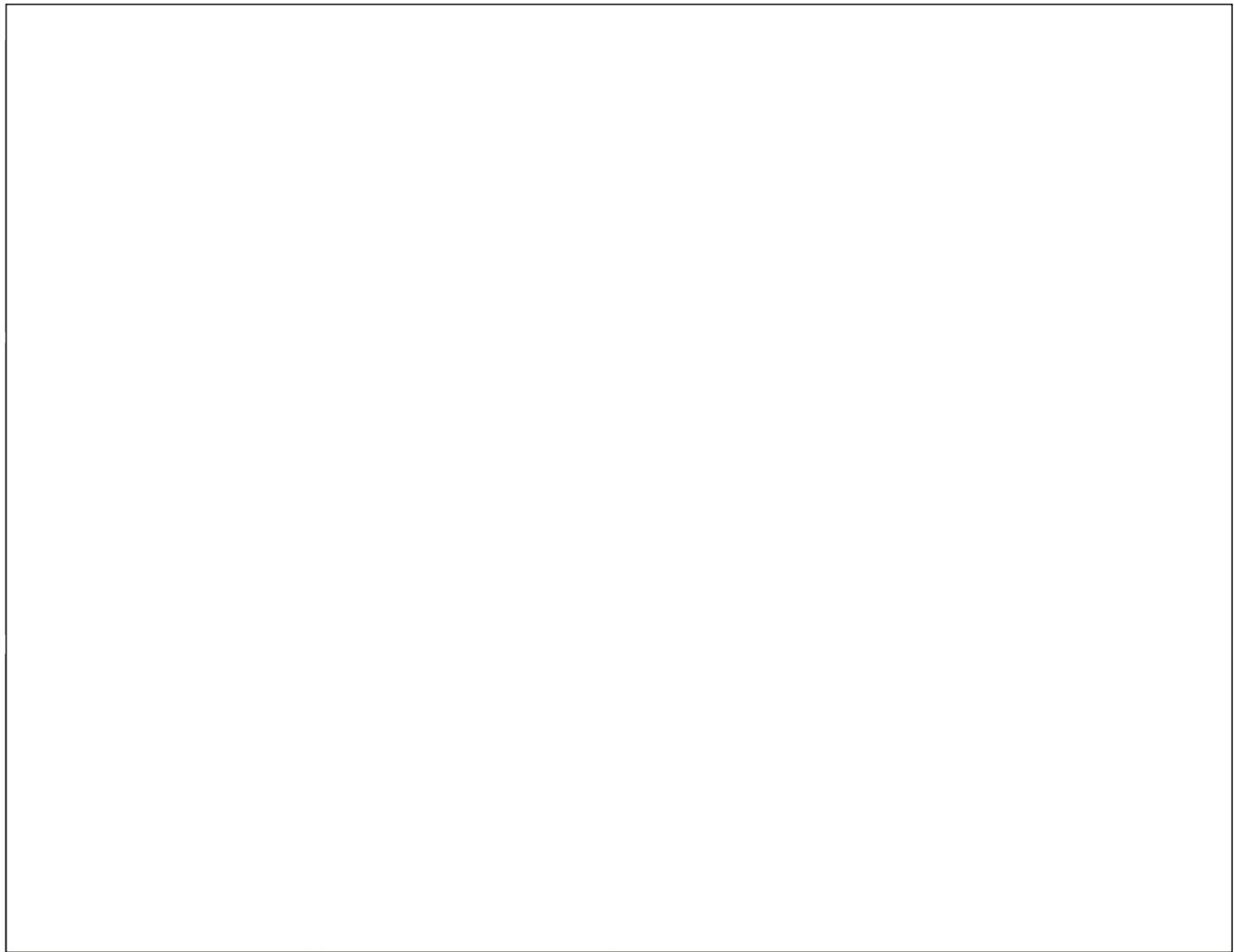


SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

December

					5 PTO Elementary School Book Fair 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. School library	6 Quarterback Challenge 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. NAS II ballfield Call 624-2710
7 Chapel Christmas Play & Cantata 6 p.m. NAS I Chapel	8 Elementary PTO Meeting 2:30 p.m. room B-25	9 Volunteer Orientation 10 to 11:30 a.m. Red Cross Call 624-5446	10 Mineo Holiday Arts & Crafts Day 5 to 6 p.m. Mineo Rec. Center	11 Recreational Boxing every thursday 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Activity Zone Call 624-4295	12 Base ICR 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. ICR class room Call 624-4291	13 Jingle Bell 10K Run registration 7:30 to 8 a.m. NAS I Fitness Center Capt. Cup event Call 624-4483/5243
14 Holiday Word Find all day Take 5	15 Holiday Gift Giveaway enter the drawing for a free gift Take 5	16 Giselle by Adolphe Charles Adam Ballet 4:30 p.m. ITT Call 624-4396	17 Rainbow Playgroup 10 to 11 a.m. 205 Housing	18 Christmas Gift Wrapping Mineo Rec Center	19 Ornament Making Day 4 p.m. BLAST	20 Arm Wrestling Competition 12:30 p.m. Take 5
21 Catania Shopping by Night ITT Call 624-4396	22 Deck Your Doors Contest noon decorate your barracks doors for prizes Liberty	23 Teen Holiday Cooking Class 3 to 5 p.m. Teen Center	24 Christmas Eve	25 Merry Christmas	26 Base ICR 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. ICR class room Call 624-4291	27 Taormina Shopping & Savoca Catacombs ITT Call 624-4369
28 Agrigento Valley of the Temples & S. Leone Beach ITT Call 624-4396	29 Babysitter Training 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Red Cross Call 624-5446	30	31 New Years Eve Special TENPINS	1 January Polar Bear Dip time TBD NAS I Pool Call 624-2710	2 Piazza Armenrina Roman Villa & Enna ITT Call 624-4396	3 Corleone & Wine Tasting ITT Call 624-4396





Word Find

Women Monarchs and Heads of State

F N I C B T O I F G R R W N J N E B C J A I I N H
 R R N S Q R R T E N I R E H T A C A A I X B N A T
 E E D P A E U A T E W F I Q L U N N R O G O A N E
 D H I Y N B G N M U E M L D B D E O F C R S N D B
 E C R E Y L E A H R H A S H A S T G B E O S N I A
 G T A W O M D L T I N B J N E C B H P X Y X A F Z
 U A G R Y L R I L F L A E Y I C L E O P A T R A I
 N H A I O R T O I A E D M V O W D O J A N D G L L
 D T N G J I A N A M L O E U Q S J N R S J L M A E
 A V D Y B A W M R L U W U E A A Z I L P M F C I N
 J W H E I Y M K E R R D V T N N F U A O A C G V T
 W E I C H S H I H O N J R Y E I B Q S K A F Z J Q
 N I A M J F Y B N V L A O H D Y R A D T M Z H V V
 J Y D N S U I K O A C N I L F M X E J R R A O T Q
 T O E K N U A J G A V I K V X G K H O S I G I R
 T L W L S E S A I N T A D E L A I D E T Z A U N Y
 X U Q M O V D R T X I N T U S P E H S T A H C T P
 W E O H R B A E D M A J I Y H S B M Q S Y K I O S
 A J B Y M M E S V D C U I F V C E U C S J F Z P G
 G Z S W S Y R N E R O B I N S O N O G U D H V B X
 A D N A H E N K N V E X U X K S Y R L T T A S L H
 T S I Q A A A D A A P U L O D P V S A E N J X Y Y
 E O E I D M L K Y J T P X N E L E H H E F W S G F
 I G L H U N J O E D K F B C Z H N Y C G E N V X R
 W P P B P A O R L Q O I W P A R R N U M F D Z Y Z

- | | | | |
|-------------|----------------|------------------------|----------|
| AMINA | FREDEGUND | MAKEDA | SUIKO |
| ANNA | GOLDA MEIR | MARIA CARTAS DE' PERON | THATCHER |
| ANNE BOLEYN | HATSHEPSUT | MARY | VICTORIA |
| AQUINO | HELEN | NANDI | YANJMAA |
| BHUTTO | INDIRA GANDHI | NEFERTITI | |
| BRUNHILDE | IRENE | NEHANDA | |
| CANDANE | ISABELLA | OLGA | |
| CATHERINE | JANE SEYMOUR | PARR | |
| CLEOPATRA | JEANNE DEVREUX | ROBINSON | |
| ELIZABETH | KATHERINE | SAINT ADELAIDE | |



DoDDs students talk about what's happening in the community

DARE program to be presented

At the Monday, Dec. 8 PTO meeting, representatives from the DARE program will do a presentation on the program. This program will be started for fifth graders in January. Come at 2:30 p.m. to room B25 to find out all about it.

Excavation of Civil War sub H.L. Hunley ends

By Kellen Correia, Naval Historical Center Public Affairs



The pocket watch that belonged to the commanding officer of the Civil War-era submarine "H.L. Hunley," Lt. George Dixon. The watch was retrieved from the Hunley and archeologists hope to use it to determine the time the sub sank on February 17, 1864

CHARLESTON, S.C. (NNS) — This week, Hunley staff scientists under the supervision of the Naval Historical Center (NHC) completed the excavation of the Confederate submarine's two ballast tanks.

During excavation of these areas, more than 1.5 tons of sediment were removed, and volunteers assisted in the screening and recording of the sediment.

The excavation, which began in early October, yielded more 19th century artifacts, as well as valuable analytical data.

A wooden barrel was uncovered earlier in the excavation on the bottom port side of the forward ballast tank and appears to have been modified for use as a bucket.

"It contained a relatively heavy and radio-dense substance that we believe may be a lead-based caulking material. Right next to the bucket lay an iron tool with the shape of a chisel that could be a caulking iron, used to caulk or repair leaks in the submarine," said Maria Jacobsen, senior archaeologist for the Hunley project. A sample of the bucket's contents has been sent to Clemson University for material analysis.

During the excavation of the aft ballast tank, scientists were slowed down due to the discovery of a coil of rope. The fragile, waterlogged rope was carefully removed for conservation and documentation.

Also during this time, archaeologists took the opportunity to revisit the central crew compartment and remove some of the heavier concreted artifacts from the area where Lt. George Dixon, Hunley's commander, was stationed.

The objects excavated were not easily recognizable and had to be X-rayed to be identified. Some of the objects recovered included a wrench, a hammer and three bolts. An artillery button was also uncovered in the center of the crew compartment.

"These tools raise questions as to whether Lt. Dixon was working on the submarine on the final night making repairs or adjustments," said Sen. Glenn McConnell, chairman of the Hunley Commission. "With the condensation in the submarine and the iron clad plates that are on the floor of the sub apparently to raise the crew's feet above the water which would accumulate, it seems Dixon would not have carelessly kept these tools in the water on a regular basis where they would corrode. Thus, it would suggest he was possibly using the tools that night, adding another clue to the operation of the submarine and the cause of it not returning home."

"The evidential jigsaw puzzle gets another piece of evidence as we put together the detailed story of the H. L. Hunley and its proud crew," added McConnell. Scientists hope this phase of excavation will also provide valuable data that could help solve the mystery on why the Hunley never returned, after becoming the first successful combat submarine in world history.

The forward and aft ballast tanks both had damage to them and over time, the sediment that filled those areas formed layers, or strata. Studying how these strata formed could eventually provide clues to the mystery of why Hunley vanished.

Warren Lasch, chairman of Friends of the Hunley, said, "The Hunley's disappearance will not remain an unsolved mystery. Through interdisciplinary scientific research and forensic analysis, we will ultimately be able to accurately tell the Hunley's chapter in world history."

In December, the Hunley project team will have the submarine mapped. Pacific Survey will use new 3D digital equipment to scan the emptied ballast tanks and the fully excavated crew compartment.

H. L. Hunley was located in 1995 by novelist Clive Cussler's National Underwater Agency. The hand-cranked submarine was raised in 2000 and delivered to the Warren Lasch Conservation Center, Charleston, S.C., where an international team of scientists is at work excavating and conserving the historic vessel and its artifacts.

Fri. Dec. 5

Come to the annual tree lighting ceremony at the new playground in front of the elementary school from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Sing holiday carols and enjoy free Otis Spunkmeyer cookies and hot cocoa. Catch a free ride with Liberty. Call 624-602 for more details.

Sat. Dec. 6

Test your accuracy, distance and agility on the NAS II ball field. Free for all participants. Prizes will be awarded to the top three men and women. Call 624-2710.

Explore Mt. Etna on horseback with experienced riding instructors on a three-hour trek up the volcano. Discover beautiful trails, incredible views and maybe a little snow. Bring warm clothes, a bag lunch, a camera and Euro. There is only room for eight participants so sign up today at AU.

Sun. Dec. 7

Visit the quaint little town on the hills of Etna and home to a great market. Then have lunch and wine tasting at the Valle Galfinia Winery. Call ITT at 624-4396.

Mon. Dec. 8

Celebrate National Brownie Day by stopping by Take 5 for a free brownie while supplies last.

Win a free stocking full of goodies by entering your name in a drawing at Take 5. Winners will be picked on the last day of the drawing.

Tues. Dec. 9

Join AU for some high-speed fun. Trip goes rain or shine. Requires a minimum of eight participants. Signups must be confirmed two days before. Pack your own lunch. Call 624-4271.

Wed. Dec. 10

Get some Christmas shopping done at the Catania market with ITT. Call 624-4396.

Eat till your heart is content with Liberty and have up to 10 Euro paid for of your bill. Sign up by Dec. 9. Call 624-5187.

Thurs. Dec. 11

Sharpen your photography skills and prepare for upcoming photo excursions. You will also be able to see photos from previous trips to help your creative juices to start flowing. Call 624-3718 for more information on Photo Safari.

TRIVIA

- 1) Sweet potato is a nickname for what musical instrument?
- 2) Grigory Potemkin entered history as a soldier and advisor to what ruler?
- 3) In chemistry, the corrosion-resistant metals of the platinum group are called what?
- 4) What was Alfred Hitchcock's last film?
- 5) In the cartoon series "The Jetsons" what is the name of the housing complex where the family live?

(Answers on page 13)

Movie Connection

AWF's Theater Schedule

Friday, Dec. 5

7 p.m.
Native American Dancers



9:30 p.m.
Master and Commander (PG-13)**

Saturday, Dec. 6

1 p.m.
Brother Bear (G)



3:30 p.m.
Out of Time (PG-13)



6 p.m.
Beyond Borders (R)**



8:30 p.m.
Matrix Revolutions (R)



Sunday, Dec. 7

1 p.m.
Under the Tuscan Sun (PG-13)



3:30 p.m.
Brother Bear (PG)



Monday, Dec. 8

6 p.m.
Once Upon a Time in Mexico (R)*



8 p.m.
Matrix Revolutions (R)



Theater Closed Tuesdays

Wednesday, Dec. 10

6 p.m.
Under the Tuscan Sun (PG-13)



8:30 p.m.
The Fighting Temptations (PG-13)



Thursday, Dec. 11

Youth Dance Recital

Friday, Dec. 12

6 p.m.
Lost in Translation (R) **





Debt from page 2

What can you do if the debt collector breaks the law?

You have the right to sue a debt collector in a state or federal court. If you win, you may recover money for any damage you suffered. You may also contact a state's Attorney General's office to determine your rights under state law. In addition, federal agencies, such as the Federal Trade Commission, rely on consumer complaints to decide which companies to investigate.

Call the NLSO at 624-5258 if you need further guidance.

MFTRA from page 3

She never returns to Camp Pendleton and rents out the condo for ten years until she gets an offer she can't refuse, and sells it for a \$150,000 gain in June of 2003. While she has not lived in the former principal residence for more than 10 years, the "regular" two of five years clock under Section 121 applies beyond the 10-year suspension period. Since she lived in the condo as her principal residence for three of the past thirteen years, she qualifies for the full \$250,000 capital gain exclusion less depreciation recapture.

iv. A partial exclusion example: The same scenario as above but the Admiral sold the house in June 2001. Applying the new 10-year suspension period means that we now have to look at the two of five years rule from June 1991. The Admiral moved out of the former principal residence in June 1987. Consequently he only lived in the house for one of the 15 years available to him under Section 121. While the regulations under Section 121 apply a day-for-day exclusion ratio, for simplicity we will state that in this scenario the Admiral can exclude only 50% of his applicable exclusion, or up to \$250,000 less depreciation recapture since May of 1997.

c. Who Won't Qualify? Those who do not meet the time limitations under the MFTRA; those whose initial move from the former principal residence was less than 50 miles away or who move back within 50 miles of the former principal residence but do not move into that home (unless ordered into government quarters); and those who have more than one former principal residence for which they would like to elect the suspension period. The MFTRA is clear that it applies to only one property for a suspension period. As noted above, the interpretation of this major change to Section 121 by the MFTRA will be promulgated by the IRS in Treasury Regulations at some point in the future. Since Congress provided a limited one-year window of opportunity to file for a refund if the taxpayer was otherwise beyond the statute of limitations, IRS may well get temporary guidance published sooner than the normal time for promulgation of regulations. Whenever official guidance becomes available to the NLSO from IRS, we will provide when we make the Section 121 Refund Package available.

2. Taxation of Death Gratuity and Increase in Amount Payable. The MFTRA increases the amount of the death gratuity payable for deaths occurring on active duty from the current \$6,000 to \$12,000. The Act fixes an anomaly in the tax law that taxed \$3,000 of the \$6,000 death gratuity. The Act specifically excludes the full gratuity from taxation, even if it were to increase in the future from the current \$12,000. This provision is retroactive to deaths occurring from 11 September 2001 forward. Since the tax was already paid by some of the affected families, they will also have to seek a refund from the IRS. A Death Gratuity Refund Package will be made available by NLSO and the Tax Center, again as soon as possible.

3. "Above-the-Line Deduction" for National Guard and Reserve members for Guard/Reserve Travel Expenses. Under prior law, Guard and Reserve members could only claim itemized deductions for their nonreimbursable expenses for transportation, meals, and lodging when they must travel away from home (and stay overnight) to attend meetings or drills. These overnight travel expenses are combined with other miscellaneous itemized deductions on Schedule A of the individual's income tax return and are deductible only to the extent that the aggregate of these deductions exceeds two percent of the taxpayer's adjusted gross income. The MFTRA provides what is called an "above-the-line deduction" for the overnight transportation, meals, and lodging expenses of National Guard and Reserve members who must travel away from home more than 100 miles (and stay overnight) to attend Guard and Reserve meetings and drills. This means that they can deduct these expenses from gross income whether or not they itemize their deductions. This only applies to expenses not exceeding the local per diem rate and is only for travel 100 miles or more from home. This provision is retroactive to expenses on or after 1 January 2003.

Exclusion of HAP Payments from Gross Income. The Department of Defense Homeowners Assistance Program ("HAP") provides payments to certain employees and members of the Armed Forces to offset the adverse effects on housing values that result from a military base realignment or closure ("BRAC" process). In general, under HAP, eligible individuals receive financial benefits that under prior law were includible in gross income as compensation for services to the extent such payments exceed the fair market value of the property turned over to the HAP program. Further, as payment for "services" under the tax code, the HAP payments were considered wages and taxable at personal income tax rates vice capital gains rates and had withholdings for FICA and Medicare. The MFTRA now excludes HAP payments from income to the extent of the reduction in the fair market value of the HAP property. This provision is not retroactive.

SPORTS

MWG Volleyball, from page 1



A member of the U.S. Armed Forces Mens Volleyball sets up a teammate during a practice in the NAS II Gym.

versus local squads from Catania, Reggio Calabria and Pedara.

Sigonella Men's Volleyball coach Erico Latham assisted the Armed Forces team during their time on base. He found the

round of training and practice matches "awesome."

"You can feel the adrenalin with each practice session," Latham said. "This is what it's all about.... The USA's best of the best going for the gold

medal. Sigonella has opened it's arms to embrace the quest for volleyball gold by these military athletes.

The team, consisting of five Navy, five Air Force and two Army athletes, were selected during the Armed Forces Volleyball Championships in September. The members have a variety of competitive experience. "We've got collegiate level players on the team from the Naval Academy, Penn State and various other colleges," said John Blondin, Navy setter and team captain from USS Mount Whitney. "We also have a few players, like myself, who have played the game for a lot of years, so it's very challenging."

Turning athletes from four different services that compete against each other into a single team is another challenge faced by armed forces teams. "You finish a week of beating each other up (in the Armed Forces Championships) and all of a sudden you become teammates," said Blondin. "Then you come overseas to face teams that have been together for a long period of time."

U.S.A. faces competition from 16 nations in the tournament. "The competition will be fairly stiff," said Army outside hitter Alan Siering, stationed at

"The competition will be fairly stiff. We'll be going up against a lot of professional athletes and probably a lot of Olympic hopefuls."

Army outside hitter
Alan Siering



Ft. Benning, Ga. "We'll be going up against a lot of professional athletes and probably a lot of Olympic hopefuls."

Many of the teams are in fact the national teams of their country, because in many countries national service is mandatory and these athletes may be recalled to military service for events like the World Military Games or the Olympics. "We'll have about six days to practice and face teams that have been together for years," Blondin said.

The news is not all bad, however. According to Blondin, individual athleticism among the teams tends to be even and a military background makes blending as a unit easier. "We're

used to taking on challenges," Blondin said. "We'll gel because we have to gel because there's no other avenue."

China is the favorite for the volleyball gold medal, but there is more to the World Military Games than sporting competition. Relationships between the various nations involved will also be developed. "[The World Military Games] is a great way to build foreign relations, as far as talking with other players," Siering said. "It's a way of getting to understand how their militaries operate. It's good for human understanding."

Team U.S.A. will take on world today through Dec. 10 at the Palacatania in Catania.

The Lane

MilitaryWorld Games

The CISM Military World Games are happening in the Catania area. For highlights of each day's events and scores Check out <http://www.cism-milSPORT.org/eng/welcome.html> for a complete schedule of events and venues.

Jingle Bell 10K adult and 2K youth runs

Saturday Dec. 13 stop by the NAS I Fitness Center for a chance to win the Jingle Bell 10 K run. Register at either fitness center before the event or on the day of the run beginning at 7:30 a.m. The youth run is on base and starts at 8:15 a.m. The adult run is off base and starts at 8:30 a.m. There is a fee to enter, but a T-shirt and a chance for awards is pay out enough. This is a Captain's Cup event.

QB Challenge

Stop by the NAS II ballfield Saturday, Dec. 6 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and show the rest of Sigonella what you got. Participation is free and prizes will be awarded for top three men and women. Call 624-2710 for more information.



Navy Helicopter Pilot Seeks "Eternal Mission" with MAF

Courtesy of Mission Aviation Fellowship

Lieutenant Commander Kevin Lynne graduated from the US Naval Academy in 1989 with one goal—to become a Navy pilot. His father was a Navy pilot who later served as a missionary pilot with Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) in Papua, Indonesia. Kevin spent 10 years of active duty flying as a Search-and-Rescue pilot in the SH-3 Sea King helicopter and as a Flight Instructor in a Bell Jet Ranger helicopter. Kevin loved being in the Navy, because he loved what he did—flying. He also loved the "missions"—they were something Kevin could believe in. He had always imagined himself someday retiring from the Navy, but in October of that year he felt the Lord calling him to combine his faith in Jesus Christ with his skills as a pilot and consider a different type of "mission". Kevin decided he wanted more than to simply earn a retirement; he wanted to use his life to make a difference. "I wanted to use my skills in work that would have lasting significance, mission flying to serve the lost of the world makes a difference for eternity every day." Kevin stayed in the Navy for another 3 1/2 years. After much prayer and discipleship, the time to move on became apparent in 1999. He transferred to the Reserves off active duty to enter LeTourneau University and earn his A&P Mechanics License and receive Bible training, so that he could go into missionary aviation. Kevin applied to Mission Aviation Fellowship in 2002 and worked for a year as an aircraft maintenance intern before he was accepted in January



LIEUTENANT COMMANDER KEVIN LYNNE (left) was on active duty for 10 years as a Navy pilot, and served as a flight instructor in a Bell Jet Ranger helicopter, before he transferred from active to reserve duty so he could become involved in missionary aviation with MAF.

2003. He, like his father, will be serving with MAF in Papua, Indonesia. There Kevin will fly an MAF Cessna 206 serving the national people of this isolated land and will continue the work his parents were called to when he was only five years old. Mission Aviation Fellowship is a nonprofit, Christian, charitable organization that participates in the

Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) as a member of Christian Service Charities federation.

STA-21 from page 1

the school and training requirements. "I am looking forward to the added responsibility," Krider said.

The process to submit applications is very easy but time consuming, according to Krider. "It took me approximately eight months to get it all squared away where I was happy with it," Krider said.

Before submitting his package, Krider had to go through various review boards. "The board looks at a variety of things to determine whether or not the applicant should be selected. The main determining factor whether or not they would be a good officer is their military and academic record. The Sailor must have professionalism, dedication and commitment to the Navy as well," said Lt. Charles

Puglia, training officer.

"Krider has the characteristics of being a good officer...he definitely has what it takes," said Force Protection Leading Petty Officer MAC (SW/AW) Antonio Gonzalez. "He has the drive and dedication to get the job done."

"I highly recommend this program to any one who is interested in becoming an officer...the worst that can happen is if they say no. Look into the program, the benefits are incredible, it is an incredible opportunity."

"It is an excellent opportunity to excel in the military while going through the officer ranks," said NCC (SW) Kendall Dobison.

For more information on STA-21 check out OPNAVINST 1420.1A.

Ops from page 1



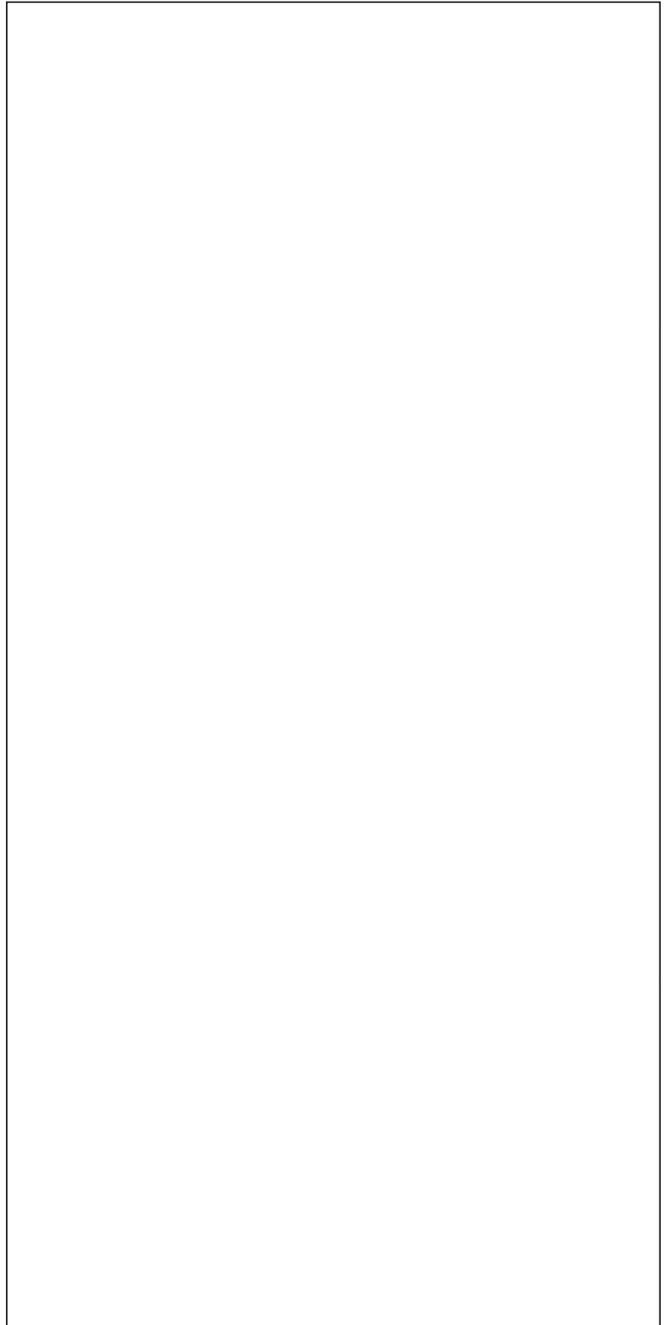
The U.S. guided missile frigate USS Nicholas (FFG-47), shown here with a Spanish helicopter during SANSO 03 in mid-October, also participated in BASILIC 03, a French-led maritime interdiction training exercise started Nov. 25.

countries — Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom and Portugal — will participate as observers for this exercise.

Although PSI 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 capabilities and interoperability. Six other PSI exercises are currently being planned for the remainder of 2003 and the first few months

of 2004. The first PSI exercise in the Mediterranean was the Spanish-led SANSO 03. Nicholas was also the U.S. participating vessel during that exercise.

Nicholas, homeported in Norfolk, Virginia, is currently performing a Mediterranean deployment. They have previously visited St. Petersburg, Russia, and Neum, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The ship is commanded by Commander Chan Swallow.





New Selectees frocked

Photo by PH3(AW) Brian Smarr



A member of Naval Station Sigonella Operations Department receives his frocking letter advancing him to petty officer first class from Capt. T.L. Davison during a frocking ceremony in hangar 407 Dec. 2.

CDC: Taking care of your children

By AN Michelle Hartgraves
Staff writers



From left to right: Angela Rojo, three years old; Noris Crig, 14 months and Joshua Jones, two years old enjoy story time with home care provider Ariene Jones.

Whether you're a single parent or dual military family, you might know what it is like to have to drop your child off at day care on your way to work. Which place you choose depends on a variety of things. You want to know that your child will be safe and cared for by professionals.

The Child Development Center is dedicated to providing professional service to the Sigonellan community. Through the center you have two options of day care, the center or Child Development Home Providers (CDH). Both the staff and the providers are trained and certified and have gone through thorough background checks.

According to Child Development Program Administrator Cathy Austin, the programs were created to help support military families and personnel with their child care needs. "We make sure that their children are taken care for in a quality environment, that they receive the best care possible."

Child Development Homes provide a warm family setting according to Etheria Young, child development home director. These homes are an alternate to center-based care and are often preferred by families because of the small group sizes, the atmosphere and the flexible hours.

"Some people prefer center environments while others prefer the home environment, particularly those with younger children," said Austin.

Not only does the center provide day care services to the community but they also offer

spouses the employment opportunity by becoming a CDH. This profession offers providers the opportunity to work in their own homes and watch their children grow and develop while, at the same time earning extra income. Anyone who wishes to provide childcare must first be certified and trained as a CDH provider, go through a background check, have their home inspected and live in government quarters (at

some installations you can live off base).

CDH providers get free training on a regular basis, participate in the Military Home Accreditation program, receive college credit for Navy training and enhance their child-rearing skills. Providers can also select their age group. When they move the certification

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is transferable.

"I have the best job in the world," exclaimed Austin. "I have the opportunity to be involved with children that are absolutely wonderful and staff who are excited about working with children."

"It makes me feel good to have people come in who want to be home providers," said Young.

"It is also great to be involved in something that is so important for the servicemembers. It helps them to be able to concentrate on their jobs, defending the country, when they know that their children are being cared for in secure and safe environment," Austin said.

If you are interested in becoming a CDH provider or want to find out more about the services provided call Cathy Austin or Etheria Young at 624-4005.



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surroundings. "When you're on deployment, things can be very fast paced. It was nice to get off base and work with the kids."

VP-45 is committed to serving the surrounding community, be it at home in Jacksonville or on deployment. The Pelicans plan to make other visits to Pecarino before they return to Florida and it is clear to see that the children are not the only ones looking forward to it.

Births

Trivia Answers

- 1) *Ocarina*
- 2) *Catherine the Great*
- 3) *Noble Metals*
- 4) *Family Plot*
- 5) *Sky Pad Apartments*