A publication of the 502nd Air Base Wing – Joint Base San Antonio

WINGSPREAD

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH

No. 49 • DECEMBER 11, 2015

Master Sgt. Mary Clark, Air Force Personnel Center, brings her daughters, Kyra and Jordyn, for photos with Santa Claus Dec. 3 at the Taj Mahal at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph.

JBSA-Randolph kicks off holiday season

PAGES 8-9

Photo by Johnny Saldivar

Senior leaders' safety message, page 3

AETC medical service awards, page 4

Intramural basketball begins, page 12

COMMENTARY

RESILIENCY

Dealing with holiday stress

By Capt. Jerry Novack
96th Medical Group, Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.

"Know that feeling down is perfectly normal from time to time. Do not forget we are resilient, even when we do not necessarily feel that way. Also, 'timeouts' are perfectly acceptable. Just like with family visits, temporarily disengaging from holiday cheer can provide a much needed break and enable you to reconnect with renewed excitement and joy."

It's that time of year again. All things pumpkin spice become all things peppermint; television networks start showing nostalgic, holiday-themed movies; in northwest Florida, we complain about cold weather while the rest of the country actually deals with winter; and I write the holiday stress mental health message.

My challenge, of course, is to write something of value not already heard or read ad nauseam. This can be a real challenge, considering the main stressors this time of year remain relatively constant.

I should recommend to create and stick to a holiday budget, spend time with loved ones instead of spending money on presents, and consider thrifty options when gift shopping. If you do these things effectively, then you should be writing me advice – not the other way around.

No matter how well I plan and budget, I find myself blindsided by unexpected expenses beyond gifts. There are holiday cards, parties, meals out, entertainment events, and postage I consistently fail to consider. Some strategies can help with damage control, though.

I maintain my year-round savings habits by setting up automatic, online funds transfers into retirement and savings accounts, and limit (or eliminate) credit cards with high interest ratings. I also create a "tighten the belt" plan for early January to help me recover from the holiday expenses. If anyone needs help managing holiday spending, make an appointment with a financial advisor or go to the nearest Military & Family Readiness Center.

I adore my family. The more I miss them, the more I adore them. Each year, I approach the holidays longing to reconnect with my siblings, parents, nieces and nephews.

By Jan. 2, I cannot wait to get away from them again. Time with family can be simultaneously wonderful, fulfilling and frustratingly stressful.

We can get overwhelmed if we forget to schedule in personal time or "little getaways" when visiting with family. For me, an afternoon spent in the bookstore or at a local Brazilian jiujitsu school can help me get some downtime, remember that I really do love these people, and re-engage renewed and happy.

Without scheduled breaks, I get irritable and relationships begin to rapidly deteriorate. Figure out what you need in order to manage family visits and protect it because it matters.

For many people, the winter holidays and New Year's celebration carries meaning and/or memories that can conjure feelings of sadness, anxiety or grief.

I hesitate to call these negative emotions because in certain circumstances they can be not only appropriate, but helpful. However, for some, these feelings can seem overwhelming, especially when juxtaposed with the happiness and cheer they see around them.

First, know that feeling down is perfectly normal from time to time. Do not forget we are resilient, even when we do not necessarily feel that way. Also, "timeouts" are perfectly acceptable. Just like with family visits, temporarily disengaging from holiday cheer can provide a much needed break and enable you to reconnect with renewed excitement and joy.

If feeling overwhelmed with holiday stress, or noticing a wingman does not seem to be coping well, reach out for help. Talk to friends, family, chaplain or mental health providers.

Accompany the wingman to a helping professional, if she/he refuses to go alone. If confused about the difference between family advocacy and M&FRC, just go to any helping agency. We will get you where you need to go. The most important thing is just get the support you or your wingman need.

Check us out on • Facebook: Joint Base San Antonio, JBSA-Fort Sam Houston, Lackland JBSA and JBSA-Randolph • Twitter: @JBSA_Official; @JBSAFSH; @JBSALackland and @JBSARandolph • YouTube: Joint Base San Antonio • Flickr: Joint Base San Antonio Public Affairs

WINGSPREAD

Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph
Editorial Staff
Brig. Gen. Bob LaBrutta
502nd Air Base Wing/JBSA Commander
Todd G. White
502nd ABW/JBSA Public Affairs Director
Marilyn C. Holliday
JBSA-Randolph Public Affairs Chief
Airman 1st Class Stormy Archer
Photojournalist Journeyman
Senior Airman Alexandria Slade
Photojournalist Journeyman
Robert Goetz, David DeKunder
Staff Writers
Maggie Armstrong
Graphic Designer

Wingspread Office
1150 5th Street East
JBSA-Randolph, Texas 78150
Phone: 210-652-4410
Wingspread email
randolphpublicaffairs@us.af.mil
Wingspread Advertisement Office
EN Communities
P.O. Box 2171
San Antonio, Texas 78297
210-250-2052

This newspaper is published by EN Communities, a private firm in no way connected with the U.S. Air Force, under exclusive written contract with Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas. This commercial enterprise Air Force newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military services. Contents of the Wingspread are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Air Force.

The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts or supplements, does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense, the Department of the Air Force or EN Communities, of the products or services advertised.

Everything advertised in this publication shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation, or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron.

Editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the Public Affairs Office of JBSA-Randolph. All photos, unless otherwise indicated, are U.S. Air Force photos.

The deadline for submissions is noon Wednesday the week prior to publication. All submissions can be emailed to randolphpublicaffairs@us.af.mil.

Air Force senior leaders stress safety this holiday season

By Deborah Lee James
Secretary of the Air Force,
Gen. Mark A. Welsh II
Air Force Chief of Staff
and Chief Master Sgt. James A. Cody
Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force

The winter holidays provide an opportunity to relax and celebrate with our families and friends. It's also an opportunity to re-establish a proper work-life balance by enjoying the seasonal festivities and activities.

We work diligently all year to reduce mishaps and we should not ignore those efforts during the much-deserved break. Sadly, last year we lost five Airmen, uniformed and civilian, in off-duty mishaps between Nov. 22 and Jan. 2.

Every Airman, uniformed and civilian, must take a few minutes to include sound risk management in his or her winter and holiday plans. The same risk management principles that keep us safe on duty are just as effective when traveling and enjoying recreational activities off duty.

Think through every plan and have a backup plan for contingencies. Pay close attention to weather conditions, remain vigilant and maintain proper awareness of your surroundings

Use your training and common sense to do the right thing. If you see someone in need, help them. If you're the one struggling, make the right choice and seek help from a friend, a supervisor or a professional.

We are the best Air Force on the planet because of who we are, how we approach challenges and what we do for our families and our fellow Airmen. The Air Force and the nation need every Airman to be ready and available to respond when and where called.

Your family, friends and nation depend on you to make safety a priority in your winter and holiday plans. While enjoying the season, take care of yourself and take care of each other.

"Every Airman, uniformed and civilian, must take a few minutes to include sound risk management in his or her winter and holiday plans. The same risk management principles that keep us safe on duty are just as effective when traveling and enjoying recreational activities off duty."

Leaders of the 502nd Air Base Wing and Joint Base San Antonio ask members to identify any wasteful practice with a JBSA Makes Cent$ submission.

Submitting suggestions on the JBSA Makes Cent$ website can benefit JBSA members with earned time off for ideas.

"1" Approved Idea = Certificate/Time Off Award (2 Hours)

"3" Approved Ideas or more than 5K saved = Certificate/Coined by 502nd ABW/CC/Time Off Award (4 Hours)

"5" Approved Ideas or more than 10K saved = Certificate/Time Off Award (8 Hours)

Visit JBSA Makes Cent$ at http://www.jbsa.mil/Resources/JBSAMakes-Cent$.aspx to learn more about submitting ideas.

Airmen earn AETC Air Force Medical Service awards

The following 59th Medical Wing team members earned 2015 Air Education and Training Command Air Force Medical Service awards. Winners of the AETC-level awards will advance to the Air Force-level and compete against other major command winners in their respective categories.

Outstanding Medical Logistics Account of the Year - Large Activity
59th Medical Logistics Readiness Squadron

Outstanding Medical Readiness Team Award
59th MDLRS

USAF MSC Commitment to Service Award
Lt. Col. Craig A. Keyes,
59th Medical Wing

USAF Biomedical Clinician Category I Offi cer of the Year - Field Grade Category
Lt. Col. Leigh G. Johnson,
559th Medical Operations Squadron

USAF Biomedical Clinician Category II Offi cer of the Year - Company Grade Category
Capt. Aaron M. Butler,
59th Medical Operations Group

USAF Biomedical Clinician Category II Offi cer of the Year - Field Grade Category
Maj. Ember Ryals,
59th MDOG

USAF Biomedical Specialist Category I Offi cer of the Year - Company Grade Category
Capt. Burke R. Wilson,
59th Medical Training Squadron

USAF Biomedical Specialist Category I Offi cer of the Year - Field Grade Category
Maj. Justin D. Lusk,
359th Medical Group

USAF Biomedical Specialist Category II Offi cer of the Year - Field Grade Category
Maj. Juram R. Balsa,
59th MDTS

USAF Biomedical Specialist Civilian of the Year
Norma J. Corona,
59th MDTS

BSC Small Team Awards
Military Training Consult Services,
559th Aerospace Medicine Squadron

Small Dental Clinic of the Year
359th Aerospace Medicine Squadron Dental Flight, Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph

Outstanding Medical Materiel Airman of the Year
Senior Airman Samantha E. Brevik,
59th MLRS

Outstanding Base Bioenvironmental Engineering Airman of the Year Award
Senior Airman Trevaughn M. Sheppard,
559th AMDS

Outstanding Mental Health Airman of the Year
Senior Airman Akel R. Leith,
59th Medical Operations Squadron

Outstanding Diet Therapy Airman of the Year
Airman 1st Class Megan E. Thibodeaux,
959th Clinical Support Squadron,
JBSA-Fort Sam Houston

Outstanding Diet Therapy NCO of the Year
Staff Sgt. Michelle N. Pascas,
59th MDTS

The Air Force Cardiopulmonary Laboratory Airman of the Year
Senior Airman Tyler J. Sutherland,
959th Medical Operations Squadron,
JBSA-Fort Sam Houston

USAF Physical Medicine Airman of the Year
Senior Airman Jordan K. Pickell,
359th MDG, JBSA-Randolph

USAF Physical Medicine NCO of the Year
Tech. Sgt. Casey D. Berry,
359th MDG, JBSA-Randolph

Outstanding Aerospace Medicine NCO of the Year Award
Master Sgt. Cheri A. Hernandez-Watson,
959th Inpatient Operations Squadron,
JBSA-Fort Sam Houston

USAF Surgical Service Airman of the Year Award
Senior Airman Melishia L. Francis,
59th MDOG, JBSA-Lackland

USAF Laboratory Airman of the Year Award
Senior Airman Olivia R. Garcia,
959th CSPS, JBSA-Fort Sam Houston

USAF Laboratory NCO of the Year Award
Tech. Sgt. Michelle L. Bernard,
959th CSPS

USAF Ophthalmic Airman of the Year
Airman 1st Class Nelson M. Amya,
59th MDOG

SNCO Operational Medicine Excellence Award
Senior Master Sgt. Lazarus E. Brown,
959th IPTS, JBSA-Fort Sam Houston

AFMS Civilian Leadership Award
Kimbreca V. Thomas,
59th MDOG

USAF Clinical Excellence Award - Field Grade Category
Maj. James H. Lantry III,
959th IPTS, JBSA-Fort Sam Houston

Chief of Medical Staff Commitment to Excellence Award
Lt. Col. Francis R. Carandang,
359th MDG, JBSA-Randolph

Physician Educator of the Year
Lt. Col. Christopher J. Nagy,
959th MDOS, JBSA-Fort Sam Houston

USAF Clinical Excellence in Nursing Award - CGO Category
Capt. Julianne Legierse,
959th IPTS, JBSA-Fort Sam Houston

Civilian Nurse of the Year
Christina L. Scallion,
559th Trainee Health Squadron, JBSA-Lackland

USAF Outstanding Excellence in Nursing Leadership Award
Lt. Col. Cynthia J. Weidman,
359th MDG, JBSA-Randolph

USAF Outstanding Achievement in Clinical Research Award
Capt. Bryant J. Webber,
559th THLS, JBSA-Lackland

Outstanding PRP Team of the Year
559th AMDS PRP Clinic

AFMS Outstanding Achievement in Innovation Award
Performance Nutrition Team,
59th MDTS

902nd SFS offers counter active shooter training

The 902nd Security Forces Squadron is offering an active shooter awareness seminar 2 p.m. Monday in the Fleenor Auditorium, building 100, at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph.

This hour and a half event will briefly cover counter active shooter tactics tailored to increased situational awareness, planning, preparation and individual reaction options. Unlike previous Counter Active Shooter Tactics Courses, this event is tailored toward social, recreational and celebratory situations.

Courtesy graphic

Food safety tips for holiday season

From Public Health Office, Robins Air Force Base, Ga.

Colder weather is settling in and it's time for warm cider, pumpkin spice lattes, deep-fried turkeys and visits from the relatives during the holiday season.

Kids love being involved in cooking pies, cookies and other sweet treats, while most of us love to overindulge on all of the fantastic food.

With an overindulgence of foods like turkey, ham and potato salad, folks should be mindful of ways to keep food safe.

Here are some tips to ensure your holiday season stays joyful and merry:

Wash your hands. Possibly one of the easiest ways to prevent a foodborne illness is to keep your hands clean. Ensure you wash your hands prior to handling food, in between different tasks, after using the restroom, and after touching something such as your nose, hair, face or pets. You should wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds to minimize cross contamination.

Clean and sanitize food contact surfaces. Counters, cutting boards, knives, and other dishes should be washed after each use and prior to being used for a different food item. Keep in mind that cloth rags can harbor bacteria if not properly cleaned. Use paper towels with a homemade sanitizing solution (one capful of bleach per a gallon of water) to clean surfaces as needed.

Keep foods separated. Along with using separate utensils, foods should also be physically separated. Raw meats should go on the bottom shelf of a refrigerator, below any ready-to-eat foods. Foods should also be prepared on separate areas of the counter.

Invest in a food thermometer. Improper temperatures are a major factor in bacterial growth in food, which can lead to a foodborne illness.

Maintain proper holding temperatures. Cold foods should be kept at 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below and hot food should be kept at 135 degrees or above.

Don't overfill your refrigerator. Holidays means company which means a lot of food. Too much food in your refrigerator can lessen air circulation and slow down cooling.

Properly cook foods to the right temperature. Don't rely on the color of meats to determine doneness. Typically, chicken-based foods should be cooked to 165 degrees for 15 seconds. Beef-based foods should be cooked to 155 degrees for 15 seconds, with the exception of ground beef, which should be cooked to 165 degrees for 15 seconds. Pork and egg products should be cooked to 145 degrees for 15 seconds. When in doubt cook your food to 165 degrees for 15 seconds. Use a thermometer to make sure foods reach the right temperature to kill bacteria.

All leftovers should be cooked thoroughly to at least 165 degrees for 15 seconds. If using a microwave, stir the food regularly for even heating.

After cooking, you are sure to have leftovers. Use shallow pans to help the food cool quicker and stir regularly, if possible. Food should be cooled to 70 degrees within two hours and then to 41 degrees within four hours after that.

Properly defrost the turkey. The sheer size of a turkey makes it a chore to thaw. When thawing a turkey, it will take 24 hours per five pounds to thaw in the refrigerator. Do not let the turkey sit out on the counter, as the outside will thaw quickly and begin to gather bacteria, while the inside stays firmly frozen. Another option is to buy the turkey fresh.

Thoroughly cook all eggs and egg products. Eggs are a yummy treat around the holidays. Whether you are eating cookies, deviled eggs, or drinking eggnog, you are likely to come across this food item. Make sure you and your family are not eating raw or undercooked eggs. Look out for ready-to-cook cookie dough as it could have raw eggs in it.

This time of year is meant for happiness and family. Just make sure you keep safety on your mind and enjoy all of that holiday food as you sit around the fireplace with friends and family. Happy holidays.

Chaplains help people attain spiritual resilience during holidays

By Robert Goetz
Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Public Affairs

The joys of the holiday season can often be clouded by feelings of loneliness and anxiety.

These feelings can especially affect military members and their families during deployments and other periods of separation, young Airmen away from home for the first time and those who are dealing with the loss of a loved one.

Mental health flights, military and family readiness centers, Military OneSource and other resources can help active-duty members and their families, as well as retirees, deal with the stressors of the season, but chaplains provide another perspective, helping people achieve spiritual resilience.

"We're one of the pillars of Comprehensive Airman Fitness," said Chaplain (Capt.) Richard Boyd, 502nd Air Base Wing. "We provide the ministerial aspect of it. The advice we give is through our faith perspective."

Boyd, who has been assigned to the Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Chaplain Office for three years, said his emphasis is on faith and family – turning outward – when he counsels people who are struggling during the holiday season.

"I believe that Christmas is not just about getting more stuff, and it isn't just about decorating your house so that you can win the neighborhood lighting contest," he said. "There is more to it than that. I believe that Christmas is the time where we can stop turning inward on ourselves and see that there is more to life than just fulfilling our own desires and wants."

Boyd said Christmas celebrates "the coming of Christ into the world to save us from our sins."

"Christmas is the time when we can turn outward and find value in God and other people, especially family," he said. "Remembering that will help us see beyond the here and the now and find hope for our future."

In addition to feeling isolated and lonely, people can experience anxiety because of financial obligations during the season. They may feel guilty because they don't have the financial resources to buy the best gifts, or they may go into debt when they overspend.

"It is the time of year when our culture is telling us to buy more," Boyd said. "How many commercials do we watch and how many emails do we receive every day that tell us that we won't be happy until we buy more stuff?

"I love to receive nice Christmas presents as much as anyone else," he said. "But it isn't about getting stuff that matters."

Boyd said Christmas provides an opportunity to follow Christ's teachings and give rather than receive.

"Wouldn't it be better if we used what we have to help those who do not have much?" he asked.

In addition to counseling Airmen who are missing their parents and feeling isolated and discouraged, the chaplain office helps provide opportunities for young active-duty members to "turn outward" through events like single Airmen's dinners and holiday cookie drives.

When spouses are separated due to deployments, Boyd said chaplains help the spouses who are at home by offering help with yard work, vehicle issues and other everyday problems.

During the holidays, he encourages spouses who are separated to place unresolved issues "on the shelf" when they communicate, whether it's through emails, letters, phone calls or Skype.

"Talk about the good things," he said. "Look forward to the opportunities you have now."

Boyd said the best advice he can give to people who are feeling lonely and stressed out by life "is that there is a God who loves you more than you can imagine and who sees the difficulties that you are going through.

"He is working behind the scenes through those difficulties and He will turn them into something good," Boyd said. "Ask Him to help you and then when He does, remind those around you of where they can go to get His help too. Christmas is a reminder that He came so that you would not have to be alone, and He promised that He will never leave you or forsake you."

James discusses coalition efforts at press club luncheon

From Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs Command Information

Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James discussed her two-week trip of seeing firsthand the Air Force's role in coalition efforts against violent extremist organizations during a National Press Club luncheon Dec. 2.

"I had the opportunity to see our Airmen of all ranks serving our nation, doing everything from advising foreign militaries to gathering and analyzing intelligence, coordinating the movement of supplies and equipment and even flying into combat," James said.

James mentioned she learned from several meetings that other nations expressed interest in buying or upgrading equipment along with training and exercises.

"I believe the United States is the partner of choice for all (countries)," James said. "Building partnership capacity is really, really important especially in light of our ongoing efforts against violent extremist organizations."

Updating the foreign military sales process by setting a pre-approved technology transfer baseline, James said, would shorten a lengthy process to assess whether a particular capability can be transferred and help build future capacity through foreign military sales.

"This is just the beginning of our efforts," James said.

The Air Force, she said, is keeping up the fight and pressure against all violent organizations. Senior commanders have indicated that the airpower strategy of degrading and ultimately destroying Daesh is proceeding at pace and getting the job done.

"Daesh no longer has the ability to operate freely in somewhere between 20 to 25 percent of the populated territory it held one year ago in Iraq and Syria," James said. "Their command and control centers, supply lines, equipment and training sites have been hit."

Deliberate targeting is used daily to detect, identify and develop a plan against the target in sufficient time. There are three steps in the process, such as study and collecting data, observing enemy activity and planning the best suited course of action.

> *"My top three priorities are taking care of people, balancing readiness and modernization so that we get the right mix for today as well as the right mix of investment for tomorrow, and in light of these very tough budget times we're facing, we have to make every dollar count. We have to be efficient."*
>
> **Deborah Lee James**
> *U.S. Air Force Secretary*

"We're intensifying our efforts as much as possible, particularly as the indigenous ground forces improve and particularly as we get more of these deliberate targets," James said.

James' team witnessed the essential role the Airmen who control remotely piloted aircraft are to the mission. In the future, a series of new initiatives will be announced to up the ante and alleviate stress from the RPA community.

"Ultimately our goal in all of this is to direct some positive change from the top down and we also want to do a good job of listening from the bottom up and directing changes that come directly as suggestions from our Airmen," James said.

James believes the Air Force has many hotspots and challenges to confront, but it's still the best.

"My top three priorities are taking care of people, balancing readiness and modernization so that we get the right mix for today as well as the right mix of investment for tomorrow, and in light of these very tough budget times we're facing, we have to make every dollar count. We have to be efficient," James said.

Courtesy graphic

Fire safety organizations launch 'Put A Freeze On Winter Fires' campaign

From National Fire Prevention Association Public Affairs

The weather outside may be frightful this winter, but a fire in your home is far from delightful. Unfortunately, the risk of home fire does increase during the winter months: December, January, February and March are the leading months for U.S. home fires.

To help better educate the public about winter fire hazards and ways to prevent them, the National Fire Protection Association and the United States Fire Administration are teaming up to promote "Put a Freeze on Winter Fires."

The annual campaign, now in its fifth year, addresses the leading factors that collectively contribute to a higher risk of home fires and related hazards during the winter months. These include heating, holiday decorating, Christmas trees, candles, electrical issues and carbon monoxide poisoning.

"The colder months and holiday season bring a set of fire risks that can quickly turn this festive, wintry time of year into a tragic one," said Lorraine Carli, NFPA vice president of outreach and advocacy. "With a little added awareness and by following some basic safety precautions, people can greatly reduce the likelihood of winter home fires and ensure a warm, fire-safe season."

The following is an overview of the safety issues "Put a Freeze on Winter Fires" addresses; the campaign runs December through February:

Cooking

While cooking fires are the leading cause of U.S. home fires and injuries year-round, Christmas Day and Christmas Eve ranked second and third (after Thanksgiving) as the leading days for home cooking fires. On Christmas Day in 2013, there was a 58 percent increase in home cooking fires than on a typical day, and a 54 percent increase on Christmas Eve.

Between 2009 and 2013, cooking equipment was involved in annual average of 162,400 reported home fires that resulted in 430 civilian deaths, 5,400 injuries and $1.1 billion in direct property damage per year. Unattended cooking was by far the leading cause of these fires and fire deaths.

Heating

Heating is the second leading cause of U.S. home fires, deaths and injuries; December, January and February are the peak months for heating fires. In 2009-2013, heating equipment was involved in an estimated average of 56,000 reported home fires per year, which caused 470 deaths, 1,490 injuries and $1 billion in direct property damage.

Home heating equipment was involved in 16 percent of home fires, 19 percent of the home fire deaths, 12 percent of the home fire injuries, and 15 percent of the direct property damage from home fires.

Failure to clean chimneys and other heating equipment was the leading cause of these fires. However, space heaters, including portable heaters and those that are permanently installed, were involved in five out of six home heating fire deaths. Heating equipment was too close to things that can burn, such as upholstered furniture, clothing, mattresses or bedding, etc. in roughly half of the fire deaths.

Christmas trees

Christmas tree fires are not common, but when they do occur, they're much more likely to be deadly than most other fires.

One of every 31 reported home Christmas tree fires results in a death each year, compared to an annual average of one death per 144 total reported home fires. Between 2009 and 2013, Christmas trees were involved in an annual average of 210 home fires resulting in seven civilian deaths, 19 injuries and $17.5 million in direct property damage. Electrical distribution or lighting equipment was involved in 38 percent of home Christmas tree fires.

Candles

December is the peak time of year for home candle fires; the top three days for home candle fires are New Year's Day, Christmas, New Year's Eve and Christmas Eve. In December, 11 percent of home candle fires began with decorations, compared to 4 percent the rest of the year.

Each year between 2009 and 2013, an average of 25 home candle fires were reported each day. Overall, an estimated 9,300 home fires were caused by candles, resulting in 86 civilian deaths, 827 civilian injuries and $374 billion in direct property damage.

Holiday decorations

Between 2009 and 2013, U.S. fire departments responded to an annual average of 860 home fires that began with decorations (excluding Christmas trees). These fires caused an annual average of one civilian death, 41 injuries and $13.4 million in direct property damage. One fifth (20 percent) of the decoration fires started in the kitchen; one out of six (seventeen percent) started in the living room, family room or den.

Carbon monoxide

Often called the invisible killer, carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas created when fuels burn incompletely. In the home, heating and cooking equipment that burn fuel are potential sources of CO. In 2010,

U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated 80,100 non-fire incidents in which carbon monoxide was found, or an average of nine such calls per hour. The number of incidents increased 96 percent from 40,900 incidents reported in 2003. This increase is most likely due to the increased use of CO detectors, which alert people to the presence of CO.

For more information on NFPA's and USFA's "Put a Freeze on Winter Fires" campaign, visit http://www.nfpa.org/winter and http://www.usfa.fema.gov/winter to find a wealth of safety tips, videos and other information on winter fire safety and prevention.

Photos by Johnny Saldivar

Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph community members visit the holiday tree displayed in the middle of Washington Circle.

Col. Matt Isler (left), 12th Flying Training Wing commander, along with the Paddock family, flips the switch and turns on Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph's Christmas tree during the annual tree-lighting ceremony Dec. 3 at Washington Circle at JBSA-Randolph.

Allana Hemenway, Randolph Elementary School principal, leads the Randolph Elementary School Choir in Christmas carols as part of the Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph tree-lighting ceremony Dec. 3 at JBSA-Randolph.

JBSA-Randolph Christmas tree lighting ceremony highlights holiday season

By Senior Airman Alexandria Slade
Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Public Affairs

About 300 members of Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph gathered to celebrate the holiday season during the annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony Dec. 3 in Washington Circle.

The ceremony showcased the Randolph High School Band and Randolph Elementary School Choir and a selection of classic holiday music before a switch was flipped to illuminate the Christmas tree in Washington Circle.

"Tonight was a great opportunity to remember what we're grateful for here at JBSA-Randolph," Col. Matthew Isler, 12th Flying Training Wing commander, said. "We are so grateful for the hardworking members here, the local community that supports our missions and those deployed defending our country. This event also provided the opportunity to support the families separated by deployment during this holiday season."

For Lt. Col. Daniel Paddock, 435th Fighter Training Squadron instructor pilot, whose children helped flip the switch to light the tree; the JBSA-Randolph Christmas tree lighting ceremony provided the opportunity to experience a sense of community with fellow military members while his wife is deployed.

"This is the first Christmas my wife has not been with our family, but this event was so memorable for us and added some holiday cheer to our lives," Paddock said.

After the tree was lit, Santa Claus rode into Washington Circle via a 502nd Civil Engineer Squadron fire engine to take pictures with JBSA-Randolph children in the Clark Rotunda of the Taj, building 100.

"The purpose of this ceremony is to celebrate the holiday season as a community," Col. Michael Gimbrone, 502nd Security Forces and Logistics Support Group commander, said. "Coming together as a community like this reminds us of the important freedoms we possess, the military members defending those freedoms abroad, and their families separated during the holidays."

Along with Santa Claus, the highlight of the Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph tree lighting ceremony was the beautiful new 36-foot tree located in JBSA-Randolph's Washington Circle.

Santa Claus arrives in a Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph fire truck Dec. 3 for the tree-lighting ceremony.

The Randolph High School Band plays Christmas carols Dec. 3 during the Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph tree lighting ceremony.

JBSA Sexual Assault Prevention, Response

To report a sexual assault, call the 24/7 Joint Base San Antonio Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Hotline at 808-7272 or the Department of Defense Safe Helpline at 877-995-5247.

Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph
News Briefs

Clinic holiday closures

Due to upcoming holidays and Air Education and Training Command family days, 59th Medical Wing clinics and pharmacies will be closed Dec. 24, Dec. 25, Dec. 31 and Jan. 1.

The 59th MDW Urgent Care Center in the Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center basement will remain open regular hours, serving walk-in patients 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The UCC can be reached at 292-7331.

Dr. Martin Luther King observance

The Joint Base San Antonio Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. commemorative observance will be held from noon to 1 p.m. Jan. 15 at the JBSA-Randolph Chapel.

Anyone wanting to be in the choir can call 652-6121 for an RSVP form and more information. All participants must complete the RSVP form and return it by Dec. 15.

2015 Federal Benefits Open Season

Open season for the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program and the Federal Flexible Spending Account Program continues through Monday. For detailed information about making an open season election, visit the myPers website at https://myPers.af.mil.

Check expiration dates on IDs

All Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System, Command Access Card and military ID card locations throughout Joint Base San Antonio are by 100 percent appointment only and wait time for an appointment can be up to 30 days. Civilian and military members need to remember their CACs and military IDs expire and must schedule renewal appointments appropriately. Plan ahead for family members when their ID cards or DEERS updates need to be made. Appointments can be made online at https://rapids-appointments.dmdc.od.mil.

Construction planned for Golf Road

Golf Road will be closed starting Monday with a planned reopening Feb. 2, 2016. The 502nd Civil Engineer Squadron is planning a pavement rehabilitation project on Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph's Golf Road, which will include removal and replacement of existing pavement and curbs.

The construction staging for this project will be located on the crossover road intersection of Golf Rd., North of Taxiway Echo and Delta and South of Taxiway Foxtrot and Delta.

Demolition and construction will occur in a single phase forcing commercial and privately owned vehicle traffic entering JBSA-Randolph's South Gate to be re-routed to the West Perimeter Road. The West Perimeter Road detour for drivers will be located on the second left entering the South Gate. Traffic exiting the South Gate will also use West Perimeter Road as a detour route. Traffic to and from Randolph Oaks golf course will be accessible from the South Gate and West Perimeter Road. Airfield traffic will not be affected by the project.

The outbound lane being used for early morning traffic will be closed from 6-8:30 a.m. until construction is completed.

All military occupations, positions open to women starting in January

By Cheryl Pellerin
Department of Defense News, Defense Media Activity

Secretary of Defense Ash Carter announced Dec. 3 that beginning in January 2016, all military occupations and positions will be open to women, without exception.

For the first time in U.S. military history, as long as they qualify and meet specific standards, the secretary said women will be able to contribute to the Department of Defense mission with no barriers at all in their way.

"They'll be allowed to drive tanks, fire mortars and lead infantry soldiers into combat," Carter added. "They'll be able to serve as Army Rangers and Green Berets, Navy SEALs, Marine Corps infantry, Air Force parajumpers and everything else that was previously open only to men."

Even more importantly, he said, the military services will be better able to harness the skills and perspectives that talented women have to offer.

Despite real progress in recent decades and lately, opening more than 111,000 positions to women across the services, Carter said that about 10 percent of military positions – nearly 220,000 total – have remained closed to women.

These included infantry, armor, reconnaissance and some special operations units, the secretary said.

Over the past three years, he added, senior civilian and military leaders across the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Special Operations Command have studied the integration of women into these positions.

"Last month I received their recommendations and the data, studies and surveys on which they were based regarding whether any of those remaining positions warrant a continued exemption from being opened to women," Carter said, noting that the Army, Navy, Air Force and SOCOM said none of the positions warranted exemptions.

The Marine Corps asked for a partial exemption in areas that included infantry, machine gunner, fire support reconnaissance and others, he added, "but we are a joint force and I have decided to make a decision which applies to the entire force."

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Marine Corps Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr. was the Marine Corps commandant at the time, and Carter said that he and Dunford have discussed the issue many times.

Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Adrian Cadiz
Secretary of Defense Ash Carter announces his Women in Service Review during a press brief Dec. 3 at the Pentagon.

"I just met with him and the other chiefs and service secretaries today, and he will be a full part of implementation," Carter added, noting that he believes the issues raised by the Marine Corps can and will be addressed in implementation.

In a memorandum to the secretaries of all military departments and others, Carter directed the military services to open all military occupational specialties to women 30 days from Dec. 3 – a waiting period required by law – and by that date to provide updated implementation plans for integrating women into the positions now open to them.

Carter said Bob Work, Deputy Defense secretary, and Air Force Gen. Paul Selva, Joint Chiefs of Staff vice chairman, will oversee the decision's short-term implementation, ensure there are no unintended consequences to the joint force, and periodically update Carter and Dunford.

Women will be fully integrated into combat roles deliberately and methodically, the secretary said, using seven guidelines:

1. Implementation will be pursued with the objective of improved force effectiveness.
2. Leaders must assign tasks and jobs throughout the force based on ability, not gender.
3. Equal opportunity likely will not mean equal participation by men and women in all specialties, and there will be no quotas.
4. Studies conducted by the services and SOCOM indicate that on average there are physical and other differences between men and women, and implementation will take this into account.
5. The department will address the fact that some surveys suggest that some service members, men and women, will perceive that integration could damage combat effectiveness.
6. Particularly in the specialties that are newly open to women, survey data and the judgment of service leaders indicate that the performance of small teams is important.
7. The United States and some of its closest friends and allies are committed to having militaries that include men and women, but not all nations share this perspective.

Implementation won't happen overnight, Carter said.

"Fully integrating women into all military positions will make the U.S. armed forces better and stronger but there will be problems to fix and challenges to overcome," he said. "We shouldn't diminish that."

The military has long prided itself on being a meritocracy, where those who serve are judged only on what they have to offer to help defend the country, Carter said.

"That's why we have the finest fighting force the world has ever known," he added, "and it's one other way we will strive to ensure that the force of the future remains so, long into the future."

ICE
Interactive Customer Evaluation
One of the best things about ICE is that people can let service providers know when they do a great job, not just for poor service.
Submit a comment at http://ice.disa.mil.

Intramural hoops season tips off Tuesday

By David DeKunder
Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph Public Affairs

The Air Force Personnel Center team – the defending Joint Base San Antonio intramural basketball champions – will start its title defense when the intramural basketball season at JBSA-Randolph tips off Tuesday.

AFPC will be one of seven teams in the JBSA-Randolph intramural league. Games will be on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, starting at 5:45 p.m., at the Rambler Fitness Center.

Rikk Prado, 502nd Force Support Squadron Rambler Fitness Center sports programmer, said the seven teams who will be competing in the intramural basketball league is an increase from the five teams that participated last season.

While the number of teams in the league has been set, individual players can still sign up to be placed on a squad by contacting Prado at 652-7272. Active-duty service members and Department of Defense cardholders age 18 and up are eligible to play.

Team coaches can put as many players on their rosters as they want.

"We are going to play nose-to-nose defense and stick to the same philosophy that we had in place for the past two years, pushing the ball up the court and a fast break offense."

Michael Gunter
Air Force Personnel Center coach

Prado said the season will last at least 12 games plus the JBSA-Randolph tournament in March. The top two teams in the tournament advance to the JBSA intramural championship tournament at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston that will include teams from JBSA-Fort Sam Houston and Lackland.

AFPC won both the JBSA-Randolph and JBSA intramural titles last spring, defeating the 502nd Force Support Squadron team from JBSA-Randolph in both title games last season. AFPC defeated 502nd FSS, 59-34, in the JBSA Intramural Basketball Championship game March 6 at the AT&T Center.

AFPC coach Michael Gunter said his squad will employ the same focus it had last season in their quest to repeat as JBSA intramural champions.

"We are coming out with the same mindset," Gunter said. "We are going to play nose-to-nose defense and stick to the same philosophy that we had in place for the past two years, pushing the ball up the court and a fast break offense."

AFPC has won the last two JBSA-Randolph intramural titles and has advanced to the JBSA championship game two years in a row. AFPC lost in the JBSA title game in 2014.

Gunter said he is looking forward to the start of intramural basketball season with four members of AFPC team starting lineup coming back.

"I just returned from deployment," Gunter said. "I am ready to kick off another season."

AFPC will face stiff competition in its bid to repeat as both JBSA-Randolph and JBSA intramural champions from the 502nd FSS team.

Chris Woods, 502nd FSS coach, said last season was the first time in his five years on the 502nd FSS team that they were able to advance to and play in both the JBSA-Randolph and JBSA tournament title games. This season, Woods said, the 502nd FSS squad is determined to win both titles.

"We know AFPC has been winning for the past few years," Woods said. "We got a chip on our shoulder and we are going to try and take it all the way. Last year we knew we had the talent, but this year it will be about doing the little things – work, hustle and effort – and finishing games up."

Woods said five players are returning from last season's team.

"I'm pumped," Woods said. "We already have a few good practices under our belt, and we are ready to go."

AF releases Form 910, implements forced distribution

By Debbie Gildea
Air Force Personnel Center Public Affairs

The revised Air Force Form 910, Enlisted Performance Report (airman basic through technical sergeant); and interim change 3 to Air Force Instruction 36-2406, "Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Systems," have been published on the Air Force e-Publishing website.

The interim change codifies forced distribution of promotion recommendations for technical sergeants and below (including staff and technical sergeant-selects), which will be implemented using Air Force Form 910 for the Nov. 30 technical sergeant and technical sergeant-select EPR static closeout date.

The new form and interim change, with the associated forced distribution process, are the latest significant changes to the Enlisted Evaluation and Weighted Airman Promotion Systems since the transformation began last summer. The promotion recommendation restrictions associated with forced distribution only apply to the regular Air Force.

For technical sergeants and below, forced distribution limits the top two promotion recommendations a commander is authorized to give to time-in-grade/time-in-service promotion-eligible Airmen. The restrictions under forced distribution are tied to historical promotion rates in each grade and are designed to ensure those Airmen receiving a top tier promotion recommendation have a distinct advantage for promotion while ensuring others remain competitive for promotion. The total number of forced distribution quotas is based on the total number of TIG/TIS promotion-eligible Airmen a commander has in a specific grade on the SCOD.

Airmen who are not eligible for promotion on their EPR SCOD will only receive a performance assessment without a promotion recommendation.

Promotion recommendations are in word-form now, rather than the numerical ratings. Recommendations include promote now, must promote, promote, not ready now and do not promote. Promote now can be awarded to the top 5 percent of TIG/TIS promotion eligible Airmen from senior airman through technical sergeant. Must promote is limited to the top 15 percent of TIG/TIS promotion eligible senior airmen and top 10 percent of TIG/TIS promotion eligible staff and technical sergeants. There are no restrictions on the remaining three promotion ratings.

Percentages will be awarded outright by large units – those with 11 or more TIG/TIS promotion eligible Airmen. Small units – 10 or fewer TIG/TIS promotion eligible – will submit their top performing Airmen for consideration by an enlisted forced distribution panel led by the senior rater.

Once the EFDP selects the Airmen who will receive the top promotion recommendations, the remaining Airmen will receive outright promote recommendations. All EPRs are returned to the appropriate commander for final signatures. Airmen receiving "promote" recommendations from the EFDP or directly from their unit will remain competitive for promotion as the overall promotion percentages are greater than the forced distribution allocations. Around 80 to 85 percent of TIG/TIS promotion eligible Airmen will receive a "promote" recommendation.

All technical sergeants and below will also receive a performance assessment. The new performance assessment categories include: performance in primary duties/training requirements; followership/leadership; and whole Airman concept.

Under those categories, Airmen will be assessed using one of five performance descriptions: not rated; met some but not all expectations; met all expectations; exceeded some but not all expectations; and exceeded most, if not all expectations. There are no associated restrictions on the five performance descriptions.

Additional guidance for completing the revised Air Force Form 910 is included in AFI 36-2406, interim change 3 on the e-Publishing website.

For more information about Air Force personnel programs, go to the myPers website. Individuals who do not have a myPers account can request one by following the instructions on the Air Force Retirees Services website.

NORAD celebrates 60 years tracking Santa

From North American
Aerospace Defense Command

The North American Aerospace Defense Command is celebrating the 60th anniversary of tracking Santa's Yuletide journey.

The NORAD Tracks Santa website at http://www.noradsanta.org launched Dec. 1. It features Santa's North Pole Village, which includes a holiday countdown, games, activities and more.

The website is available in eight languages: English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, German, Italian, Japanese and Chinese.

Official NORAD Tracks Santa apps are also available in the Windows, Apple and Google Play stores, so parents and children can count down the days until Santa's launch on their smartphones and tablets. Tracking opportunities are also offered on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Google Plus. Santa followers simply need to type "@noradsanta" into each search engine to get started.

This year, the website features the NORAD headquarters in the North Pole Village and highlights of the program over the past 60 years.

Tracking Santa's flight

Starting at 2:01 a.m. EST on Dec. 24, website visitors can watch Santa make preparations for his flight. NORAD's "Santa Cams" will stream videos on the website as Santa makes his way over various locations. Then at 6 a.m. EST, trackers worldwide can speak with a live phone operator to inquire as to Santa's whereabouts by dialing the toll-free number 1-877-Hi-NORAD (1-877-446-6723) or by sending an email to noradtrackssanta@outlook.com.

Any time on Dec. 24, Windows Phone users can ask Cortana for Santa's location, and OnStar subscribers can press the OnStar button in their vehicles to locate Santa.

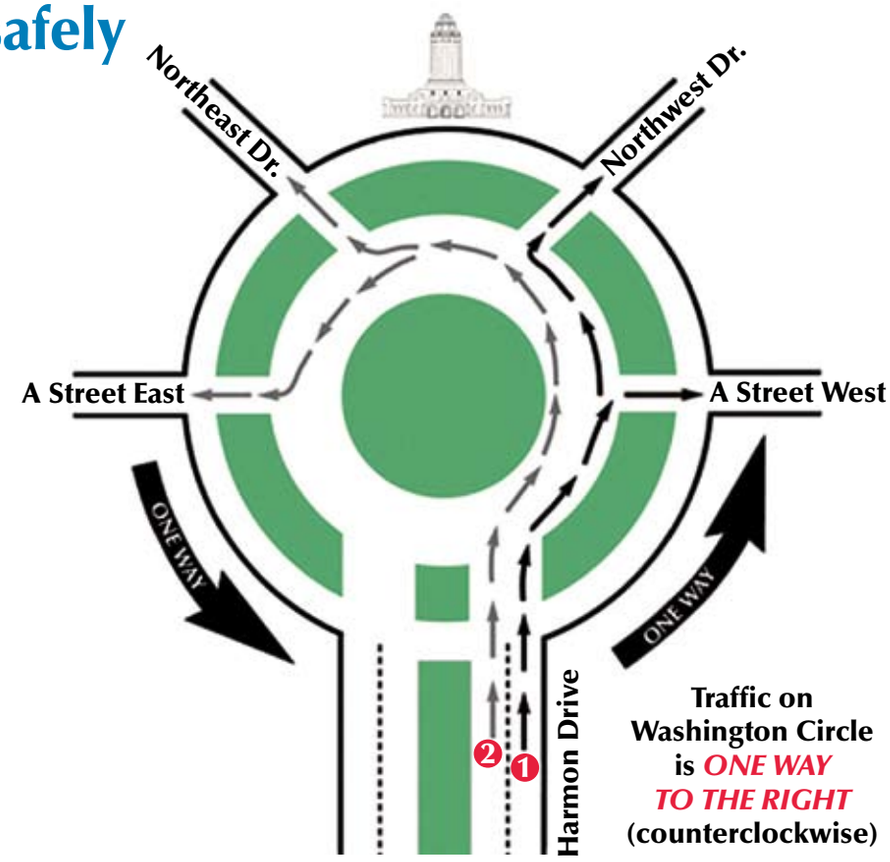
NORAD Tracks Santa is possible, in large part, to the efforts and services of numerous program contributors, NORAD officials said.

Driving around Washington Circle safely

Base safety and security officials want people to be aware of the procedures for driving in and out of Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph's Washington Circle.

Officials want to ensure motorists know which lanes they should be in when entering and exiting the circle.

The biggest safety issue occurs when vehicles try to directly exit the circle from the left lane instead of moving to the right lane in advance of their exit turn. Officials urge people to drive defensively and use caution in and around Washington Circle.

TRAFFIC RULES FOR WASHINGTON CIRCLE

- Traffic entering the circle must yield to traffic already in the circle.
- When entering the circle:
  - ❶ If you are exiting at the first or second exit, stay in the outside lane or right lane.
  - ❷ If you are exiting at the third exit or beyond, use the inside or left lane until ready to exit
- If two vehicles are side by side, the vehicle in the outside lane has the right or way.
- All traffic must signal for turns when exiting the circle.