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SOUTHERN STAR



★ *The newspaper of United States Southern Command* ★

Vol. 3 No. 6 ■ Miami ■ July 31, 2002

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Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jose Ruiz



Marlins host armed forces salute



Retirement

Staff Sgt. Daniel Galarza, Left, J5 engagement liaison, presents a military service shadow box to Sgt. Maj. Jose Lopez, USSOUTHCOM acting command sergeant major, on behalf of USSOUTHCOM enlisted soldiers during a retirement ceremony in the Thurman Building main conference room July 12. Lopez' 23-year career included tours in Vietnam and Germany.

(Photo by Army Sgt. Lucy Pabon)

Southern Star

is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense. Contents of the *Southern Star* are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government or DoD. The editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the U.S. Southern Command Public Affairs Office. Deadline for submissions is 5 p.m. Friday, a week before publication (the last Friday of each month). The public affairs staff reserves the right to edit all submissions to journalistic standards. All photos are official photos unless otherwise noted. Acceptance of input by the public affairs staff does not guarantee publication.

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Florida Marlins, fans salute U.S. servicemembers

Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Jose Ruiz, USAF
Southern Star Editor

The Florida Marlins joined their fans in rendering a major league salute to America's armed forces Jul. 6.

The ball club and more than 21,000 South Florida fans hosted a tribute to all four military services and the U.S. Coast Guard during a pre-game ceremony

dubbed "Give Thanks, America" just before taking on their division rival New York Mets at Miami's Pro Player Stadium.

The pre-game salute began with a mass, all-service enlistment ceremony.

Brig. Gen. Galen Jackman, U.S. Southern Command

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Photos by Tech. Sgt. Jose Ruiz

Brig. Gen. Galen Jackman, USSOUTHCOM director of operations, administers the oath of enlistment during an enlistment ceremony at Miami's Pro Player Stadium July 6. The ceremony was part of the Florida Marlin's salute to America's armed forces.

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Director of Operations, administered the oath of enlistment to 48 new airmen, soldiers, Marines and Coast Guardsmen with fans and athletes looking on.

Marine recruit Edgar Cerpas, who is scheduled to begin his military service in June 2003 said he felt honored by the experience.

"Everyone could see the commitment I was making to the Marine Corps," he said. "Ever since I was a

little kid, I wanted to be a Marine."

"I looked out there, and I knew I had support," said Air Force recruit Chris Gomez, describing the stadium atmosphere.

"When I did it down at the MEPS (Military En-

trance Processing Station), it was just the officer administering the oath and the few people around me," he added. "But now, I know how much people truly care about what we're doing for the country."

Jackman also administered the oath to Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Allen Finkley and Coast Guard Chief Petty Officer Terrance Kanzig, who reenlisted in their respective services.

During the ceremony, the Marlins organization joined Marine Maj. Daniel Greenwood in presenting a Blue Star Banner and certificate to Darina Cabrera,

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Marine Maj. Daniel Greenwood, CO of Marine recruiting office, Plantation, Fla. front left, presents Darina Cabrera with a Blue Star Banner during the ceremony. Cabrera's son, Marine Cpl. Jose Cabrera, right, is scheduled to deploy in August in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

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whose son, Marine Cpl. Jose Cabrera, is scheduled to deploy with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit to the Mediterranean in August in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

According to Marine Staff Sgt. Arsenio Cortez, the Blue Star Banner recognizes the sacrifices made by parents whose sons and daughters are deployed away from home while serving in America's armed forces.

Consisting of a

blue star enclosed in a red, vertical rectangle and dating back to World War I, the blue star banner has made a comeback in recent months.

Across the nation, parents like Cabrera proudly display their banners as a symbol of their hope and pride.

Marlins fans displayed their own pride for all of the new recruits, as well as Finkley, Kanzig, Greenwood and Cabrera by treating them with cheers and applause as they made their way off the field.

USSOUTHCOM's Color Guard replaced them on the field and presented the colors of the service flags and the nation while Navy Lt. Cmdr. Amelia Sweeney, of the command's J2 Directorate, sang the national anthem.

At the close of the anthem, two Coast Guard HH-65 Dolphin helicopters performed a slow fly-over above the stadium, drawing cheers from the crowd.

Following the fly-over, representatives from each service

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helped wrap up the Give Thanks America pre-game salute by simultaneously tossing the first pitch of the evening game.

Because the Marlins were offering military members seats to the game at group prices, many of those in attendance were military members stationed in the South Florida region.

Air Force Staff Sgt. David Tolson, a physical exams technician assigned to the USSOUTHCOM health clinic, said the discounted tickets gave servicemembers a chance to take a break from work together.

“I think it’s great the Marlins hosted this military appreciation day,” Tolson said. “Their support of the military certainly enhances our status within the community, and

it has afforded us the opportunity to relax during the game and to show our support for them as well.”

Army Staff Sgt. Keith Arachikavitz, of the USSOUTHCOM protocol office, who attended the game with his family, said the Marlins’ gesture of support speaks for itself.

“They didn’t have to front the money to offer us discounted seats,” he said. “But they did, and that shows that they’re trying to do something for the men and women in the military. To me, that alone says a lot.”

Gary Levy, the Marlins’ in-game entertainment coordinator, said the idea of a military appreciation day was well received by the team.

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Brig. Gen. Jackman, left, congratulates Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Allen Finkley, following his reenlistment while Coast Guard Chief Petty Officer Terrance Kanzig looks on.



From left, Marine Staff Sgt. Edwin Miranda, Army Sgt. 1st Class Jose Roman, Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class Gene Morrison and Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jeff Roudebush throw the first pitch of the game.

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“I think the organization as a whole was very excited to kind of dive into this event,” he said. “We wanted to do something that encompassed the whole military and make it as good an experience as possible for military personnel who enjoy the great American pastime.”

Levy said he has noticed a change in how fans react to such events after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11.

“Over the last eight or nine months, I think the American public has become very aware of the state of the world,” he said. “I’ve seen a growing patriotism among fans when we do things like this. Their reaction is just tremendous. They’re already feeling patriotic, and we just want to keep that going.”

GTMO a 'No-Spin Zone' for a day

Bill O'Reilly covers life on base

By Spc. Michelle Scsepko
Joint Task Force 160

NAVAL STATION
GUANTANAMO BAY, Cuba — Guantanamo Bay was a No-Spin Zone for a day as Bill O'Reilly, host of "The O'Reilly Factor" on Fox News Channel, brought his camera crew here July 6 to interview the military men and women who make Camp Delta's detention operation run.

O'Reilly, greeted at the plane by a large group of public-affairs officers and media escorts, said he had no problem with the security restrictions placed on him and other media for the protection of our troops. He wasn't here for a scoop, or a controversy - just a story.

"I'm not here to do a political story like Newsweek," said O'Reilly. "There's no controversy surrounding this mission to me. I agree with exactly what the Department of Defense is doing." That, he said, is because of the nature of this war.

"Obviously, it is harder for the media to cover a war like this because we have to be patriots as well as journalists. We can't break stories that might put peoples' lives in danger for the better of our own careers. It's not like Vietnam or the Gulf War, where we could hunt our own stories up. We just can't do that; we play it the way

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Photo by Spc. Chris Pisano

O'Reilly enjoys a meal with service-members at the Seaside Galley.

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the Defense Department wants it to be played. The war is now in the country, and we've got to be very cognizant of that," he said.

O'Reilly and his supporting staff hit the ground running, moving purposefully as they exited their jet to meet with their media escorts for the day.

"Mr. O'Reilly, we welcome you to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Following a brief overview of the itinerary and the ground-rules, we'll be ready to get this mission started," said Army Maj. F. Lee Reynolds, officer in charge of the Media Support Center. After receiv-



Members of the JTF 160 Media Support Center staff greet O'Reilly and his crew on the tarmac.

ing a warm welcome from the rest of a public affairs staff, who appeared to be clearly pleased to meet him, O'Reilly and his team were mission-ready and Windward bound.

First stop, JTF-160 Headquarters.

Once there, Command-

ing Gen. Rick Baccus walked out and introduced himself to O'Reilly and his staff as they approached. Introductions were brief, however, as the crew quickly departed and headed for their first location for taping: The Northeast Gate.

With a handful of Ma-

rine guards watching from their posts, Baccus and O'Reilly strolled for the cameras along what has been GTMO's defining feature for decades: the chain-link, concertina wire-topped fence line dividing the U.S. military's Cuba and Fidel Castro's.

After taping O'Reilly's interview with the commanding general and collecting some background footage of the area, the entourage proceeded to Guantanamo Bay's new hotspot of media attention and occasional political controversy: Camp Delta and Camp America, where the detention operation is

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O'Reilly and Brig. Gen Rick Baccus, JTF-160 commander, tour the perimeter of Camp Delta.

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located.

That operation — the soldiers who run it and the detainees who are its mission — was what brought O'Reilly to GTMO.

“I am here to do a day-in-the-life-of story on the detainees,” said O'Reilly. “The American people are curious about what the detainees do all day long, and that's why I'm here. I want to find out what their routine is, and what their day is like.”

During his visit to Camp America, O'Reilly made a stop for chow at the Seaside Galley, which afforded him the opportunity to speak with some of the

men and women who make the detention facility run. Living up to his image as a “working class hero,” O'Reilly could have been one of the troops, chowing down and chatting amiably with hard-working servicemembers.

“I'm very happy to be here. I think everybody knows that 90 percent of the country is behind the military, the War on Terror, and what these troops are doing here,” said O'Reilly. “There's an enormous amount of people in America that support this cause, and you usually never get this kind of support for a war. The troops

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should know that we're all behind them and want them to stay safe."

After signing a few copies of his book, "The No-Spin Zone," and taking pictures with fans, O'Reilly selected two sergeants to come back to Headquarters with him to be interviewed along with the commanding general. The interviewees said O'Reilly focused on many different aspects of working with the detainees, as well as their day-to-day routine.

"He asked me about the female perspective of day-to-day work with the detainees," said Sgt. Gabrielle E. Graham.

"He was interested in finding out what happens with the detainees when they misbehave or if they are caught with contraband," said Sgt. Bernard Buehler. "He also wanted to know if I ever feel sympathetic toward them."

After spending a day in GTMO with the opportunity to converse with the commanding general and troops, O'Reilly offered his own opinion on the mission here.

"It looks to me like everything is very well organized and that there isn't anything left to uncertainty. This is a very methodical operation," he said.

"These people put themselves in this position,

and they're being treated humanely. Basically, that's all we owe them at this point. We're at war, and if you're going to mess with our country, you're going to have to pay the price."

After sitting in the hot seat with O'Reilly, Baccus was satisfied with the visit.

"I thought the interview with O'Reilly was very positive, he really sounded like he supported the mission and what we're doing down here," he said. "This coverage will clearly tell the families exactly what kind of mission we're doing and how important what we're doing is. I think it will give Americans a better picture in terms of how serious a mission this is and certainly that all the

servicemembers take the mission very seriously," he said.

O'Reilly expected that media like him would return to GTMO, covering the war on terror for a long time to come.

"With the way I see the War on Terror is being handled here, a year from now it will still be front-page news," he said. "Except with a lot less terrorists around — that includes Saddam Hussein."

As for his visit, O'Reilly had but one disappointment.

"I was hoping to see Fidel (castro), but I guess he's not in today," said O'Reilly.

The segment aired on O'Reilly's network July 15 and 16 and on the Armed Forces Network July 16 and 17.

USSOUTHCOM Health Clinic adds new services

By Tech. Sgt. Jose Ruiz, USAF
Southern Star Editor

U.S. Southern Command Health Clinic patients will soon have a few new services at their disposal.

The clinic, together with the TRICARE Management Office is currently working on a procurement contract that will make X-Rays and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) available to patients who need it.

Under the contract, two local companies — Quality Portable X-Ray and Tri-County MRI — will make their equipment and ser-

vices available to clinic patients on an on-call and pre-scheduled basis.

“This is an initiative that was brought on by patients concerned about the amount of time it takes to send personnel and family members out in the community to get these services done,” said Sgt. 1st Class Melvin

Gibson, USSOUTHCOM Health Clinic NCOIC. “Under this contract, these companies will be able to bring their facilities to us, thereby saving time for our patients.”

Gibson said services from Quality Portable X-Ray will be just a phone



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Jose Ruiz

Wilfred Gooden, an X-ray technician with Quality Portable X-rays, explains the equipment set up process to the clinic staff during an orientation visit June 28.

call away. “These guys have seven units circling our area,” he said. “They can bring a portable unit to the clinic within a matter of an hour or so, take it out of

their van and bring it into one of our rooms.”

He pointed out that

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Staff Sgt. David Tolson, physical exams technician, tries out the mobile MRI unit during an orientation visit to USSOUTHCOM by Tri-County MRI July 3. The clinic plans to use mobile MRI services to improve health care services for its patients.

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despite being portable, the X-Ray units used by the company pose no more of a radiological threat to patients than the fixed units used in other medical facilities.

“With these machines there is very little dissipation of radiation, if any,” he explained, adding that a lead-lined room within the clinic and protective equipment will be utilized to ensure the service is provided to patients in the safest manner possible.

Because MRI equipment is much larger, Gibson said it must be transported by trailer and requires a little more coordination between the clinic and the company.

Stan Birken, Tri-County MRI president, said his company will initially schedule visits to the clinic based on demand and adjust the vis-

its later if necessary.

He said, though portable, the MRI products USSOUTHCOM health care providers and patients will receive will be high quality compared to similar products from many fixed facilities.

“We come to the table with an imaging enhancement system that includes a software program developed by General Electric,” he said. “It provides the radiologist and health care provider with a clearer, more contrasted picture of whatever ailment may or may not exist.”

Birken called the mobile GE Sigma Contour MRI unit “state-of-the-art,” adding that the unit’s magnet is still used on today’s newest MRI machines.

“Also, scans will only take about 15 minutes, versus the 45 minutes it

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takes to carry out a scan on other MRI units," he added.

Gibson said the mobile equipment will also make X-Ray and MRI images available to health care providers within minutes, therefore reducing diagnosis times.

Eleanor Gayagoy, USSOUTHCOM health system specialist, said reducing health care costs for the clinic was not the driving factor behind the decision to seek the services. "The cost is still the same, because they fall under one TRICARE cost," she explained, "but it provides our customers with higher quality, more accessible, timelier health care."

She pointed out that the mobile services provided by the clinic will involve no out-of-pocket expenses for patients, adding that patients who

wish to use similar services at other facilities will still have the option to do so under TRICARE.

Gibson said patients can expect to see future clinic improvements in the weeks and months to come.

"The goal of any military health facility is to expand their capabilities to better take care of their patients' needs," he said. "If we allow ourselves to be boxed into our own little world, then we might as well shut down. We have to do our best to provide our customers with the highest quality care possible."

Gibson urged clinic customers to voice their thoughts and ideas to the staff via comment/feedback cards pre-positioned throughout the clinic.

"Tell us how we're doing," he said. "We see things

from the health care provider's perspective, and patient feedback provides us with a different perspective.

"That's why we welcome the comment/feedback cards," he added. "It tells us where we need to focus our efforts. So by helping us with feedback, you're helping yourself as well."



Capt. (Dr.) Ana Peralta, USSOUTHCOM health clinic, discusses a sample magnetic resonance imaging scan with 1st Lt. Dina St. Amour, Physician Assistant.

VIP guest

Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, Victoria Clarke, meets with former USSOUTHCOM Public Affairs Officer Col. Ron Williams, and Deputy Public Affairs Officer Lt. Col. William Costello during a visit to USSOUTHCOM on June 28.

(Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jose Ruiz)



Engineers, Seabees wrap up Caribbean exercise

By Marine Cpl. Allan Grdovich
Marine Corps News

CAMP PARAGON, Barbados — Approximately 60 Marines from 8th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Force Service Support Group from Camp Lejeune, N.C., and a detachment of Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion-40 out of Port Hueneme, Calif., packed up their tool belts, drill bits and sea bags July 8 as Exercise New Horizons Barbados-02 ended here.

The Marines and Sailors have prepared for their return to the United States for a couple of weeks now after spending three months providing humani-

tarian assistance to the local communities here.

More than 6,000 concrete masonry unit blocks, thousands of square feet of roofing, 100 yards of concrete and numerous miscellaneous items were needed to complete the construction exercise.

The projects included a 3,300 square foot barracks for the Barbados Defense Force capable of housing 60 troops; a 2,000 square foot community center for the Sterling House Orphanage; and a new roof for the Youth With a Mission retreat center, said 1st Lt. Bradley J. Van Slyke, an 8th ESB combat engineer officer.

“Before we came here,

the current site was practically a jungle,” said Sgt. Eric Smith of the Sterling House project. Today Sterling has a brand new multi-purpose facility in its place, said the 8th ESB foreman from Bastrop, Texas.

“This is very positive for us. It will be a good place to let the children let off some steam where they can play indoor games. Also, I won’t have to be as creative as I was before,” joked Adrian Douglass, a Sterling assistant house parent.

Community relations played a significant part in

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Photos by Cpl. Allan Grdovich

Lance Cpl. Andre Guzman lays a brightening touch to some wood panels during the New Horizons exercise.

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the exercise, explained Van Slyke, who hails from Madison, Wis.

“Many of the locals and children were curious about us,” he said.

To satisfy their curiosity, Marines and Sailors invited children from the orphanage and nearby neighborhood to the base in June.

“We showed them some of our equipment and distributed Meals Ready-to-Eat. The children seemed excited,” he said.

Ultimately, humanitarian exercises such as New Horizons play an important role in the development of foreign friendships and also to



Petty Officer 2nd Class John Cooke, with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion-40, shows local Boy Scouts layout plans for the 60-man barracks built by Seabees and Marines during the exercise.

troop development, according to Van Slyke.

“We’ve taken 18- and 19-year-olds who have no prior professional expe-

rience in building, brought them to a foreign country, gave them a plan and directions and they got the job done. That’s impressive.”

With the exercise concluding, most Marines and Sailors enjoyed their learning experience, said Lance Cpl. Danford A. Rowell, who plans to take some needed leave in his native Gresham, Ore.

“It has been interesting, but I think we are all ready to get out of here and back to our families,” he said.

In previous years, News Horizons Exercises have been held in Haiti, St. Lucia and various other South American and Caribbean nations.



Brig. Gen. Ronald Burgess, J2 Director, right, presents the Defense Superior Service Medal to Col. Mark Christian, Joint Intelligence Center commander, left, during an award presentation July 1 at the Thurman Building main conference room.

(Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jose Ruiz)

News briefs

Ice skating at Miami Ice Arena

Ice skate at the coolest place in town Saturday, August 10! Come to the USSOUTHCOM summer skate at Miami Ice Arena, 14770 Biscayne Boulevard, North Miami Beach.

Tickets - \$2 includes skate rental. Fair market value - \$10.

Please respond via e-mail to corpmanp@hq.southcom.mil.

Employment seminar

If you or your family members are

seeking to prepare for employment opportunities in the community, please call or write the SOUTHCOM Family Support Center at Ext. 2665/2632 to reserve a seat for this seminar. Our e-mail Points of Contact are: corpmanp@hq.southcom.mil and crearym@hq.southcom.mil.

August 14, 2002
1:30 - 3:30 P.M.
USAG Education Center
8300 NW 33rd St.
Suite 110
We would also like

you to complete and return our Employment Readiness Intake Form that is online. You may obtain the form and more about our services at www.southcom.mil/usag-miami/dca_FSC.htm.

Transition Web site

The U.S. Department of Labor has launched a brand-new website designed to assist separating or retiring military personnel sort through the vast amounts of electronic

information available regarding their transition. The e-VETS Resource Advisor includes information on a broad range of topics, such as: Job Search Skills and Tools, Employment/Career Job Listings, Career Assessment Tools, Starting Your Own Business, Veterans Benefits, Veterans Service Organizations, and Federal Employment, just to name a few. Visitors can browse various topics or complete a profile and have a

customized list of applicable websites provided for them.

Visit <http://www.dol.gov/elaws/evets.htm>

U.S. Army Garrison online

Yes, we are located on the world wide web! You can also access us from home or any other personal computer; that way we better service the family member, retired and remotely located service mem-

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ber as well.

While we are constantly updating and renovating our website, please visit us often for new services and updated information. Also, please offer any constructive criticism and or suggestions.

You can visit the USAG-M website at <http://www.southcom.mil/usag-miami/index.htm>

Benefits Delivery at Discharge

Under an Agreement between the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD), active duty military personnel will now be able

to file a claim for service-connected disability compensation while on active duty.

Prior to separation, service-members will receive a disability medical exam, have their claim adjudicated by the VA and be notified of the results of their disability claim prior to separation from active duty.

After separation and upon receipt of the veteran's DD-214, the VA will finalize the disability award and provide a copy of the rating decision to the veteran.

When fully implemented, the new national policy calls for separating or retiring service members to undergo a single

physical exam prior to discharge.

The exam will meet the Veterans Administration's requirements for claim determinations, as well as DoD's needs for a separation medical examination.

Service members wishing to participate in the Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) Program should be within 180 to 60 days of discharge or retirement.

For further VA information, claims filing assistance or BDD physical examinations, contact Worner Orlandi at (305) 324-4455 Ext. 4991.

Chaplain office relocates

The Command Chaplains office has moved. The

new location is room 1219D. That is the 1st floor, east hallway across from the J-6.

Junior ROTC vacancies

The Naval Junior ROTC. at G. Holmes Braddock Senior High School has a vacancy for Officer (SNSI) and Senior Enlisted (NSI) NJROTC Instructor effective 15 August 2002. Retired USN, USMC and USCG are eligible to apply.

G. Holmes Braddock Senior High School is located in the southwest suburbs of Miami, FL, in a middle class, predomi-

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nantly Spanish speaking community. The school is located approximately 30 minutes from Homestead Air Reserve Station in Homestead, FL. The unit has a reputation for discipline and “spit and polish.” Established in 1993, the unit has earned the CNET Unit Award of the Honor Unit Award seven of the nine years. The school has a projected enrollment for 2002-2003 of over 4,700 students. The unit has 325 cadets currently enrolled.

The beginning salary for the successful applicant is \$44,000 annually. The contract is a 12-month contract. Interested appli-

cants should send a cover letter and resume to:

Principal, G. Holmes
Braddock Senior High School

3601 SW 147th Avenue
Miami, FL 33185

ATTN: NJROTC Unit
(305) 220-NAVY (6289)
or e-mail: VALDEZC-
PUENTES@aol.com

For more information,
visit <https://www.njrotc.navy.mil/>

Marriage enrichment retreat

On 16-18 August 2002, CREDO Mayport will be sponsoring another marriage enrichment retreat. It will be held at the Duncan Conference Center in Delray Beach, 15820 S. Military Trail (561-496-

4130). The conference center is about 60 miles north of Miami and can be reached by taking the Linton Blvd exit off I-95, then going west to Military Trail. The conference center is on the north side of Linton, at the intersection of Linton and Military Trail.

CREDO, sponsored by the Navy Chaplain Corps, offers weekend retreats for the purposes of personal growth, marriage enrichment, and spiritual growth. The marriage retreats are open to active duty personnel, reservists, retirees, DOD/DOT civilians, and their family members.

This is not a religious retreat; couples are wel-

come regardless of religious preference.

The conference begins at 7:30 PM on Friday, August 16, and concludes with lunch on Sunday, August 18. Check-in at the conference center begins at 1500 (3 PM) on Friday. Dress is casual.

Best of all, there is no cost for meals or lodging. CREDO Mayport pays for those items. The only costs you may incur are travel to and from the retreat site and child care for the weekend, if that is necessary.

Register by calling CREDO Mayport directly at 904-270-6958.

Southcom volleyball team enjoys many happy returns

By Tech. Sgt. Jose Ruiz, USAF
USSOUTHCOM Public Affairs

U.S. Southern Command's undefeated volleyball team shook up the opposition during a tournament match at Ft. Lauderdale's Holiday Park Gym July 10.

The team improved their record to 6-0 by defeating the Players in two back-to-back victories 25-19 and 25-21.

Despite their success, Juan Hurtado, the team's coach, said the team has a very brief history together.

"We began playing volleyball outdoors at the Southcom grass area, in front of the command section," Hurtado explained. "From there we grew to three against three, then

four against four, until we had enough to form a team."

After a brief period of playing together for fun, the team decided to play competitively as well.

The idea to play in their current league came matter of fact in the form of a flyer during an outdoor match in Fort Lauderdale in May, Hurtado said.

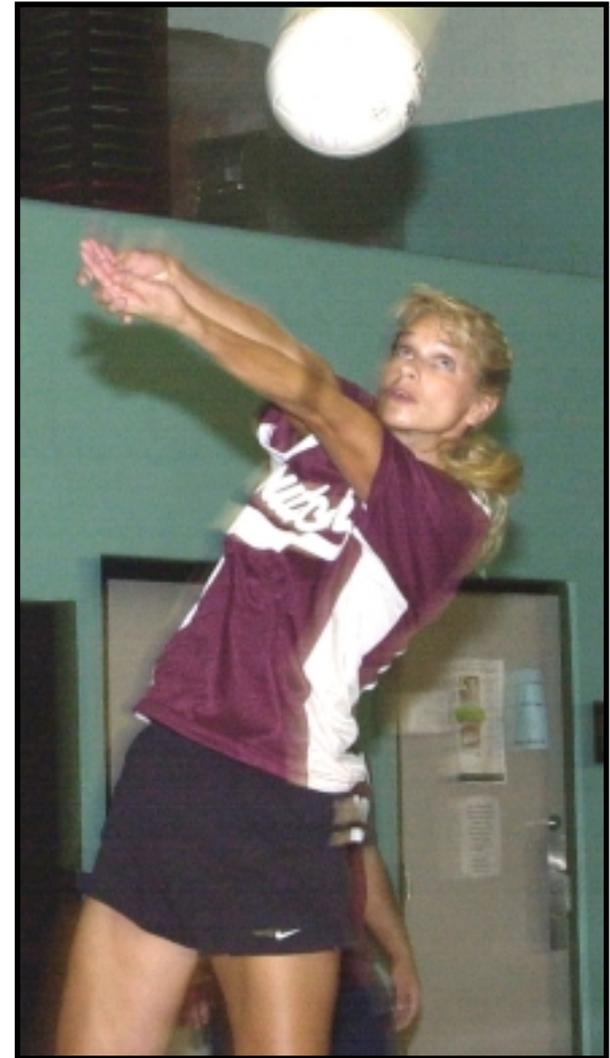
"We were playing a grass tournament there and we found out an indoor league was about to start up,"

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Photos by Tech. Sgt. Jose Ruiz

Army Major Elizabeth Coffman returns a shot during a game July 10.



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he said. "It's a Fort Lauderdale recreational volleyball league. Basically, it's teams from the community, such as feds and firemen, who just get together and play."

Motivated by the prospect of representing USSOUTHCOM competitively in a tournament, the team sought out support from the headquarters' Morale, Welfare and Recreation Office.

"MWR did a fantastic job of supply-

ing us with everything," said team member Elizabeth Coffman, describing the offices response to the team's request. "We are the best dressed and equipped team out there. Knowing that USSOUTHCOM is behind us 100 percent is really important to us."

With the backing of the command, the team showed up for the tournament ready to challenge any takers, but despite getting off to a good start, Coffman said it took a few games for all the players to reach peak



SOUTHCOM team regroups for a strategy session during the game.

performance.

"When we first started out, there were a few really striking players, and the rest of us were kind of mediocre and filling in the gaps,"

she explained. "As we developed as a team and worked together more, it became more cohesive, and we all started getting on the same playing field. We're

actually able to rely on each other a lot more now."

Hurtado pointed

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SOUTHCOM team member punches a return across the net.

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out the team has won most of their games with different players on the roster, and he credited much of the team's success to what he called "team chemistry."

"Some of us have played together all summer, and we get along really well," he said. "It's all worked out really good for us."

"Everyone on the team wants to get together, have a few laughs and play some volleyball," added Mark Vanoordt, describing his teammates. "Most of the players here have that competitiveness in them. They want to come out every week and play."

With six victories under their belt, Vanoordt said the team has its sights on the tournament championship. "People are getting farsighted, and we're start-

ing to look at winning the tournament because we've done so well," he said. "If we can continue to go undefeated, it would be great."

Coffman invited USSOUTHCOM members to join the team during tournament's remaining games.

"We have three games left in league play and they promise to be really eventful," she said.

Coffman pointed out that many of the team's players still gather two days a week on the headquarters' grounds for a "friendly" volleyball match, and are open to anyone interested.

"You don't have to be on the volleyball team or even have played in a long time," she said. "If you just want to come out and have fun, you're welcome to join us at 11:30 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays."

Todd W. Koch



Service: Contractor
Organization: J339 IO
Duty title: Information Operations Technician
Hometown: Unionville, Mich.
Hobbies: Computer graphics, woodworking, gaming
Favorite duty station: USSOUTHCOM Miami, Fla.
Career highlights: 15 years in

the Army, now working as a contractor for J339 as Info Ops Tech, as a Web Application Developer for Red de las Americas, Dialogo and J339.

TSgt Ismael Montalvo



Service: U.S. Air Force
Organization: Clinic
Duty title: Pharmacy Technician
Time in service: 18 years
Hometown: Mayaguez, P.R.
Hobbies: Family outings, mountain biking, travel.
Favorite duty station: H.Q. Southcom!!!

Career highlights: 482 MDS Unit Deployment Manager and Medical Readiness NCO.

Under the big top

**Technicians
assemble tents in
preparation for
SOUTHCOM's
upcoming DeCA tent
sale being held
Aug. 1-3.**

*(Photo by JOC (SW)
Gabe Puello)*

