

The Northwest Airlifter

McChord Air Force Base, Wash.

Depend on us - Count on me

Friday, December 8, 2000

Purple mountain majesty



Daniel Thompson

A C-17 Globemaster III passes by Mount Rainier as the sun rises behind the majestic peak on a cold winter morning. The sky may be clear now, but that's not always the case. See Pages 7-10 for the Winter Storm Guide.

McChord Today



What's Inside

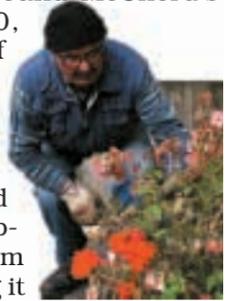
SFS changes beret policy



Only trained Air Force security forces members are now authorized to wear the distinctive blue beret, reversing a more inclusive policy in effect at security forces units for the last three years. See Page 3 for details.

McChord man escapes communism

Bitter, early-morning cold stings Les Corey as he maneuvers his small tractor around McChord's building 100, enroute to one of a series of grounds-keeping jobs outside the mammoth structure. Read his story of escaping communism and then fighting it on Page 11.



MATRIX builds spirits

Being away from home and beginning your own life is full of excitement and uncertainty. A group of airmen have gotten together to add a bit of "home" back to their lives. See what their group, MATRIX, has to offer on Page 13.

Football championship tonight

The Intramural Flag Football season is coming to a close tonight with the championship game on Rainier Field. See how the teams have done so far this week on Page 1B.



Two 22nd STS men named 'Real Heroes'

The American Red Cross honored Staff Sgts. Christian Begnal and Darrell Cherry for saving downed pilot's life.

By 2nd Lt. DAVID J. WILSON AND VIVIAN WILSON
62nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

In recognition of a rescue in the Bosnia-Herzegovina theater last May that saved the life of a downed Air Force F-16C pilot, two members of the 22nd Special Tactics Squadron sta-

tioned at McChord were dubbed heroes by the Red Cross.

The American Red Cross Tacoma-Pierce County Chapter honored Staff Sgts. Christian Begnal and Darrell Cherry with the Military Real Heroes Award at the seventh annual Real Heroes Breakfast Tuesday morning.

In the spirit of humanitarianism, the Red Cross Real Heroes Awards recognize individuals for showing courage, kindness and unselfish character through acts of heroism in the Pierce County community.

Begnal and Cherry's act of heroism, which also earned them Air Medals, took place May 2, 1999, in the early

morning hours following a 1:30 a.m. mayday call. Three helicopters, two MH-53J Pave Lows and an MH-60G Pave Hawk - were launched shortly after the mayday, with three- to six-man rescue teams aboard each. The plan was to approach the first location where the pilot was thought to be, then, if necessary, on to a second location, land and extricate the pilot.

Although more than a year has passed since the event, Begnal and Cherry recall the details very clearly, particularly those surrounding the flights to and from the rescue site

See HEROES Page 3

Aeronautical students visit McChord to glimpse at their future

One hundred sophomores and juniors at Puyallup's newest high school are preparing for aviation-related careers in a first-of-a-kind secondary education aeronautics program.

By VIVIAN WILSON
62nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

One hundred sophomores and juniors at Puyallup's newest high school are preparing for aviation-related careers in a first-of-a-kind secondary education aeronautics program. One-fourth of those students spent time in the C-17 simulator and visited a C-17 static aircraft at McChord Air Force Base Dec. 1 as part of the academic program.

"The program came to be because of an increasing demand for qualified individuals to fill positions throughout the aviation industry," said Jeff

Coleman, who instructs the program's three courses - Introduction to Aviation, Physics of Flight and Computer Aided Design of Aircraft Systems. "This is the first program within this state that I know of to have an aviation program with a full-time, district-paid teacher on staff. Nationwide there are aviation programs at the high school level, but they are fairly rare."

David Kennedy, director of secondary education for the State of Washington, confirmed that Emerald Ridge is the first high school in the state's public education program to offer aviation-related courses. "I don't know of any others," he said.

Coleman said, "The students here are very excited about aviation and highly motivated to learn.

Some want to know about military aviation, pilots, aircraft maintenance, air traffic control, airport management, etc."

He said his goals for the program include exposing them "to as much aviation career info as I can." His job is made easier by the students' enthusiasm. Several on the McChord tour expressed longtime interest in aviation-related careers. Some like junior Candace Collins even changed schools to get into the new aeronautics program.

"I want to be a pilot," said Collins, who specified her hopes for a future career with Alaska Airlines.

See STUDENTS Page 3

"I've never flown before, ever. My way of getting to fly is taking this course. Our teacher told us if we get an A, we get free flight time. I'm going to get an A."

- Kevin McCabe, student

From
THE TOP

Help people make good choices

By Col. PAUL SELVA
62nd Airlift Wing commander

There is perhaps no greater responsibility for a commander, first sergeant, or frontline supervisor than to take care of their people. It is the basic premise of leadership, the foundation that supports everything we do here at McChord. Take care of the people, and they will take care of the mission.

And what better way to take care of your people than to steer them in the direction of an Air Force career.

Often times, we lose our people to the civilian sector via the promise of greener pastures — bigger paychecks, better opportunities, and a higher standard of living. Sadly, those who choose to leave the service often find those careers on the outside to be inadequate in some way — perhaps the money just doesn't add up, or the benefits are lacking, or the esprit de corps and camaraderie is not what it could be.

The grass is not always greener beyond the front gate. By then it is usually too late to reconsider.

That's why it is critical that commanders, supervisors, and especially frontline supervisors take an active role in the careers of their people. Ensure they have all the facts available to them before that all-important decision is made. Give them the data to make that decision an informed one.

The following article, written by Master Sgt. Glynn Ward of the 355th Supply Squadron at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz. describes perfectly the kind of



"Often times, we lose our people to the civilian sector via the promise of greener pastures — bigger paychecks, better opportunities, and a higher standard of living."

— Col. Paul Selva

commitment it takes to do this. I encourage you to take note, and to address the situation head-on if and when one of your people has a choice to make.

"Recently, a young, aggressive, energetic, and highly visible staff sergeant here came to me for some advice concerning his reenlistment. I was surprised by his visit because I just expected this particular noncommissioned officer to be a career person and I couldn't believe he came to me for advice."

This NCO is a six-year enlistee, well on track for a successful career, and is completely aware of the advantages and benefits of a military career. In fact, he didn't even want to discuss or consider benefits as part of the choice to stay or go. He was already aware of how important the benefits were to his life, but still he questioned whether he wanted to make the Air Force a career. He wanted to know and understand what would make a person stay or go.

With little notice and since he caught me by surprise (I never thought he was in doubt) I could only resort to one issue. An issue very close and personal to each and every one of us ... goal achievement. I

proceeded to ask him a series of questions like, "Why did you come in the Air Force?" "Since you've been

in, have you satisfied your goals?" "If you have satisfied your goals, what are your new goals?" "How will, or can, you satisfy your goals if you get out?"

He could not answer these questions to his own satisfaction. He certainly knew why he came in the Air Force, but he could not say his goals were satisfied. His goals were things like more education, improved financial security and travel.

He had not completed the level of education he had expected to complete at this point in his career. Financially he had not saved as much as he thought he would. And Davis-Monthan was his only base, so travel certainly wasn't satisfied. So again I asked him, "How will or can you satisfy your goals if you get out?"

Silence, uncertainty, and bewilderment crossed over his face. He thought he could get a good job back at home, but did not know what benefits the position provided and could not say, "I have the job." After nearly an hour-and-a-half of conversation we came to some other issues that were also bothering him.

His current job, although marketable in the civilian community, was not providing the satisfaction he had

expected. His office relationships were not as rewarding as he had hoped. And, he felt like he was just stagnating.

Some very interesting thoughts came out as we continued to talk. The military has one great advantage over civilian jobs; all of us move at some time or the other.

This is especially important when we feel less satisfied than expected, don't have positive working relationships, or just find it hard to get motivated. When we don't like our boss, one of two things eventually happen, you or your boss will move. In a civilian job, the people we work with are there until retirement unless someone quits.

I shared these thoughts with him and reassured him the Air Force is more than Davis-Monthan, more than the current pool of coworkers, and more than this one job. However, each of us owns the responsibility to make the best of each situation, work on the issues causing us displeasure, and many times our perception of the situation may make things worse than they really are.

He still has not decided but has extended his enlistment to accept another assignment. He has a new found excitement about this change and, who knows, maybe the Air Force will get to keep this young, aggressive, energetic, and highly-visible staff sergeant. I certainly believe the Air Force will be a much better place with him as a member.

So, when you are considering the question to stay or go, seek the advice and thoughts of others and evaluate your personal goals.

Question: 'Chief, What About the Dining Hall?'

By Chief Master Sgt. DAVE ANDREWS
62nd Airlift Wing command chief master sergeant

As I visit enlisted members all over McChord, I am routinely asked about the reopening of the Olympic Dining Facility. In particular, why did it close and when will it reopen. So . . . the Olympic Dining Facility closed Sept. 22. We closed the facility primarily to replace flooring and to upgrade the kitchen with new electrical and ventilation systems along with some other minor projects. The flooring needed work to eliminate a safety hazard; the floors sometimes became slick after being cleaned. The kitchen needed some electrical upgrades in regards to available power. Additionally, the ventilation system needed to be improved. Both of these projects will make our dining hall both a safer and more efficient place



"As I visit enlisted members all over McChord, I am routinely asked about the reopening of the Olympic Dining Facility. In particular, why did it close and when will it reopen."

— Chief Master Sgt. Dave Andrews

to enjoy meals. The facility is tentatively scheduled to reopen on or about Jan. 29.

All members previously holding meal card privileges on McChord were given Basic Allowance for Substance. That BAS will end when the facility reopens and members are placed back onto meal card privileges. Most of the airmen I have spoken to are very eager to have the facility reopen. It turns out that the approximately \$220

per month does not buy nearly the quality or the variety that was available at the dining facility.

An interesting note, prior to closing, the dining hall served an average of over 260 meals per day to members already drawing BAS, in addition to the hundreds of meal card holders.

That means that hundreds of our members who were receiving BAS chose to eat at Olympic Dining Facility over all other food outlets both on and off base! I think that says volumes for the quality and value of the service and meals provided.

Finally, comment cards received by our dining facility indicate a continuing improvement in the quality of the food we serve, especially over the last year. If you would like to participate in that continuous improvement process, contact your first sergeant and ask about the Menu Planning Committee and/or the Dormitory Council.

The Northwest Airlifter

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News

Security Forces modify beret wear policy

By **GARY EMERY**
Headquarters Air Force Security Forces Public Affairs

LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN) — Only trained Air Force security forces members are now authorized to wear the distinctive blue beret, reversing a more inclusive policy in effect at security forces units for the last three years.

The beret, which has been a symbol of police authority in the Air Force since 1975, was authorized in 1997 for wear by all members of security forces units, including non-SF trained persons in support positions.

That change, though, caused some confusion among the base public, according to Brig. Gen. James M. Shames, Air Force director of security forces, and commander, Air Force Security Forces Center.

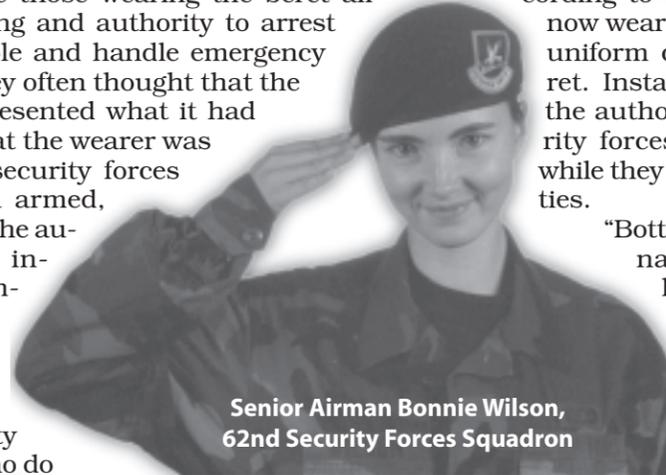
"The 1997 policy change was made to address the inclusiveness of all SF unit members, that we

are all working toward the goal of force protection—and we are," Shames said. "However, we found that the people on our installations continued to assume those wearing the beret all had the training and authority to arrest or detain people and handle emergency situations. They often thought that the beret still represented what it had in the past "that the wearer was an Air Force security forces member, often armed, speaking with the authority of the installation commander."

The change only affects military members of security forces units who do

not carry the security forces career field specialty code, such as those in administration, communications, finance and first sergeant positions, according to officials here. Those people will now wear the headgear authorized for each uniform combination rather than the beret. Installation commanders will still have the authority to allow locally trained security forces augmentees to wear the beret while they are performing security forces duties.

"Bottom line, we've reverted to the original beret policy so that everyone knows the wearer has the authority and skills to enforce laws and regulations and respond to emergencies," Shames said. "This change in no way changes our philosophy that force protection is everyone's mission."



Senior Airman Bonnie Wilson,
62nd Security Forces Squadron

Local High School students see base aircraft up close, personal

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Although she lives outside the Emerald Ridge district, "when I heard about the aviation program, I petitioned to go to Emerald Ridge." The school district granted her a waiver.

Junior Jana Millaway lives in the Emerald Ridge area and was offered a choice of schools since she attended Rogers High School last year. She chose Emerald Ridge for its aeronautics program. "I want to fly and be an aircraft mechanic," she said.

Family history motivated sophomore Billy Reisz to join the program. "My grand-dad flew in World War II, and my dad in Vietnam," he said. But that's not his only reason for looking at an aviation career. "I like adventure, and flying is about as adventurous as you can get," he grinned.

For sophomore Ken Lemings, the product of nine generations of Marine Corps history and the grandson of a current Corps lieutenant general, the military is a natural choice. But he is inspired to an aviation career for another reason.

"When I was younger, I saw the space shuttle take off," Lemings said. "I decided then that's what I want to do. I'm going for it," he said, adding that he's the only student taking all three aviation classes in the program.

The program is a natural choice for Rachel Wadley, a junior. "My dad is a pilot and has his own plane. He taught me and my brother how to fly," she said. Now she wants to take it to the next level through formal training and getting her private pilot's license.

The program offers new opportunities to some students. Kevin McCabe's reason for getting into the aeronautics program is pretty basic. "I've never flown before, ever. My way of getting to fly is taking this course. Our teacher told us if we get an A, we get free flight time. I'm going to get an A." His career

choices after that? "I'm open to options," he said.

For some, there's no question where the program will lead. Brandon Pollard, a junior, seems almost impatient to have his training behind him to reach his goal. "I'm going into the Air Force to work on aircraft engines," he said. "That's been my dream. I've been working on cars for years."

Junior Nick DuBay is similarly motivated. "I decided at a young age to be a pilot or engineer," DuBay said. "That's part of my life and career goals. I plan to go to Embry Riddle or the military after this."

Zach Helgren is motivated by more practical reasons. He said his dad has encouraged him to become a pilot for the pay and benefits. "I

want to make good money, have a good life and not work too hard," the 11th grader said. He wouldn't mind some excitement along

the way: "It'd be really cool to fly a F-15 or F-18."

The Boeing Aerospace Operations office at McChord, which manages the C-17 simulator's services contract, arranged their trip to McChord. Rich Clark organized the simulator time with training scheduler Jerry Tecca. Lou Matts briefed the students about the facility, the mission and the simulator's function in pilot training. J. D. Welch briefed them on airdrop scenarios in the loadmaster trainer. Dewey Owens took them through the process of take-offs, landings and aerial refuelings in the C-17 simulator.

"They were all impressed and in awe of the facilities we use to train pilots," Clark said. "Some were very interested in the (simulator) technology. We gave those students a tour of our computer room." Boeing plans to continue supporting the school's aviation classes in future years.

Lt. Dan Stromberg and Staff Sgt. Jeff Wilson briefed the students on pilot and loadmaster duties, respectively, at the C-17 static.

Red Cross honors STS staff sgts.

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when they came under missile and small-arms fire.

"We were still on the good-guy side when I heard a radio from the (other) side that they knew we were coming and they had authorization to fire," said Begnal. "As soon as we were on the bad-guy side, our pilot said 'traffic at twelve o'clock.'

I could see the triple-A (anti-aircraft artillery) out the bubble window. I saw a flash to the left and another missile was launching from the rear.

"It was pretty intense," Begnal said.

Begnal's job was to maintain radio communication with the pilot throughout the flight and rescue. He was able not only to see activities, but also to hear the aircrew as the event unfolded.

"There was a lot of stress in the pilots' voices," Begnal said. "They were pumping out chaff and flares. We dove into a valley to evade the missiles."

Cherry recalled, "No sooner had we crossed the border than two SA-6 missiles came our way. The missiles crossed the paths of all three helicopters.

"The pilots did an outstanding job of maneuvering the aircraft," Cherry said. "I can't emphasize enough what a great job the pilots did. They earned silver stars," he said of their later decorations.

Evading enemy fire was the first step in the rescue attempt. After getting no communications at the first location, they routed to the second locale where the pilot vectored the aircraft toward himself.

Only the smaller MH-60G actually landed because the pilot was able to walk on his own.

If he hadn't been ambulatory, one or both of the other aircraft would have landed as well.

As the Pave Hawk approached the landing site through a valley, it received AK-47 fire from a window of a house on the hillside. A gunner eliminated that threat, Begnal said.

Once the other aircraft received word the "precious cargo" was on board the Pave Hawk, all three aircraft prepared for the return trip.

The egress was expected to be even more dangerous as dawn approached, making the aircraft more visible for attack.

Once again, the pilots' skills provided the aircraft and aircrews safe passage. They landed at their home base without damage.

"We definitely didn't have the element of surprise," Begnal said of the May 2 rescue. The element of surprise was evident in an earlier rescue that involved Begnal

"I could see the triple-A out the bubble window. I saw a flash to the left and another missile was launching from the rear."

— Staff Sgt. Christian Begnal

and earned him another Air Medal.

Begnal set up radio communications for the March 27 rescue of the F-117 pilot, an event that drew publicity around the world.

In fact, Begnal said his wife, Tina, told him her heart skipped a beat when she heard a plane had gone down in Bosnia. She knew he would be involved if a rescue took place.

Unlike the May rescue that came under attack, the F-117 pilot extrication was a textbook example of entry and exit without a hitch. Everything went by the book, again with total success.

Begnal, who spent eight years in the Marines before joining the Air Force special tactics team, noted it was an "opportunity of a lifetime...to perform two combat search and rescues. It's a priceless experience for our community," he said.

As for the overall success, especially in the F-16 rescue, Begnal credited another source: "The man upstairs was looking after us. It was by the grace of God that he got us through."

In recognition of these heroic deeds, the Red Cross designated Begnal and Cherry Real Heroes.

The gathered audience of more than 800 people honored individuals from 11 different categories in all.

Each year the Red Cross sponsors this event to celebrate the spirit of humanitarianism and recognize heroes in our community.

The American Red Cross, a humanitarian-led volunteer organization, provides health and safety training, disaster preparedness and supplies, local disaster relief, senior nutrition program and volunteer opportunities for residents of Pierce County and globally.

Briefs

Housing sponsors home decorating contest

Once again, the Housing Office invites all housing residents to participate in the Holiday Decorating Contest. Judging will be Monday at 7 p.m., with the winners to be announced tentatively Tuesday.

- All Decorations must bear the UL Seal of approval for intended use
 - Extension cords must be UL approved for exterior use
 - Exterior lighting must be UL approved for exterior
 - No nails, hooks, etc., will be nailed into any type of siding or fascia boards
 - Only use clips designed for exterior decorating
 - Be conservative and energy conscious in the use of exterior lighting
 - Keep decorations in good taste and not excessively elaborate
 - Occupants will be responsible for ensuring fire and safety requirements are strictly followed
 - In order to conserve energy exterior lighting should be from hours of 5 to 10 p.m.
 - All decorations and light should be removed by Jan. 10
- For more information on the contest, call the Housing Office at 982-5514.

New Medical Clinic open house

The 62nd Medical Group wants to invite everyone to help celebrate the opening of the new Medical Clinic Dec. 15. The festivities will begin with a "gauze cutting" ceremony at 10 a.m. and the Open House will continue until 2 p.m. Refreshments will be served. While touring the facility, you can talk with TRICARE and Military Treatment Facility representatives. As a result of the Open House, there will be no patient appointments that day. If you need acute medical care, please call the TRICARE Regional Appointment Center and an appointment will be made at Madigan for you. In case of emergencies, please call 911.

Wing awards luncheon

The 62nd Airlift Wing Quarterly Awards Luncheon will be Dec. 21 at the Northwest Connection at 11 a.m. The menu is roast breast of turkey with stuffing, roasted baby red potatoes, vegetable of the day, tossed salad, rolls and butter, coffee, tea and water. Cost is \$7.50 for club members and \$9.50 for nonmembers. Colonels and above and group deputy commanders will sign up with Protocol, 982-5974; all others should see their unit first sergeants for sign-up. The suspense is Tuesday for sign ups.

22nd MAS reunion

The 22nd Military Airlift Squadron is reuniting at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, May 1-3. If you are interested in attending, please call Ray Daley at 937-323-6304.

AFSA Christmas party

The Air Force Sergeants' Association's holiday party/meeting will be Dec. 19 at 3 p.m. in the Chapel Support Center, building 746.

Bring your favorite side dish, salad, dessert or beverage to the gathering, the Chapter will provide the meats. For

more information about what items to bring, contact Master Sgt. Dave Lilly at 982-8197.

Christmas lights done right

When you hang your Christmas lights this year, you should be aware not only of their beauty, but also of their dangers. Here are some helpful hints to make decorating with Christmas lights safer:

- Ensure you use only lights, which have been approved by UL or some other approving agency.
- Check wiring on lights for damage before use.
- Outdoors only lights approved for out door use.
- To hang lights to house, wrap tape around cord and leave a flag of tape to staple to wall.
- Ensure you do not overload circuit; check box or tag to see how much amperage a string of lights is going to need, add up the strings. A normal receptacle circuit is good for 15 amps.

Jobs available for HS grads

Jobs are available for high school graduates in the Air Force. Statistics show that 76 percent of first-year college students will drop out of college.

On the other hand, the Air Forces gives a quick start at learning a technical trade and helping young students find their niche in society.

Tech. Sgt. Del Kendall is the local recruiter for the McChord area. For more information call him at 253-539-8607, or visit his office in Spanaway at 15018C Pacific Avenue, right out the East Gate of McChord.

Homes for puppies

This is a great season to give a companion as a gift. The Humane Society in Tacoma is searching for good homes for some of their animals. They offer a variety of services, from adoption to education. The society is located at 2608 Center Street, Tacoma.

FSC highlights activities for little ones

The Family Support Center Playgroup meets each Wednesday, 10 a.m., at the Youth Center or another fun destination. They welcome all parents, babies, toddlers and preschoolers. The Playgroup event calendars are available each month at the FSC and Youth Center. Dec. 20 the group will be decorating holiday cookies at the Youth Center. Call the FSC at 982-2695 for more information or to sign up.

AECF board meets soon

The next Airman Education and Commissioning Program selection board is scheduled to convene at HQ AFROTC during the last week of March.

The cutoff date for the Memorandum of Academic Eligibility to AFIT/RRE is Jan. 15, and cutoff for applications to HQ AFROTC/RRUE is Feb. 28.

This program is open to airmen who wish to pursue a Baccalaureate Degree in meteorology, computer engineering, electrical engineering, foreign languages and foreign area studies. Applicants should contact Dr. Mica Wells at 982-5026.

Emergency dispatch class offered

Beginning level classes for the Emergency Dispatch certificate will be offered at Pierce College at Fort Steilacoom beginning Jan. 3.

The training is designed for individuals interested in answering 911 calls as well as other dispatch-related positions. For more information about the certificate or the classes, contact the criminal justice program at 253-964-6662. To register, call 253-964-6615.

AFAS grants available

Concerned about the soaring cost of higher education for your children? Maybe the Air Force Aid Society can help.

The Society's General Henry H. Arnold Education Grant Program awards \$1,500 grants to sons and daughters of active duty, retired, or deceased Air Force members, spouses of active duty stationed stateside; and widows of deceased members, retired reservists, regardless of whether or not they are receiving retired pay, Title 10 AGRI Reservists on extended active duty and Title 32 ANG performing full-time active duty.

Last year 5,000 young people received grants to help pay their college education. Call your Family Support Center/AFAS section today at 982-2695 for more information.

Holiday volunteers needed

The 361st Recruiting Squadron is looking for volunteers to help wrap and deliver gifts from the KING 5, Seattle Center Sharing Gift Box.

The Sharing Gift Box collects gifts for needy children and senior citizens from now until Dec. 19. Gift wrapping will be at the Seattle Center, and the delivery area is from North Seattle to Tukwila and Renton.

If you are interested in volunteering, call Master Sgt. Patrick Brandell at 425-271-3226 or e-mail patrick.brandell@rs.af.mil.

Jobs available

The 62nd Services NAF Human Resource Office is recruiting for the many job vacancies.

There are jobs available ranging from custodial worker to bartender; from recreation assistant to woodcrafter; from lodging clerk to food service worker.

Interested individuals can pick up an application in Building 100, room 1010.

Burger Burn to help our own

The 62nd Supply Squadron is sponsoring a burger burn to raise money for Tech Sgt. Ron Harvey, Dec. 12 at Building 1177 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Harvey and his wife, Tina, were on leave in Indiana when his wife quit breathing due to a seizure on Dec. 2. His wife was transported via Lifeline helicopter to the Neurological Critical Care Unit at the Methodist Hospital of Indiana. She underwent brain surgery on Dec. 6 to remove a tumor which had caused the seizure. Although the surgery went well, the tumor was found to be malignant. It is unknown when she will be well enough to travel back to McChord. This situation has caused a financial strain on the family. Donations may be made through your unit first sergeant or to Master Sgt. Tim Downey, 62nd Supply Squadron first sergeant.

People

All in a day's work

Castle keeper escaped, fought communism

By Master Sgt. RICK BURNHAM
62nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs Office

Bitter, early-morning cold stings Les Corey as he maneuvers his small tractor around McChord's building 100, enroute to one of a series of grounds-keeping jobs outside the mammoth structure. On most days,



Photos by Master Sgt. Rick Burnham

Les Corey stays busy keeping building 100 looking beautiful year round.



Corey is "... one of the hardest-working folks we have at McChord ..."

it's a tremendous responsibility to manage the exterior of what is perhaps McChord's most visible facility. This time of year, the near-freezing temperatures make that job a bit more intimidating.

For Corey, however, a man who narrowly escaped the grasp of communist aggression as a teenager, and who suffered gunshot wounds as an U.S. Army noncommissioned officer in the Vietnam Conflict, such daily sacrifices seem insignificant, almost nonexistent. The 63-year-old Hungary native explained how he made it to America, all alone, two days before Christmas in 1956.

"Because of Russian oppression and the spread of communism, we were fighting in Budapest to remain free," he said. "Following the revolution on Oct. 23, 1956, I knew they were looking for me, and I knew that I had to get out of there. I had to go, and I had to leave my father, mother and sister behind."

He managed to do so a month later, despite losing many of his friends behind at the border. Now all alone in Austria, he headed toward Germany and the call of freedom.

Soon after arriving there, he got his first taste of that freedom, courtesy of the United States and its Air Force. One of approximately 50,000 refugees granted asylum in America, he arrived stateside Dec. 23, 1956.

Briefly entangled in the red tape that accompanies the immigration process, Corey saw an opportunity for citizenship in the U.S. armed forces. His oath of enlistment in the U.S. Army, less than a year after arriving in the states, began a relationship with the Department of Defense that has spanned more than four decades.

That includes four separate stints in the Vietnam Conflict, covering a total of more than two years, as well as involvement in the failed Iran hostage rescue attempt in 1980, and the successful rescue of American citizens from Grenada in 1983. During that time, he provided a variety of services for the Army, including linguistic. He

speaks four languages - helicopter gunner, and a job training cadets at the Army's service academy, West Point.

When he retired as an Army E-8 in 1985, he did so with both the Bronze Star and Purple Heart, earned for his exploits in Vietnam. After working as a civilian at Fort Lewis and at the Veterans Administration Hospital at American Lakes, he began his work at McChord. It was not long after arriving that he was handed the responsibility for upkeep of "The Castle."

"Back then I had two airmen to assist me," he said. "But we were responsible for both the outside and inside. Now there are contractors who take care of the inside, and the outside is my responsibility."

That responsibility entails numerous duties both large and small, beginning with the opening of the building at 6 a.m. each day. There are more than 40,000 square feet of lawn that has to be mowed, edged, trimmed and raked throughout the year, as well as numerous trees and shrubs, and more than 500 flowering, potted plants.

Officially assigned to the 62nd Support Group, Corey's care of the wing headquarters building, and his attention to detail in keeping its appearance up to standards, are a big reason why the base captured Air Mobility Command's Base Appearance Award for 1999, said Col. Darrell

Jones, 62nd SPTG commander.

"Les is one of the hardest-working folks we have at McChord, and that hard work is reflected in the outstanding appearance of the castle," the colonel said. "He is out there every day, braving the elements to maintain the best-looking facility, on the best-looking base in the command. Almost every visitor to the base asks to meet Les personally. Les makes us all look good, and we're fortunate to have him here at McChord."

It's all in a day's work for the man who has lived through so much history, to maintain a piece of McChord's history for generations to come.



Les Corey narrowly escaped communist aggression as a teenager, and fought against it in Vietnam. He maintains the outside of "The Castle" now, for a change of pace.

11"

Community

MATRIX builds teamwork through faith

By Tech. Sgt. TONYA L. KEEBAUGH
Northwest Airlifter editor

Being away from home and beginning your own life is full of excitement and uncertainty. A group of airmen have gotten together to add a bit of "home" back to their lives.

"You can't always take your family and friends with you," said Airman 1st Class Kristian Jorgenson, 62nd Maintenance Squadron, "but you take your faith with you everywhere you go."

The core leaders of "MATRIX" are working hard to help airmen find their niche in life away from home by adding faith to the equation.

MATRIX is an airman-led, interdenominational, faith-based organization focusing on uniting young people in a positive atmosphere.

"People aged 18-32, a.k.a. Generation X, which makes up about 60 percent of the Air Force, are a highly spiritual group but not necessarily attached to a religious denomination," said Chaplain (Capt.) Steve Hetrick, MATRIX advisor. "The result is a group of people with a high interest in spiritual things, but a low interest in expressing their beliefs in a traditional church or denomination. MATRIX was created to encourage young adults to take further steps in their spiritual development without feeling confined to a traditional church setting."

No one would feel confined in some of the settings where MATRIX outings are held.

About eight people went to Camp Berachah in Auburn, Wash. Nov. 3 and 4, where they tackled a teamwork-building obstacle course ran by a retired Army drill sergeant.

"There's nothing like tangling with a high-level obstacle course to create your own style of teamwork and leadership," said Hetrick. "We had to literally work together or fall together."

The group has also sponsored a couple of cookouts at the dormitories on base since the Dining



Courtesy photo

From left: Airmen 1st Class Kristian Jorgenson, Joey Hawkins and Michael Lim tackle the obstacles together at Camp Berachah in Auburn, Wash., Nov. 3. They are all part of the MATRIX program.

Facility has been closed. They are co-organizing a "cookie marathon" with the base chapel now, to bring home-cooked cookies to all the people living

in the dorms. They are asking base folks to cook a few dozen cookies to donate to the cause.

They need 720 dozen cookies to make sure everyone has at least one dozen. If you are interested in donating cookies, call the Chapel Support Center at 982-5556 or Chaplain Hetrick at 982-2680.

MATRIX will also be singing Christmas carols at the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Lake City, Wash. They will be singing from 4 to 6 p.m. there; then they will join the Chapel in the base housing area from 6:30 to 8 p.m., said Hetrick.

The group is planning a New Year's Eve party, a one-day ski trip Jan. 6, and an overnight ski retreat in February.

The group has a Core Team of about 10 original members who get together and brainstorm ideas. So far the idea of MATRIX sounds like it will be a winner.

"We hope to help airmen to be part of a positive group and make friends who will help them get through tough and lonely times," said Senior Airman Aaron Walters, 62nd Airlift Wing Chapel services.

He said that airmen looking to build positive friendships while trying new activities are encouraged to join the group and quench their spiritual thirst in the process.

"I have a great time playing the drums during our time of praise music," said Walters. "I leave with a sense of personal spiritual fulfillment."

Airman Jorgenson said, "I think people turn to their faith when they're away. Your religion is like a little taste of home."

MATRIX, along with the Chapel, provides that place for them to turn, whether you're married or single, everyone is welcome to join MATRIX and make a "home away from home," said Hetrick.

To join MATRIX call Hetrick at 982-2680 or Walters at 982-5441.

8"

Salutes

Group Quarterly Award Winners

The following are the group quarterly award winners for the fourth quarter which began in September and ended in November.

The **62nd Logistics Group, 62nd Support Group, 62nd Operations Group and 62nd Medical Group** Quarterly Award winners are:

Airman of the Quarter

- **Senior Airman Christopher Friberg**, 62nd LG
- **Senior Airman Capucine L. Fick**, 62nd SPTG
- **Senior Airman Marc Rittberg**, 62nd OG
- **Senior Airman Charles Gilman**, 62nd MDG

Noncommissioned Officer of the Quarter

- **Staff Sgt. Thomas Mattern**, 62nd LG
- **Tech. Sgt. David Deitt**, 62nd SPTG
- **Staff Sgt. Steven Sobrilsky**, 62nd OG
- **Tech. Sgt. LouAnn Gilliland**, 62nd MDG

Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Quarter

- **Master Sgt. Van Zimmerman**, 62nd LG
- **Master Sgt. Chris A. Caseman**, 62nd SPTG
- **Senior Master Sgt. Ken Thibodeau**, 62nd OG
- **Master Sgt. Robert Rineer**, 62nd MDG

Company Grade Officer of the Quarter

- **Capt. Mark Meyer**, 62nd LG
- **Capt. Timothy P. Maxwell**, 62nd SPTG



Courtesy photo

MDG time share

The 62nd Medical Group "Rockers" spread holiday cheer at the Fort Lewis Fisher House during Thanksgiving. The 13 people led by Senior Airmen Amber Tymn and Elaine Strona prepared dinner for eight families from food donated by other MDG members. The Fisher House is a home for ill people who are receiving medical treatment at Madigan Army Medical Center and are far from home.

- **1st Lt. Patricia Csank**, 62nd OG
- **Capt. Mark Meersman**, 62nd MDG

Civilian of the Quarter - GS Non-Supervisory

- **Donna Hays**, 62nd LG
- **Stanley S. Beard**, 62nd SPTG
- **John Ryan**, 62nd OG

Civilian of the Quarter - WG Non-Supervisory

- **Meridith Jose**, 62nd LG
- **Richard L. Greenwald**, 62nd SPTG

Civilian of the Quarter - WS Supervisory

- **Lynne Kaser**, 62nd LG
- **Robert Massey**, 62nd SPTG
- **Rocky Hirst**, 62nd OG

Civilian of the Quarter - GS Supervisory

- **Corrine Upton**, 62nd LG
- **Charles Hawthorne**, 62nd SPTG

The following are the the 62nd Operations Group quarterly award flyers for July to September

Pilot of the Quarter

- **Capt. Andy Macha**

Navigator of the Quarter

- **Capt. Chris Panush**

Load Master of the Quarter

- **Staff Sgt. Saleem Muncey**

Flight Engineer of the Quarter

- **Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Abston**

Flying Crew Chief of the Quarter

- **Senior Airman Tommy Palmer**

6"