

ALASKA POST

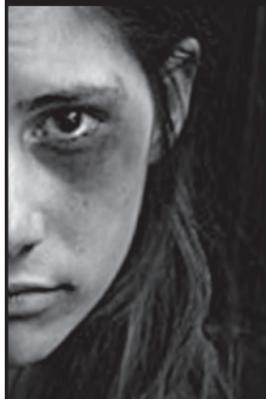
Home of the Arctic Warriors

Vol. 2, No. 48

Fort Wainwright, Alaska

December 2, 2011

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WEEKEND WEATHER



Friday

Cloudy with snow
accumulation to 2
inches
Low 0 High 15
Light winds



Saturday

Mostly cloudy
Low 15 High 20
Light winds



Sunday

Mostly cloudy with
chance of snow
Low 5 High 35

Forecast courtesy of
the National Oceanic
and Atmospheric
Administration

Thanksgiving shared by mother and son in Afghanistan

Karla Marshall, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Deployed Soldiers and civilians rarely expect to see Family members on their deployment, so when mother and son had the opportunity in Afghanistan, they quickly grabbed it.



1st Stryker Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Sgt. Thomas Hess and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Cheryl Hess share time together at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Afghanistan Engineer District-South compound on Kandahar Airfield while deployed to Afghanistan. (Photo by Karla Marshall/U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)

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Home away from home

Spc. Gary Chessa, 1-25th SBCT PAO Contributor

Any service member who has served a short amount of time will agree that the definition of home tends to be slightly different than what the average person would define it as.

With multiple deployments as well as spending anywhere from weeks to months in foreign countries for simple training exercises, "home" becomes more of an idea rather than an actual geographical location. Over time service members adapt the area around them into something that resembles a home whether it is photos of loved ones or perhaps something as simple as a collection of books.

Spc. Tabetha McKenzie, an Emporium, Pa., native deployed with the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division to Afghanistan, has arranged her living area to make herself feel more at home.

"I have a collage on my wall with pictures of my family and artwork that my son made for me," She said.

Much like McKenzie, Sgt. Matthew Clark from Anchorage, Alaska, has pictures of loved ones and a photo slide show of his family on his laptop's screensaver.

In no time at all the small area given to service members begins to resemble a small apartment. Though, it's their temporary place of peace it will never be home.

One of the most important things to most service members is social interaction. Whether it is a game of basketball or hamburgers and a movie with the entire battalion staff, people have a natural need to be around others.

A lack of social interaction can have a negative impact on a person's health, for example depression as well as other psychological impacts that can be easily avoided with team interaction.

Service members have many ways to pass the time while deployed.

See HOME on page 6

Upcoming events

The annual Holiday Tree-Lighting Ceremony is scheduled for Wednesday, at the Physical Fitness Center. The Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation event starts at 6:30 p.m. and features free ice skating, children's activities, door prizes and a visit from Santa Claus.

The 9th Army "Arctic Warrior" Band is planning a holiday concert at Hering Auditorium for Dec. 20 at 7 p.m., thanks to the sponsorship of North Haven Communities and Army and Air Force Exchange Service.

The band, under the direction of Chief Warrant Officer Jeff Price, will play holiday music ranging from classic favorites to contemporary pieces.

The public is invited to help U.S. Army Alaska and U.S. Army Garrison celebrate the season. Admission is free.



At the 2010 Fort Wainwright Holiday Tree-lighting ceremony, Santa Claus makes his appearance. (File photo)

Army Family Action Plan: The process continues

Allen Shaw, Fort Wainwright PAO

Army Family Action Plan delegates from Fort Wainwright came together at the Last Frontier Community Activity Center Nov. 15 through 17 to address concerns of Soldiers and Family members, and then made recommendations for solutions to local leadership.

Four separate workgroups who were a mixture of Soldiers, Family members and Army civilians spent hours discussing important topics received through a post-wide survey. The topics ranged from benefits and entitlements, Family programs and community services, and specific teen issues.

Issue number one for the benefits and entitlements group was a Family Care Plan for married Soldiers. The current Army regulation requires a FCP for single parents and dual military, but not all Soldiers with dependents. The consensus was that this is inadequate. Without a plan the capability to provide emergency care can lead to an unstable environment for the Family members. The recommendation was to revise the regulation to require all Soldiers with Family members to have a Family Care Plan.



Cari O'Daniel, (standing), Army Community Service, transcribes bullet points and ideas from one of the workgroups during the Fort Wainwright AFAP Conference Nov. 15 through 17 at the Last Frontier Community Activity Center. Moderator Megan Brown (facing right), special events coordinator, Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation, led the group through the process. (Photo by Allen Shaw/Fort Wainwright PAO)

The second issue addressed by the benefits group was that the terms Outside the Continental United States, military jargon for outside the continental United States and 'overseas' have not been used consistently when relating to the DoD civilians and Soldiers.

See ISSUES on page 2

Retirement Ceremony

Maj. Danny N. Devereaux will be honored during his retirement ceremony, Tuesday, 10 a.m., at the Last Frontier Community Activity Center, Building 1044. For more information contact Antonio D. Harris, ceremonies specialist, at 384-6166.

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SN/ BIRCHWOOD HOMES

ISSUES: Conference work groups make recommendations

Continued from page 1

Joe Sheehan, spokesperson for the group, said, "The lack of consistency creates dissatisfaction." They recommended current benefits be analyzed and reviewed to determine what specific changes need to be implemented.

The final issue addressed by the benefits and entitlements workgroup involved Army Emergency Relief for National Guard and Reserve Soldiers. Sheehan said, "The service members can only use this benefit if they are on active duty status for more than 30 consecutive days. Ineligibility and limited repayment options may create a financial hardship on the Soldier." The recommendation was to revise the Army regulation to all Soldiers, allowing for reasonable entitlements and repayment options.

Another group dealt specifically with Family Readiness Support Assistant roles and responsibilities. The crux of the issue is that there are no DoD regulations that define the position, and at times the FRSA can occasionally be assigned administrative duties unrelated to Family readiness. Victor Toldoya spoke for the group and said without the enforcement of defined roles, the FRSAs may be inefficient and not cost effective. The recommendation was to align FRSAs to work under Army Community Service where they can improve community outreach and receive effective standardized training, increasing professional development.

Lourdes Ramirez, Zephaniah McDaniel and Yasser Ortiz spoke for the teen group whose issues revolved around transportation. The teens are concerned that there is currently no transportation provided for military children to and from the Youth Center – especially during times of extreme weather conditions. The group took turns speaking to the audience and said not having transportation results in low participation at the Youth Center. They recommended a bus be provided to transport youth on the installation to and from the Youth Center.

The second transportation issue the teens addressed involved middle and high school students. With all of these schools located off-post, it occasionally causes a problem for youth to get home or reach the Youth Center after school. The group also said some buses are crowded, to where more than three students have to sit in a seat, while others have only a few riders. They were also concerned that the school transportation system does not provide buses to all the schools for military youth. Ramirez said depending on which school the student attends they may have to catch a bus from their school to another school to catch another bus that will bring them on post. She said, "During extreme weather, waiting for buses can be a safety concern. Having to run from one bus to another (on icy conditions) is also a safety concern." The group recommended better bus management, more bus-stop locations and better coordination for buses between schools to reduce the risk of

missing a connection.

The Programs and Services group had four main objectives:

Analyze programs and services offered by the garrison to the Fort Wainwright community;

Determine which programs listed in the Customer Climate Survey were critical, important or not necessary;

Work to determine if there are any overlapping services or programs listed in the survey;

Propose efficiencies regarding Fort Wainwright community programs and services that will contribute to ready units, strong Families and arctic tough leaders.

The survey, which was an opportunity for everyone in the community to have a voice in the decision-making process, was completed by 249 Fort Wainwright community members and 425 USARAK respondents.

Spokesperson for the group, Jessica McKeown, said the surveys were generally consistent with small variations. The group deemed 80 programs and services as critical while Fort Wainwright respondents had 15.

The Programs and Services focus group considered the top five for Ready Units to be: Legal assistance, physical fitness centers and facilities, dining facilities, alcohol and drug abuse prevention training and Education Center and learning facilities.

The top five for Strong Families were: Retirement services, before and after school programs, Mobilization and deployment support, Survivor Outreach Services and child day care full-day program.

Recommendations for improving programs and services are the Army Substance Abuse Prevention and Education Program should absorb the alcohol and drug abuse prevention training; Child Youth and School Services combine Edge AND SKIES programs to make enrollment easier; and the Religious Services Organization consolidate youth religious education programs, youth ministries and Vacation Bible School.

McKeown said the group also suggests stronger marketing efforts through briefings, increased awareness through FRGs and FRSAs, the use of social networking, coupons in Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation publications, the post newspaper and unit bulletin boards. "Cost savings will be realized by reducing the scope of or eliminating programs that are under-utilized and by examining what the value of the service or program is to our community," she said.

At the conclusion of the out-brief, Charles Lyons, Army Community Service, Army Family Volunteer Programs Manager, said, "The way ahead is to focus on efficiencies and how we can improve our installation and services. We will continue to achieve resolution on the issues submitted and provide community feedback." He plans to provide updates on the status of issues through the AFAP Facebook page, the Alaska Post and the Fort Wainwright website, "until final resolution," he said.

Medical Department Activity - Alaska

Col. George Appenzeller, MEDDAC-AK commander



Healthy holiday eating

Honey-glazed ham, eggnog, sugar cookies, apple pie...the holiday season is upon us. Over the coming weeks many of us will be faced with gatherings at work, with friends and family that will be centered around food, making it easy to gain weight and increase your waist line. Avoiding weight gain during the holiday season can be a challenge, but it can be done with healthy eating.

Healthy eating is not about strict nutrition philosophies or depriving yourself of the foods you love. Rather, it's about feeling great, having more energy, and keeping yourself as healthy as possible – all which can be achieved by learning some nutrition basics and incorporating them in a way that works for you. Even during this season, when chow tends to take a front seat at gatherings, it's important to choose the types of foods that improve your health and avoid or minimize the types that raise your risk for such illnesses as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.

Healthy eating begins with learning how to eat smart. It's not just what you eat, but how you eat. Maintain a balance between your calorie intake and calorie expenditure – that is, don't eat more food than your body uses. To do this, keep portions moderate, especially high-calorie foods. This means you can still enjoy grandma's triple fudge almond cake, just be mindful of the slice you take and resist the inevitable second helping. It is also important to drink more water, a vital part of a healthy diet. Our bodies are about 75 percent water. Water helps flush our systems, especially the kidneys and bladder, of waste products and toxins. Finally, eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes. These foods are high in complex carbohydrates, fiber, vitamins, and minerals, low in fat, and free of cholesterol. They will help keep you feeling full and help reduce the desire to overindulge.

You can enjoy your favorite sweets and fried foods in moderation, as long as they are an occasional part of your overall healthy diet. Food is a great source of pleasure, and pleasure is good for the heart – even if those french fries aren't. A healthy diet improves your energy and feeling of well-being while reducing your risk of many diseases. Adding regular physical activity and exercise will make sensible eating work even better for keeping your weight in check.

Although holiday weight gain is a reality for many people, following these few simple strategies can help avoid those extra holiday pounds without shunning the festivities. Remember that moderation is the key to calorie control. If you eat more than you had planned, get back on track the next day and set realistic diet and exercise goals for a healthier New Year!

Medical Department Activity-Alaska is here to help you maintain your healthy lifestyle. If you have any questions about helping control your weight, talk to your primary care manager or contact Arctic Health Link on Fort Wainwright at 361-4148. At MEDDAC-AK our number 1 priority is providing you and your family quality care with quality caring.

Fort Wainwright winter forecast



La Nina, the cold-hearted sister of El Nino, returns to Fairbanks

Roy Metcalf, chief forecaster, Detachment 3, 1st Weather Squadron, Fort Wainwright

Temperatures are forecasted to be warmer north of the Brooks Range but much colder south of the Brooks Range to the Gulf of Alaska. Precipitation is forecasted to be lower than normal, which does not fit the La Nina mold. La Nina winters normally have plenty of snow.

Ocean and atmospheric observations throughout the Pacific indicate La Nina conditions at the current time. Sea surface temperatures in the tropical Pacific Ocean continue to trend below average, indicating the continued presence of La Nina conditions. Though Interior Alaska is thousands of miles from these anomalous temperatures, the impacts of La Nina are far reaching and will alter our winter climate. These colder ocean temperatures cap convection in the tropics which reduces the frequency and severity of precipitation-producing dying tropical storms. The so-called "pineapple express" flow that often brings our mid-winter warming Chinook winds will be less frequent. In other words, we may get VERY COLD.

In the short term (next 20 to 30 days) the lower atmosphere will be recovering from the powerful storm that hit the Bering Sea on Nov 9 and disrupted the flow well into the stratosphere. The lower atmospheric vacuum this storm created entrained an equal volume of very cold polar-arctic air from Siberia and has provided us with our recent record breaking cold snap. These cycles normally take from 20 to 60 days to complete depending on the strength of the atmospheric disturbance. In other words, the cold air could still be with us for a while. However, the welcome cloud cover we currently have has warmed us up about 10 degrees and low temperatures are not expected to drop 30 degrees below zero for the next week. Once the current warm spell is over, all bets are off.

December, January and February indicate La Nina will be at her strongest, meaning colder temperatures. Our only savior from widespread frozen pipes will be snow. Our current snow pack of seven inches is not adequate considering the expected below-normal temperatures. The Bering Sea still has a good deal of open water, which could help provide a moisture source for increased snowfall before the temperatures plummet again. Unfortunately, the primary storm track remains well to the south of Alaska and the La Nina composite forecast models are not being very friendly with this winters forecast. The current cold air migrating from Siberia has certainly cooled the sea surface temperatures down in the Bering Sea. It could be ice-covered in 30 days.

In conclusion, I want this forecast to be wrong but the current indications, interpretations, crystal-ball gazing and chicken-bone-ticking gurus who try to outguess the Goddess Meteora are lining up like the planets saying with a single voice, IT'S GONNA GET COLDER.

ALASKA POST

Home of the Arctic Warriors

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Civilian Employee of the Quarter, Adam Rost

Trish Muntean, Fort Wainwright PAO

A Directorate of Logistics employee recently received recognition for outstanding job performance as part of the Fort Wainwright Civilian Employee Recognition Program which was established November 2010.

Adam Rost was selected Civilian Nonsupervisor of the 3rd Quarter and has been working as a materiel handler at the DOL Central Issue Facility, Warehouse and Customer Service Section since 2006. His primary responsibilities deal with Soldier Readiness, making sure Soldiers have the proper clothing and equipment not just for deployment, but for cold-weather survival here in Alaska.

Linc Hawkes, one of his supervisors, said that his ability to learn and execute duties with minimal supervision along with his dedication and loyalty to the overall organization made him stand out from other employees.

Rost truly understands the phrase "caring for the Soldier" Hawkes said. "Through effective communication with our modern-day warrior, Adam, one member of a fantastic, understaffed Central Issue Facility team, services over 7,500 Soldiers," he said.

Rost is a good example for teamwork, Hawkes said.

"Due to the hiring freeze, he has stepped up to perform forklift and organizational clothing and individual equipment inspection duties as other employees



Directorate of Logistics employee Adam Rost, selected as Civilian Nonsupervisor of the 3rd Quarter. Supervisor, Linc Hawkes said that Rost's dedication and loyalty to the overall organization made him stand out. (Photo by Brian Schlumbohm/Fort Wainwright PAO)

accepted promotions with other organizations," he said. "He has also stepped up and partnered with another agency to support the Commander's Property Accountability Initiative."

Rost's life is not just about his work with DOL.

Originally from Iowa, Rost came to Alaska as a Soldier and got out in 2004. He chose to stay here for the outdoor recreational opportunities, such as moose hunting and salmon fishing, which he enjoys when he is not working his second job in the dining facility. His favorite part of that job is carving the ice sculptures seen during the holidays.

Rost said he was honored to be selected as employee of the quarter, saying he didn't even know that he had been nominated.

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Public Works leader hones speaking skills while having one heck of a time

Allen Shaw, Fort Wainwright PAO

Many people will tell you Mike Meeks, director of Public Works, United States Army Garrison Fort Wainwright, never has a problem speaking his mind. But one thing they might not know, said Eileen Wallace, Employee Equal Opportunity office, he is quite the diva.

Wallace is referring to Meeks's passion and ability to perform. When Meeks leaves his day job he dabbles in public speaking. He is a member of the Wainwright Warriors - a Toastmasters club, and recently placed second in a statewide speech competition in Anchorage. He advanced after winning local contests against other public speaking groups.

"Wainwright Warriors is a group which offers a safe place to learn speaking techniques and grow as a public speaker, but it's so much more," Wallace said. "We are a group of leaders and we all want to improve our communication skills. We encourage growth through constructive feedback and the opportunity to practice with people who care about you and will provide support as you grow (in the organization)."

Meeks described it as a small group that gets together to practice speaking skills and offer constructive feedback. "If you're horrified of speaking you can stand up and talk about any subject in front of a friendly group of people who will offer a friendly critique," he said. "It's just like anything else, if you want to get better, you need to practice."

The Wainwright Warriors is open to anyone who is wants to get better. "If you can do a speech that makes someone think, makes someone feel and makes someone want to take action, you've probably hit a home run," Meeks said

There are several types of speeches

each member is challenged to write and perform in an allotted time period. It can be political, comedy or serious. In one story Meeks said he made up an imaginary person, talked about him, killed him (hypothetically) and then did his eulogy. "That was challenging."

There are guidelines set up for public speaking to help an individual improve. It shows the importance of hand gestures, inflection, eye contact, research and focus. "We usually count the number of ahs, likes, and you-knows," Meeks said. "You'd be surprised how that distracts from a good speech."

His winning composition was a humorous speech that actually blossomed after his daughter invited a boyfriend to dinner. "She said 'Dad, whatever you do, don't embarrass me'," Meeks said. "Thus the story of Billy Bob was born and it took on a life of its own," Meeks said.

"At Billy Bob's Catfish and Bass Eatery, also known by the locals as the BBC, you can take a losing situation and turn it into a tasty win-win," Meeks said (as Billy Bob).

The seven-and-a-half minute presentation about an imaginary restaurant in south Florida was given to a crowded room of people, with unidentified judges intermingled throughout. "That way you're encouraged to address the audience and not just single a few people out," he said.

The audience often broke into laughter as Billy Bob continued his spiel about scooping up the road-kill victims and bringing them to the restaurant, "where we'll fry 'em up fer you," he said. "Just on the road between here and there is possum and skunk that was hit by an automobile and kilt, and squashed right there. And there are plenty of snakes and gators off the side of the road," he said.



Mike Meeks, Directorate of Public Works director, United States Army Garrison Fort Wainwright, dressed in character, with overalls and no shoes as he delivers his prepared presentation as the owner of Billy Bob's Catfish and Bass Eatery. Meeks recently placed second in a statewide competition after advancing through local contests against different Toastmasters groups in the area. (Courtesy photo)

With a strong southern drawl Billy Bob continued to encourage potential customers with the lure of comfortable recliners, flat-screen televisions and your own TV tray, served on a recycled TV dinner pan.

He talked about the fried possum and cold beer, sautéed snake on a skewer and ambience. "We got one of them two-headed goats hanging on the wall and a fish tank filled with them pie-rah-nas," he said. "You can take your possum bones and fish bones, stick 'em on a cane pole and catch your own dinner," he said. He continued to entice customers with talk about Grandma's special dessert she makes with weeds that grow right outside the door. "An hour later you'll see colors you ain't ever seen before."

Meeks says he really enjoys

comedy and hopes to one day compete on the stage in Las Vegas against other members of Toastmasters International. The Wainwright Warriors currently meet every Tuesday from noon to 1 p.m. in a conference room in Building 3015. "But that could change as we try to encourage participation," said Wallace. "Anyone on post is invited to attend, bring a lunch, bring a friend and join in the fun." For more information call 474-4788.

You can also see Meeks and a talented ensemble of other performers at the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Murder Mystery 101 comedy and dinner theater tonight and Saturday in the Last Frontier Community Activity Center at 7 p.m. For more information call 353-6043.

Got cabin fever? Outdoor Recreation has the cure

Trish Muntean, Fort Wainwright PAO

Old man winter has returned to Fort Wainwright - subzero temperatures, snow and ice with limited amounts of sunlight each day. The good news? Outdoor Recreation offers lots of reasons to come out and play no matter what the season, and winter is no different.

From snowmachining to ice-fishing to cross-country skiing, Outdoor Recreation offers something for the beginner who is spending their first winter in Alaska and the sourdough that came to Fort Wainwright years ago and decided to make Fairbanks their permanent home.

"I think we make all of our programs easy and family friendly where anybody can participate" said Lara Patterson, director of the Outdoor Recreation Center. "We don't cater to the experts because you would expect the experts to be able to go out and do it by themselves, so we are all about the training."

The staff offers cross-country skiing and snowmachine safety classes as part of their training programs.

"If you can walk, you can cross-country ski," said James Smith, a recreation specialist. The ORC even has skis and snowshoes that can be strapped onto children's winter boots so they can go out with their parents, allowing both skiing and snowshoeing to be a family activity.

The snowmachine safety class is required before renting one from Outdoor Recreation.

If you want company on your Alaskan adventure, try a trip organized by Outdoor Recreation. The staff has put together several reasonably priced trips which

include transportation, safety equipment and know-how. Participants provide warm clothes, snacks and beverages.

For those who want to strike out on their own, but don't want to buy all that expensive gear, Outdoor Recreation rents out a variety of equipment.

The Women in the Wilderness series is being offered again this year. Once each month, from December to March, the center offers a women-only activity to get them outdoors, possibly trying something they have never done before or something they may not have felt comfortable doing in the company of men. Plans for this season include a trip to Chena Hot Springs and a day on the ice, not skating, but fishing. "What I love most about women in nature programs, I don't really think you can hit on the fact that it is an Outdoor Recreation activity," Patterson said. "I think with women it is more like a vehicle for socialization. Getting to meet new people. Getting to know people. Experiencing something new in a less threatening environment than if men were there."

For information on any Outdoor Recreation program or trip call the center at 361-2652 or check out the ORC website at www.ftwainwrightfmwr.com/outdoorrec.html.

"You are only here for so long," said Smith. "You have to enjoy it while you have the chance. When you get those trips and someone tries skiing or something and they say that was the moment of a lifetime, I'll never forget that. Those are the things that make it for me."



James Smith, a recreation assistant with the Outdoor Recreation Center tries out some cross country skis at the center Wednesday. Cross country skis are just one of many pieces of equipment that can be rented at the Outdoor Recreation Center. Smith said that if you can walk, you can cross country ski. (Photo by Trish Muntean/Fort Wainwright PAO)

Task Force Saber, 6-17th Troopers earn combat awards

1st Lt. Kristen Gellhaus,

The Soldiers of Task Force Saber (6th Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment) held an awards ceremony on Contingency Operating Station Taji, Iraq, Nov. 17. Squadron Commander, Lt. Col. Michael C. McCurry, presented numerous awards recognizing the troopers' valorous acts and service during Operation New Dawn. Individual troopers received Combat Action Badges, Air Medals and Army Commendation Medals with "V device" for their heroism during a major Indirect Fire attack that occurred May 4.

Early in the morning May 4, the enemy engaged COS Taji with over

50 rounds of indirect fire. Firing a mixture of mortar rounds from multiple locations, the enemy's attack was centered on the flight line with Blackfoot Troop right in the middle. As the attack started, a Blackfoot Troop scout weapons team had just returned to aircraft parking for maintenance. The team consisted of Chief Warrant Officer Brian Jacobson and Chief Warrant Officer Michael King in one OH58D Kiowa Warrior helicopter, and Chief Warrant Officer R.J. Smith and Chief Warrant Officer Adrienne Anderson in another.

When the first rounds impacted, the aircrew of Jacobson and King



Squadron Commander, Lt. Col. Michael C. McCurry, presents Sfc. Steven Singleton the Combat Action Badge during an awards recognition ceremony at Contingency Operating Station Taji, Iraq, Nov. 17. (U.S. Army courtesy photo)



Soldiers of Task Force Saber (6th Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment) gather for an awards ceremony at Contingency Operating Station Taji, Iraq, Nov. 17, where Squadron Commander, Lt. Col. Michael McCurry presented Air Medals, Army Commendation Medals and Combat Action Badges to awardees. (U.S. Army courtesy photo)

recognized COS Taji was under attack, immediately took off and flew in the direction of the fire in order to thwart the enemy's actions. Despite being under fire as mortar rounds impacted all around the other aircraft, the maintenance team of Sgt. 1st Class Luis Porres, Staff Sgt. Robert Walter, Sgt. Gus Haywood and Sgt. Jesse Cooney continued to assess and fix the helicopter to get it back in the fight.

Following the repair, Smith and Anderson, with the assistance of the maintenance personnel, cranked the helicopter and joined Jacobson and King responding to the indirect fire attack.

These acts by the aircrews and the maintainers enabled the scout weapons team to be the first U.S. forces on scene in response to the attack causing the enemy to flee. They prevented the firing of more mortar rounds later discovered

unfired next to the tube.

The aircrews and maintainers of Bravo and Delta Troop, 6-17th showed personal courage under fire, extreme dedication to duty and selfless service. Their actions are not only the embodiment of Army values but also demonstrate what it means to be a Cavalry Soldier in the 6-17th. The maintenance personnel received Army Commendation Medals with "V" device and the pilots received Air Medals for their actions

During the same ceremony, 32 other troopers from 6-17th received Combat Action Badges for various events during Operation New Dawn. All together, the Squadron has received 587 valor, achievement and service medals during their deployment.

They are scheduled to return to Fort Wainwright by the end of the year.

The day before Black Friday, the day before Cyber Monday: That's what I'm talking about

Allen Shaw, Fort Wainwright PAO

On turkey day Packer Quarterback Aaron Rodgers threw two touchdown passes as the Packers continued their winning ways defeating the Detroit Lions 27-15. The defending champs are 11 and 0 for the season, winning 17 straight, including last year's playoffs and the Super Bowl. The Dallas Cowboys beat the Miami Dolphins 20-19 as kicker Dan Bailey made a 28-yard field goal as time ran out and the big bad birds of Baltimore came out on top 16-6 as the coaching Harbaugh brothers faced off against each other guiding their division-front-runners in the late game Thanksgiving Day. John, head coach of the Ravens who lead the AFC North 8-3 improved

their record against Jim, the 49er head coach whose team still holds the advantage in the NFC West with nine wins and two losses.

In Sunday games the Falcons beat Minnesota 24-14, Cincinnati squeezed by in-state rivals the Cleveland Browns 23-20 and Carolina kept a big goose egg in the Indy win column beating the Colts 27-19. Houston went away with a 20-13 win against Jacksonville, but lost another quarterback as Matt Leinart injured his throwing shoulder. On Tuesday the Jaguars announced the firing of head coach Jack Del Rio and informed everyone that owner Wayne Weaver was selling the team. In the meantime defensive coordinator Mel Tucker

will take over as interim head coach.

The Jets beat Buffalo 28-24, Arizona edged St. Louis 23-20 and the Tennessee Titans defeated the Tampa Bay Buccaneers 23-17. The Raiders toppled Chicago 25-20, Washington beat Seattle 23-17 and New England hammered Philadelphia 38-20. Quarterback Tim Tebow led the Denver Broncos to a 16-13 victory against San Diego, the Steelers outlasted Kansas City 13-9 and the Drew Brees show continued Monday as the Saints QB passed for 363 yards and four touchdowns, and ran another one in to help his team defeat the New York Giants 49-24.

For the most part the Fort

Wainwright prognostication team fared well. A-Team and BrowBrose Salsa scooted closer to the top with 13 wins and only three losses. Brain and the Jones Bros did well with 12 and four while Urbi is "movin' on up" posting 11 wins and five losses. Bear and Tate shared the bottom spot this week, but still had double-digit wins.

The next few weeks should prove to be an interesting as the playoff picture takes shape. The holiday spirit is in the air, there's still plenty of football to be played and the National Basketball Players will be back on the courts for Christmas Day games. The lockout has ended and that's what I'm talking about.

Week 13 in the Alaska Post football series



Bear

121 Wins / 55 Losses

PHI @ SEA PHI
TEN @ BUF BUF
KC @ CHI CHI
ATL @ HOU ATL
OAK @ MIA OAK
DEN @ MIN DEN
IND @ NE NE
CAR @ TB TB
CIN @ PIT PIT
NYJ @ WAS NYJ
BAL @ CLE BAL
DAL @ ARI DAL
GB @ NYG GB
STL @ SF SF
DET @ NO NO
SD @ JAC SD



Brain

114 Wins / 62 Losses

PHI @ SEA PHI
TEN @ BUF BUF
KC @ CHI CHI
ATL @ HOU HOU
OAK @ MIA OAK
DEN @ MIN DEN
IND @ NE NE
CAR @ TB CAR
CIN @ PIT CIN
NYJ @ WAS NYJ
BAL @ CLE BAL
DAL @ ARI DAL
GB @ NYG GB
STL @ SF SF
DET @ NO NO
SD @ JAC SD



A - Team

112 Wins / 64 Losses

PHI @ SEA SEA
TEN @ BUF BUF
KC @ CHI CHI
ATL @ HOU ATL
OAK @ MIA OAK
DEN @ MIN DEN
IND @ NE NE
CAR @ TB TB
CIN @ PIT CIN
NYJ @ WAS NYJ
BAL @ CLE BAL
DAL @ ARI ARI
GB @ NYG GB
STL @ SF SF
DET @ NO NO
SD @ JAC SD



Jones Bros

110 Wins / 66 Losses

PHI @ SEA PHI
TEN @ BUF BUF
KC @ CHI CHI
ATL @ HOU ATL
OAK @ MIA OAK
DEN @ MIN DEN
IND @ NE NE
CAR @ TB CAR
CIN @ PIT PIT
NYJ @ WAS WAS
BAL @ CLE BAL
DAL @ ARI DAL
GB @ NYG GB
STL @ SF SF
DET @ NO NO
SD @ JAC JAC



BrowBrose Salsa

110 Wins / 66 Losses

PHI @ SEA PHI
TEN @ BUF BUF
KC @ CHI CHI
ATL @ HOU ATL
OAK @ MIA OAK
DEN @ MIN DEN
IND @ NE NE
CAR @ TB TB
CIN @ PIT PIT
NYJ @ WAS NYJ
BAL @ CLE BAL
DAL @ ARI DAL
GB @ NYG GB
STL @ SF SF
DET @ NO NO
SD @ JAC SD



Steve Tate

109 Wins / 67 Losses

PHI @ SEA PHI
TEN @ BUF BUF
KC @ CHI CHI
ATL @ HOU ATL
OAK @ MIA MIA
DEN @ MIN DEN
IND @ NE NE
CAR @ TB TB
CIN @ PIT PIT
NYJ @ WAS NYJ
BAL @ CLE BAL
DAL @ ARI DAL
GB @ NYG GB
STL @ SF SF
DET @ NO NO
SD @ JAC SD



Ed Urbi

103 Wins / 73 Losses

PHI @ SEA SEA
TEN @ BUF TEN
KC @ CHI CHI
ATL @ HOU HOU
OAK @ MIA OAK
DEN @ MIN DEN
IND @ NE NE
CAR @ TB TB
CIN @ PIT PIT
NYJ @ WAS NYJ
BAL @ CLE BAL
DAL @ ARI DAL
GB @ NYG GB
STL @ SF SF
DET @ NO NO
SD @ JAC SD

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TANANA VALLEY FARMER'S

what is it?
when is it?
where is it?

find it here!

Friday – 2nd

MURDER MYSTERY 101; A COMEDY MYSTERY DINNER, Doors open at 7 p.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, Building 1044. Appropriate for everyone 12 and older. Cost is \$17 in advance, \$20 at the door. Tickets can be purchased at the LFCAC, Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, Physical Fitness Center, Melaven Physical Fitness Center or the Financial Management Office until the day of show. All tickets can be picked up at the "will call" window the day of the show at the LFCAC. Call 353-6043.

BINGO STORY HOUR AND CRAFTS, 4 to 5 p.m., Post Library, Building 3700. Call 353-4137.

FIRST FRIDAY'S ART BASH, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Arts and Crafts Center, Building 2727. Call 353-7520.

Saturday – 3rd

MURDER MYSTERY 101; A COMEDY MYSTERY DINNER, Doors open at 7 p.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, Building 1044. Appropriate for everyone 12 and older. Cost is \$17 in advance, \$20 at the door. Tickets can be purchased at the LFCAC, Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, Physical Fitness Center, Melaven Physical Fitness Center or the Financial Management Office until the day of show. All tickets can be picked up at the "will call" window the day of the show at the LFCAC. Call 353-6043.

WOMEN IN THE WILDERNESS: SNOWSHOE AND SOAK, 9 a.m., Outdoor Recreation Center, Building 4050. Participants will take a trip to Chena Hot Springs. Cost is \$15 per person. Must be 18 years and older to enter the rock pool. Call 361-6349/361-6350.

SNOWMACHINE SAFETY COURSE, 9 a.m., Outdoor Recreation Center, Building 4050. This class is required to rent snowmachines from the ORC. Must be 18 years and older. Call 361-6349/361-6350.

CHESS CLUB, 3 to 5 p.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, Building 1044. Call 353-7755.

BINGO STORY HOUR AND CRAFTS, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., Post Library, Building 3700. Call 353-4137.

FEDERAL BENEFITS OPEN SEASON

The 2011 Federal Benefits Open Season will come to an end Dec. 12. Until then Federal employees may enroll, change enrollment or cancel enrollment in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program and enroll in a Flexible Spending Account. Open season is an excellent opportunity to review the information for your current benefits to see if there will be any changes for 2012, such as an increase in bi-weekly premiums, or differences in coverage. It is also a good idea to verify that health-care providers will continue to participate in plans for 2012. Information on FEHB, FEDVIP, and FSA is available at the Office of Personnel Management website at www.opm.gov/insure/.

ALASKA POST SUBMISSIONS

To submit a photo, place an event or class on the calendar send an email to pao.fwa@us.army.mil no later than close of business Monday prior to the print week. The name of the event or class, date, time, location and a contact phone number must be included. For display advertising contact the Fairbanks Daily News Miner at 459-7548.

TRAINING CENTER DEDICATION

The Sergeant Clarkson Training Support Center will be dedicated Jan. 5 at 2 p.m.

The training support center, located at 3441 Ile De France Avenue, is being named after Sgt. Joel David Clarkson, a native of Fairbanks. Clarkson was injured March 13 by small arms fire during a patrol in Farah Province, Afghanistan. He died March 16 of those wounds.

Clarkson's unselfishness was exemplified as an organ donor. Following his death, seven recipients were given a second chance in life. Clarkson served with the 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment.

Sunday – 4th

STAINED AND FUSED GLASS ORNAMENTS WORKSHOP, Dec. 4, 11, 18 from 2 to 5 p.m., Arts and Crafts Center, Building 3727. Cost is \$65 and includes materials for all three sessions. Open to participants ages 16 and older. For more information, call 353-7520.

Monday – 5th

REPEAL DAY, 5 to 7 p.m., Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, Building 3702. Open to participants ages 21 and older. Call 353-2654.

CHILD ASSESSMENT, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, Building 1044. For children ages birth to 5 years of age. Call 353-7372.

ROMP AND STOMP PLAYGROUP, 9:30 to 11 a.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, Building 1044. This activity is a partnership with ACS and CYSS. Call 353-7713 and 353-7856.

Tuesday – 6th

EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY MEMBER PROGRAM SIP AND SOCIAL, 1 to 2 p.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, Building 1044. Open to members of the Exceptional Family Member Program. Call 353-4243.

Wednesday – 7th

ANNUAL HOLIDAY TREE-LIGHTING CEREMONY, 6:30 to 8 p.m., Physical Fitness Center, Building 3709. Call 353-6043.

MULTI-CULTURAL STORY HOUR, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m., Post Library, Building 3700. Call 353-4137.

Thursday – 8th

GINGERBREAD-HOUSE MAKING, 5 to 7 p.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, Building 1044. Call 353-7755.

HANDMADE HOLIDAY CARDS, 4 to 5 p.m., Post Library, Building 3700. Call 353-4137.

ROMP AND STOMP PLAYGROUP, 9:30 to 11 a.m., Last Frontier Community Activity Center, Building 1044. This activity is a partnership with ACS and CYSS. Call 353-7713 or 353-7856.

HOLIDAY HOURS

The Fort Wainwright Law Center will close at 11 a.m. Dec. 16 for an official function. For more information, call 353-6500.

Military Personnel Division (MPD) and Army Career Alumni Program (ACAP) will be closed Dec. 22, from noon to 4:30 p.m. for a holiday celebration.

The commissary will close early for Christmas Eve, 4 p.m. Dec. 24, and is closed for the holidays, Dec. 25 and Jan. 1.

Admission for open recreational ice skating at the Physical Fitness Center



Individual daily fees

4 years and younger, free
Ages 5 to 17, \$2.50
Adults, \$3.50
Family of four or more, \$8
Skate rental, \$1.50

For more information call 353-7294.

HOME: Morale in small packages

Continued from page 1

Some use their time doing college courses. Others such as Sgt. Joshua Meader from Pittsfield, Maine, and Cpl. Travis Hott, from Crandall, Ga., enjoy playing video games on the systems provided in the Morale Welfare and Recreation tents throughout Afghanistan.

Pfc. Matheau Sloan of Worcester, Mass., like many others enjoys going to the gym on a regular basis, while the service members assigned to the battalion intelligence section gather together at least once a week for a movie night. The battalion as a whole gathers together every week or so for a barbecue and either a movie or card tournament in an effort to build esprit de corps.

Most all branches of the military will agree that one thing that helps with being away from home is the care packages sent by family and friends back home.

The contents of the package generally do not matter much, especially on a small outpost in the middle of Afghanistan. A simple note, piece of artwork from a child, or a box of snack crackers can make a world of difference to a service member's morale.

Family members also play a key role in reducing the perceived distance between here and home and the idea that someone is thinking about the service member, is what makes it important.

Airman 1st Class Travis Hunt said the biggest piece of advice he can give to future deploying service members is "to keep a good attitude."

Staff Sgt. Bryan Fenn said "It is important to keep in contact with family members whether it is by email or phone... it's important to make the call once or twice a week so it is something to look forward to."

All service members tend to agree it's good to have some sort of activity or hobby to keep yourself occupied during these long tours of duty. And while these techniques work, most agree that there's no replacement for the love and support from family members as well as a good 'battle buddy'.

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FAIRHILL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
AK POST/BAZAAR
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21388567

DOWNTOWN BINGO
AK POST/DECEMBER
2 x 4.0

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SN/ MAC FEDERAL CREDIT UN
AK POST/E-CHECKING
5 x 2.0

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Army news
army.mil
Army services
myarmyonesource.com

MURDER 101

Murder 101 will take place tonight and tomorrow in the Last Frontier Community Activity Center. Not the typical, mystery-in-a-box show, Army Entertainment's Kenneth Freehill and Darryl Allara meet with cast members before the show and tailor their original scripts and characters incorporating the performers' unique personalities and style. There will be a single seating each night, doors open at 7 p.m., show starts at 7:30 p.m. The cost of the pasta dinner is included. Tickets are \$17 in advance and \$20 at the door. Tickets are available at the Last Frontier, Nugget Lanes Bowling Center, the FMWR Financial Management Office, Murphy Hall, Building 1045, the Physical Fitness Center and Melaven Gym. All tickets will be available at the Last Frontier's "will call" window the day of the show. For more information, call 353-6043.

HOLIDAY TREE-LIGHTING

Merry musicians from the 9th Army "Arctic Warrior" Band bring holiday music to the annual Holiday Tree-Lighting Ceremony Wednesday, at the Physical Fitness Center. The FMWR event starts at 6:30 p.m. and features free ice skating, children's activities, door prizes and a visit from Santa Claus.

WARRIOR ZONE OPENING

The Warrior Zone will be back in the zone Dec. 15. The grand reopening of the renovated facility is set for 4 p.m. Local musicians are slated to perform. The Warrior Zone is the home of the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program. For more information about the Warrior Zone's events and programs, call 353-1085.

BUILDING RESILIENCE

Don't deal with a problem alone. In case of emergency, dial 911. To speak with someone in the local area, call Careline Crisis Intervention, 452-4357.

After duty hours chaplain, 353-4182 or 353-4180; Fort Wainwright Bassett Army Community Hospital Emergency Room, 361-5491; Police desk, 353-7710; Toll-free Careline Crisis Intervention (877) 266-4357; Military OneSource, (800) 342-9647 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-8255 or visit www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

CUTCO

2 x 2.5

17390124

INTERIOR YOUTH BASKETBALL
AK POST/REG & ASSESS

2 x 3.5

17390433

NORTH STAR DANCE
AK POST/NUTCRACKER

2 x 3.5

DOLLAR RIDE SERVICE CHANGE

The Armed Services YMCA 'Y on Wheels' \$1 shuttle service on Fort Wainwright will be under reduced hours for the next couple weeks. Hours will be temporarily changed to 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday effective immediately. To schedule a \$1 (each way) shuttle ride on post, please call 353-5962. "Serving Those Who Serve America"

BIRCH HILL SKI AND SNOWBOARD AREA

The Birch Hill Ski and Snowboard area is open. Visit the FMWR website for hours, equipment rental, lift information and prices. The last day to purchase a season lift ticket at discount rates is Dec. 11. Cross country skiers will have more trail options than ever, and skiers are reminded to keep off the golf course, it is closed for the winter. The lodge and ski hill close when temperatures drop to 20-below zero or colder.

LEGAL NOTICE

Anyone having claims against or who is indebted to the estate of Pfc. Matthew C. Colin of 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division may contact CW3 Karl Griffith, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-25th SBCT, 1-25th Brigade Support Battalion, Fort Wainwright Alaska, 99703 or phone (931) 980-6141.

Anyone having claims against or who is indebted to the estate of Spc. James R. Burnett of 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Regiment may contact Chief Warrant Officer 3 William J. Baker II, Building 3424 Luzon Street, 1-25th SBCT Rear Detachment, Fort Wainwright, Alaska 99703 or phone 353-3138.

Anyone having claims against or who is indebted to the estate of Sgt. 1st Class Johnathan McCain, of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, may contact 1st Lt. James Desjarlais at Building 3409, Rhineland Avenue, 1-25th SBCT Rear Detachment, Fort Wainwright, Alaska 99703 or phone 353-1345.

Anyone having claims against or who is indebted to the estate of Spc. Calvin Pereda of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, may contact 1st Lt. James Desjarlais at Building 3409, Rhineland Avenue, 1-25th SBCT Rear Detachment, Fort Wainwright, Alaska 99703 or phone 353-1345.

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BABULA, DR.
AK POST/AK POST
2 x 3.0

50388420

ALASKA FUN CENTER SALES
AK POST/HOW MUCH CAN
2 x 5.0
RED**PWOC FIRST FRIDAYS**

Protestant Women of the Chapel, First Fridays "Christmas Morning Magic," tonight, 6:30, at Northern Lights Chapel. Join women in the Fort Wainwright community for a night filled with all the magic of Christmas morning. Come in your favorite Christmas pajamas and enter the pajama contest. Bring a wrapped Christmas tree ornament for an ornament exchange, and enjoy your favorite Christmas carols, yummy yuletide breakfast and brunch treats, a decadent hot chocolate and hot beverage bar, door prizes, free childcare and fun! School-aged children's programming this month will be at the Southern Lights Chapel. Kindergartners and older school-age children may be dropped off at the Southern Lights Chapel beginning at 6 p.m. for this month's event, and preschool and nursery programming will be at Northern Lights Chapel. Children are also encouraged to wear their Christmas pajamas for this month's event. Please contact PWOC at wainwright@pwoc.org for more information.

MILITARY SKI TRAINING

Every Friday, 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. with the exception of holidays and scheduled ski school activities, the Birch Hill Ski and Snowboard Area is available for military units to train. Units must coordinate in advance with the ski hill manager at 353-1998 or fax requests to 353-9805. Active duty must be in uniform.

FAIRBANKS EVENTS**Theater and Film**

"It's a Wonderful Life" showing at the Riverfront Theater today through Dec. 11, times vary, see website for costs at www.fairbanksdrama.org.

Free films on Alaska history, nature and more shown at the Morris Thompson Cultural Center. Shows for Dec. 5 to 10 are Alaska's Coolest Birds (1 hour), 9 a.m.; Monty Moose: Amazing Alaska Animals (40 minutes), 10 a.m.; Alaska Winter Wonder (35 minutes), noon; Light of the North (30 minutes), 2 p.m.; Winter Patrol: Denali by Dogsled (25 minutes) at 4 p.m. For more information call 459-3700 or see film schedules at www.morrithompsoncenter.org/daily-film-schedule/.

Music

Northern Lights String Orchestra Concert, Dec. 1, 8 p.m. at the Davis Concert Hall on UAF Campus. Free admission.

Design Alaska Holiday Concert, Dec. 4, 4 p.m., at the Davis Concert Hall on UAF Campus. See website for admission fee at www.fairbanksymphony.org.

Holiday Choral Concert, Dec. 8, 7:30 p.m., at West Valley High School. \$12 adults, \$7 children under 12, military and senior citizens.

13391622

FAIRBANKS SHOE REPAIR
AK POST/NEW SHOE REP
2 x 2.0

18390286

WHITFIELD, JANET
AK POST/RHODA
2 x 6.0

THANKSGIVING: Shared in Afghanistan

Continued from page 1

Cheryle Hess, chief of Operations and Maintenance for the Afghan National Security Force at the Afghanistan Engineer District-North in Kabul, and her son Army Sgt. Thomas Hess, a geospatial engineer assigned to the 1st Stryker Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, at Forward Operating Base Masum Gahr in Kandahar province, were able to spend some of Thanksgiving week together.

"I had to attend a conference at Kandahar Airfield and learned that at the same time, Tom may be attending training there, so I was hopeful we could be together for Thanksgiving," said Cheryle, a retired Army Reserve lieutenant colonel. "Coming from a military background and a military Family, I knew the likelihood of me seeing Tom was remote, but it was worth a shot."

Tom checked with his brigade deputy commander and sure enough, the training was scheduled during the same time that his mom would be at Kandahar Airfield.

"I wasn't sure if I could see her, but when I talked to the brigade deputy commander, he gave me great news," Tom said.

Both Cheryle and Tom spent a few days before Thanksgiving together at Kandahar Airfield. Cheryle treated Tom and a few of his friends to dinner one evening and enjoyed meeting Tom's extended military Family.

"The rest of our family is back in the United States," Cheryle said "But this is the next best thing."

Tom, who was married just a few months before he deployed in April, is grateful to have his mom relatively close by.

"I miss being home with my wife, Molly, and the rest of our family, but having my mom here is awesome."

The Hess family is close-knit. Cheryle's husband is an engineer who developed the computer hardware Tom uses in his job here. Her son-in-law developed the software for the system. "When I have computer issues at work, I can call my dad or my brother-in-law to troubleshoot," said Tom. "I'm lucky to have them both a short phone call away."

Cheryle agreed. "Our family really works together in so many ways. My daughter is keeping everything running smoothly at our home in Northern Virginia, which made it possible for me to deploy."

Tom returned to FOB Masum Gahr on Tuesday, Cheryle joined him there on Wednesday. She served a Thanksgiving meal to the troops and got to meet more of Tom's co-workers and friends. "Everyone in the 1-25th SBCT was exceptionally supportive of my visit with them, which made this time together really special."

"I am really grateful for this opportunity to spend time with my son and to have this memory," said Cheryle. "Not many people get to spend a holiday with loved ones while they're deployed."

Fire safety for the holidays

Sarah Chapman, Fort Wainwright Fire Inspector

Each year fires occurring during the holiday season claim the lives of over 400 Americans, injure 1,650 more and cause over 990 million dollars in damage.

According to the U. S. Fire Administration (USFA), there are simple life-saving steps you can take to ensure a safe and happy holiday. By following some of the outlined precautionary tips, individuals can greatly reduce their chances of becoming a holiday fire casualty.

Special fire-safety precautions need to be taken when keeping a live tree in the house. A burning tree can rapidly fill a room with fire and deadly gases. When selecting a tree for the holidays choose a fresh tree with green needles that are hard to pull back from the branches; the needles should not break if the tree has been freshly cut. The trunk should be sticky to the touch. Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree trunk on the ground. If many needles fall off, the tree has been cut too long, has probably dried out and is a fire hazard.

Do not place your tree close to a heat source,

including a fireplace or heat vent. The heat will dry out the tree, causing it to be more easily ignited by heat, flame or sparks. Be careful not to drop or flick cigarette ashes near a tree. Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.

Never put tree branches or needles in a fireplace or wood burning stove. When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly. The best way to dispose of your tree is by taking it to a recycling center or having it hauled away by a community pick-up service.

Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up. Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory. Do not link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet. Make sure to periodically check the wires – they should not be warm to the touch.



2010 Fort Wainwright Holiday Tree lighting at the Physical Fitness Center. (File photo)

Do not leave holiday lights on unattended. All decorations should be nonflammable or flame-retardant and placed away from heat vents.

Never put wrapping paper in a fireplace, it can result in a very large fire, throwing off dangerous sparks and embers that may result in a chimney fire.

If you are using a metallic or artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant.

Avoid using lit candles. If you do use them, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked down. Never leave the house with candles burning. Never put lit candles on a tree. Do not go near a Christmas tree with an open flame - candles, lighters or matches.

Finally, as in every season, have working smoke alarms installed on every level of your home, test them monthly and keep them clean and equipped with fresh batteries at all times. Know when and how to call for help. And remember to practice your home escape plan.

12390237
TANANA VALLEY FARMER'S
AK POST/BAZAAR
2 x 4.0
GREE

12390272
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AK POST/TREES/SANTA
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