

THUNDERBOLT

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Ex-Green Berets gather at MacDill - page 10



Photo by Senior Airman Melissa V. Brownstein

Attendees of the 1st Special Forces Group reunion watch as retired U.S. Army Sergeant Major Russ McDonald, U.S. Southern Command Parachute team member, carries down the POW/MIA flag that will be presented to Isaac "Ike" Camacho, former Vietnam POW, at MacDill Air Force Base, June 20. The memorial service was part of a five-day reunion of former members of the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) which was celebrating a tradition that dates back 54 years.

COMMANDER'S CORNER



Ready to serve, ready to help; some shout outs to our standouts

by Col. Lenny Richoux
6th Air Mobility Wing commander

Last Friday, Michele (my wife) and I sat down with a reporter for an article in one of their upcoming issues, and they had all the usual questions. You know: Where did you grow up? Where did you go to school? What's it like to fly a military aircraft? What keeps you up late at night?

What keeps me up at night? I'll tell you what doesn't keep me up late at night: worrying about mission effectiveness. We are ready to conduct our nation's wars! We're ready because we work hard to hone the skills that make us ready just like we did last Wednesday during our latest generation exercise. Many of you spent a long 16-hour day running through numerous scenarios, and for that I thank you. In particular, **Staff Sgt. Chad Raaymaker** and **1st Lt. Andrew Lee** from our intelligence shop were especially on top of their game as they set the world stage and prompted us into action. Also, the 6th LRS **vehicle maintenance shop** was Johnny on the spot on numerous occasions,

like when one of the aircrew vans experienced a flat while scrambling to the flight line. Finally, hat's off to **Mr. Dave Cresswell** and his entire Exercise Evaluation Team for planning the exercise and squeezing it into a single day. Safe mission accomplishment is our number one priority, and I see you working hard every day to get us there.

So what keeps me up late at night? Thinking about that 19-year-old newlywed with a child, living off base while her husband is deployed for the first time. It's not the programs and services we offer to meet her needs here at MacDill that concern me; they're outstanding. It's whether we've done all we can to reach that spouse on a level that makes her feel comfortable coming to us for help no matter the problem. I encourage every commander, first sergeant, supervisor, colleague and neighbor to personally stay in touch with spouses of our deployed Airmen. I want you to look them in the eye, connect with them and show them just how much you care about them. I truly believe it takes a community to care for our Airmen and their families, and we live in one of the



Col. Lenny Richoux (far right of front row) was one of 15 people who participated in the recent Tampa General Hospital Foundation's White Coat Internship.

greatest Air Force communities on the planet.

Speaking of our great community, have you heard of Operation Helping Hand? This is an incredible organization that supports our wounded warriors and their families. James Haley VA hospital hosts numerous wounded warriors and their average stay is about 45 days, and of course their families want to be with them. Operation Helping Hand provides for the families so they can stay with the wounded warriors. Last week I had the honor of giving that great organization a check for \$4,200. We had many fine organizations that made

that check possible such as the Chief's Group, the med group staff, and LRS. However, there were two Airmen who went above and beyond. **Senior Airman Paola Bustamante** and **Staff Sgt. Christina Smith** single-handedly raised nearly three quarters of the entire check. They sold T-shirts, facilitated a softball tournament, held a pie-in-the-face raffle, and numerous bake sales. Paola and Christina, you are fine Americans and I'm proud to serve with you.

We have some truly amazing Airmen on this base, like **Senior Airman Joseph Fears**. Airman

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COMMANDER'S ACTION LINE

The Action Line provides a two-way communication between the 6th Air Mobility Wing commander and the MacDill community. A 24-hour recording service is provided so personnel may submit questions, concerns or comments. Call the Action Line at 828-INFO (4636) or e-mail macdillwingcommander@macdill.af.mil



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MacDill Thunderbolt

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Editor: Nick Stubbs

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Events, movies, more...

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Critical Days of Summer

Boating safety

- ◆ Every boat outing should start with a basic assessment of the boat's condition, especially checking for loose objects or exposed sharp edges.
- ◆ Swim in Safe Areas. A lifeguard can be the difference between life and death.
- ◆ Make sure the boat is not overloaded.
- ◆ Make sure there is a life jacket for every passenger and extras for emergencies. Keep them visible and don't make anyone uncomfortable for wearing one.
- ◆ Check weather reports before going out.
- ◆ Be sure to have a fuel reserve.
- ◆ Always tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return.
- ◆ Be familiar with anchoring procedures.
- ◆ Take a boating course.
- ◆ Always carry the necessary safety gear and know how to use it.
- ◆ Remember, alcohol slows your reaction time, reduce your coordination and increase your susceptibility to hypothermia.
- ◆ If diving, know how deep the water is.

Commentary

Celebrate our freedom and be safe this Independence Day

by Gen. Raymond E. Johns Jr.
Commander, Air Mobility Command

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, Ill. - The 4th of July is a day for all of us to celebrate what we cherish and hold so dear as Americans... it's been this way for 235 years. What our forefathers fought and worked so hard for you carry on today, magnificently. We are as busy as ever and no matter what's asked, you rise to the challenge...to answer the call of others so they can prevail.

Our Airmen have a rich history supporting those in need, making a difference around the globe, and protecting the freedom we enjoy. In March, when our nation called on us to support operations in Libya, many of you, active, guard, reserve, answered that call in a matter of hours saying good bye to your families instead of good night, without any hesitation. It truly makes us all proud to know we have such dedicated Airmen.

We know and recognize this does not come

without personal and family sacrifice. We owe you and your loved ones a debt of gratitude for all that you do.

As you enjoy this Independence Day weekend, I urge each of you to make safety a priority. Be especially careful when traveling, as the roadways remain our most dangerous environment. While we may be good wingmen for one another - others are not so responsible; watch out for drunk drivers and certainly don't drive if you've been drinking...it's just not worth it.

The Critical Days of Summer campaign has been the AF's ongoing campaign for decades for one simple reason: we save lives through persistent safety efforts. You, and your family's safety, begins with you.

One fatality is too many; together, we can attain our continued goal of zero preventable mishaps and fatalities.

We wish all of you a very happy Independence Day and thank you for your selfless commitment to our nation and those you help around the world.

Evolve or risk extinction

by Lt. Col. Joe Heilhecker
6th Maintenance Squadron commander

A basic law of nature asserts species adapting to changes in their environment will evolve and survive. The ones lacking the capability to adapt will merely become nonexistent. In a similar fashion, free-market businesses will either adapt to changes in customers' expectations, supply chain situations and work force issues, or go out of business. As with college and professional sports, the teams aggressively adapting to injuries, new plays, and better skill development become successful. Others will fall short and eventually get new coaching staffs and players.

So what is changing for

members of the 6th Air Mobility Wing? With the fiscal issues facing our government, budgets will definitely be cut. The Air Force is still over the authorized manning levels for active duty. Along with new civil service hiring rules of engagement, overall end strength will be lower. And, watching the world news there is no indication of stability in some regions and Mother Nature will still cause havoc around the globe requiring our support. Essentially, there is no sign of our current operations slowing and our deployment rates will remain high. Basically, we are facing reduced resources and manpower with the same operational tempo.

I know I'm not the brightest kid on the block, but it



Lt. Col. Joe Heilhecker

appears to me, status quo will not work. How should we address present and future problems? Well, problems aren't truly understood and solutions aren't found in a

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Comprehensive Airman Fitness: spiritual health

Part IV of IV

by **Jessica Banks**

6th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs

Spiritual fitness can easily be a touchy subject, after all religion is a very personal matter, one in which many people are easily offended. CAF, is not here to tell you that one religion is better than another, or to even say you need to be religious. Spirituality has become a term synonymous with religion, but in all actuality, it's very much its own concept.

Spirituality can mean a number of different things. To one person it may mean going to church or the synagogue every week, praying, and confessing, to another it may be through meditation and breathing exercises, or perhaps it's simply a matter of self-reflection. Whatever your beliefs are, there is always a way in which you can still grow spiritually.

Without leaving any one person or group of people out, how can spirituality be discussed? As long as you acknowledge there is a difference between spirituality and religion, it's actually done quite easily.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines religion as "the service and worship of God or the supernatural." So, when speaking of religion we are referring to a set of beliefs, whether these are set personally or by an institution.

Spirituality, however, is a bit more ambiguous. Traditionally, spirituality was defined as an aspect of religion, today though; people have begun to interpret spirituality in a different manner. While, both religion and spirituality are essentially about the search for an absolute or a God, spirituality isn't

necessarily tied to any religious practice. For instance, Christians can make the assertion that they are spiritual just as someone with secular beliefs can.

If you look at spirituality as a path that leads someone to either a higher state of awareness, perfection of one's being, wisdom, or a deeper communion with God or a creator it's easier to understand the concept of spirituality. Someone who simply believes in kindness, compassion, patience, tolerance, responsibility, forgiveness, etc., but doesn't necessarily believe in "a higher being," can still be spiritual.

As Maryl Celiz, a holistic lifestyle consultant, puts it, spirituality "is not religion or denomination, it is a way of living your life with awareness of who you are and where you're going, and a commitment to growth."

Some people may disagree, and that's alright, but to put it simply, CAF is dedicated to helping everyone on Macdill finding a set of beliefs that are important to each individual – beliefs that help each person to become the best possible version of themselves. Spirituality can help people to make it through a difficult time such as a death in the family, a divorce, a fight, a heavy work load, or even just a bad day. Becoming a more spiritual person can not only help you to find yourself, but become yourself.

The next question this begs is how can you become more spiritual? This is an issue people have always dealt with differently. Some people might like the option of talking to a chaplain who could offer advice, listen to your problems or help you through a difficult time. Perhaps this isn't for you, in which



Photo by Senior Airman Melissa V. Brownstein

Spirituality means different things to different people, including something as simple as a moment of solitude and reflection.

case you could try something such as prayer, self-contemplation or meditation.

The Meditation Society of American describes that, "The difference between prayer and meditation can be understood by saying that during prayer, we ask God for something, and during meditation, God speaks to us."

The benefits of meditation/prayer are vast. Spiritually, meditation can provide you piece of mind, increased compassion, increased self-actualization, increased concentration, deeper understanding of yourself and others, and can help you learn forgiveness.

Prayer and meditation can also help on a mental and physical level though. It can reduced anxiety, increase blood flow, lower blood pressure, enhance the immune system and increase feelings of vitality. There are at least a hundred more benefits of prayer and medi-

tation, and nearly every religion in the world uses some form of prayer or meditation. So whether you use one of these methods to get closer to God, or some sort of creator, or you are even just working to become the better you – there are many reasons to take time out of your day to focus on prayer or meditation.

Meditation doesn't even have to be intensive to show benefits, for example a study was conducted by scientists at the University of North Carolina where students were able to improve their cognitive skills after simply four days of meditation for only 20 minutes each day. After a challenging computer test that required sustained attention, it showed that the group who meditated for the past four days did 10 times better than the control group which did not. Medi-

COMMANDER'S

From Page 2

Fears was selected as a transfer student to Harvard University for the academic year 2011-2012. Nearly 1,500 candidates applied to this prestigious university for only 12 places in the sophomore and junior classes. The Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid agreed that Airman Fears stood out among them, and he will be studying at Harvard beginning this fall.

Senior Airman Seth Taylor reached a similar major milestone in his Air Force career. He was ac-

cepted into the Air Force Academy Prep School. He enlisted as Cyber Transport Technician in December 2009 with his first duty station at Osan Air Base, Korea. After arriving to MacDill AFB, he continued to work toward his long-term goal of an Air Force commission. Mark my words, you'll see Air Force 2nd Lt. Seth Taylor in about five years. His drive and impressive work ethic guarantee it. Airmen Taylor and Fears, I salute you for your dedication and hard work. Well done!

I am proud to serve with you in the finest Air Mobility Wing on the face of the planet!



Ex-Special Forces members drop into Tampa, MacDill

by Nick Stubbs

Thunderbolt editor

In the steamy jungles of Vietnam in 1957, nearly eight years before America began major combat operations there, members of the U.S. Army's 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) were in country, advising and training indigenous warriors.

It was all on the down-low, as were all missions until the end of the war. Secrecy is the stock and trade of Green Berets, after all.

But it was no secret in Tampa this week when some 200 veterans of the famous unit gathered for a ceremony at U.S. Special Operations Command at MacDill Air Force Base Monday. Arriving in town over the weekend, the group of old soldiers staged at the DoubleTree Hotel at Rocky Point. It was a time to remember, laugh and shed a tear or more for those who were lost.

Formed at Camp Drake, Japan, June 24, 1957, 1st SFG served in the Pacific region and provided some of the first American military members to serve in Vietnam. It wouldn't be until 1965 when major combat operations would begin, sending many members of the 1st on very dangerous missions well behind enemy lines.

How far behind lines?

"We were the front line – sometimes 70 miles behind what they called the front line," said retired Master Sgt. David Kauhaahna, who joked that his special forces code name is "Brother K."

He arrived in country November of 1965, and served in Laos among other places. Like most others of the 1st, he operated in small units, usually just six men. Three of them might be indigenous Montagnards, or mountain people who earned a reputation as some of the toughest warriors and expert jungle guides in the country.

Being so far behind lines, and with support far away, there was always the risk of not making it through any mission.

"Lots," said Sergeant Kauhaahna of close brushes he had with death. "Lots of times."

One sticks out in his memory.

"We were surrounded by enemy, and they had set the elephant grass on fire and it was closing in on us," he recalled. "We thought that was it for us, but helicopters got there just in time to pull us out; we would have been slaughtered."

Close calls were part of the job, said retired Sgt. Major Billy Waugh, who served just shy of eight years in Vietnam, and has a Purple Heart for all eight (along with a Legion of Merit, a Silver Star and four Bronze Stars).

"A lot of what we were doing was directing air strikes (targeting and surveillance as members of the Studies and Observation Group)," said Sergeant Waugh, who recalled that the U.S. Air Force fighters and bombers evolved into being "very effective" at tactical air strikes during his years of service. "They took a little while to get the hang of it, but once they did, they did a heck of job."

When not performing SOG duties, "Our job was to kill and destroy," said Ser-



Photo by Nick Stubbs

Sergeants Waugh, left, and David Kauhaahna lock hands at the Special Forces reunion headquarters at the DoubleTree Hotel at Rocky Point Saturday. The pair served together in Vietnam.



Photo by Airman 1st Class Melanie Bulow-Gonterman

(Above) Karen Newman and retired Sgt. 1st Class Cliff Newman gaze at the sky as retired Lt. Col. Keith Walter (Top), former member of 10th Special Forces Group and Team Leader of the Para-Commandos, brings down the American flag during the 54th Annual Special Forces Group reunion memorial service at MacDill Air Force Base, June 20. The memorial service included a moment of silence and a tribute to fallen members of 1st Special Forces Group from Vietnam through Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.



Flags wave over the United States Special Operations Command Memorial Plaza during the memorial service.

Photo by Airman 1st Class Melanie Bulow-Gonterman

Military Connects gets breakfasts for the long trip to MacDill

by Paul Catala

Courtesy The FishHawker

Once a month for more than a year, they've been up before sunrise, out on pleasant days as well as days of wind, rain, heat and cold, doing what they can to make a long trip and workday for military and military support personnel a bit easier.

Since May 2010, over six families and about 15 volunteers have been up with the roosters to serve a free bag breakfast and coffee to men and women serving in the military who work at MacDill Air Force Base in South Tampa, nearly 30 miles away.

From about 5 to 6 a.m. on the third Thursday each month, the volunteers have toted tables, coffee dispensers, tables, bagged breakfasts and condiments out to the FishHawk Sports Complex Park-n-Ride, 16120 FishHawk Blvd. There, they've welcomed an average of 35 officers, enlisted and civilian personnel to a new day with "coffee express" – coffee and muffins made fresh in their home ovens.

The breakfast effort is led by the FishHawk Fellowship Church's Military Connects, a ministry formed in March 2010 for the military families in the church and community.

During a June 16 breakfast, about 25 MacDill workers and staff stopped by the table for coffee, muffins and a few minutes of chit chat.

As he stirred his coffee, Wayne Lohf of Lithia said the breakfasts were appreciated and helped him get going. A 14-year Air Force veteran who works at MacDill, he said it saved him time having to fix something for himself at home and he could get on his way earlier.

"It's wonderful, all they're doing for us. I get coffee and a muffin and they make the ride more enjoyable," he said. "I hope it helps contribute to their ministry."

Under the dark hue of an early morning sky, Military Connects member Duane Rackley, U.S. Army retired and a MacDill contractor, and Holly Rowlette organized breakfast bags. Rowlette and Duane's wife Trisha began Military Connects after meeting the many FishHawk Ranch residents who worked at MacDill.

Rowlette, who also volunteers for FishHawk's Mothers of Preschoolers group, said the effort has been rewarding and everyone benefits.

"We decided to intentionally reach out to the military families," she said. "This seemed like an easy way to do that. Since we're so far away from the base, this makes the trips not seem so lonely. A cup of coffee and a muffin is an easy way to connect."

The Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Route 24 Express and 27L Express buses pick up riders in FishHawk and Riverview, serving members of the military who live in the greater Brandon area, on their ways shuttling them to MacDill.

Marcia Mejia, HART public information officer, said in May 2011, 5,578 people rode the 24x; a 37 percent increase from 4,078 a year earlier and 2,651 rode the 27Lx in May 2011, a 24 percent increase from the 2,146 in May 2010. In May, 24x was the busiest express route in Hillsborough County. The 27Lx was the third busiest.

Donna Chen, HART Community Relations Manager, said the FishHawk effort is unique in the county and showed commitment.

"From what I am aware of, this is the first time HART has seen this type of kind gesture at one of our facilities," she said.

Briefs

Free Movie

The MacDill AFB Theater is hosting a free screening of CARS 2 June 25 at 2 p.m. Ticket holders will be seated first followed by those without tickets. A special Disney guest is scheduled to appear at the screening before the movie. A free small popcorn and small drink is available to each ticket holder.

Hole-in-one

Congratulations to Kirby Wilson, member of the MacDill Air Force Base Golf Complex, who scored a hole-in-one on the 2nd hole of the North Course June 4.

Settlement of Estate

Col. Lenny Richoux, 6th Air Mobility Wing commander, regrets to announce the death of Maj. Charles Creech, formerly assigned to the 6th Operations Group, MacDill AFB, Fla. Lt. Col. Lance Hill is appointed as the Summary Courts Officer to handle the disposition of personal property of Major Creech. Anyone indebted to or having a claim against the estate of Major Creech should contact Lt. Col. Hill at (856) 366-5659.

COMMENTARY

From Page 3

conference room. Lending to the idea of Go and See, leaders and team members should be at the point of truth ... where the problem is occurring. This will help elevate the problem to an opportunity for a cross-functional team to solve. If the "they" becomes "we," then problem solving gets much easier for a team with a common goal. Also while inquiring about the situation, the questions should address what, how and why leaving the "who" to the owls.

Accepting the problem as a process failure, not a personnel failure, will accelerate finding the root cause of the waste. If we take a moment to look at our processes from our customers' point of view, be your own customer, the waste becomes obvious. All of our processes have at least 80 percent waste and most have more than 90 percent. Then, with a little reflection, we'll realize we don't have money or manning problems. We are drowning in waste.

How often do we wait during our duty day? Travel back and forth for information, equipment, and supplies? Rework a form, slide, or package? Deal with a defect or mistake? Firefight to reach a goal? We are constantly dealing with waste with blind acceptance.

This condition highlights the tenet "Chaos is simple and simplicity is hard." Accepting the current wasteful process is far simpler than seeing and eliminating waste thereby changing people's behavior to a higher level of performance. Especially since many are passionately allergic to Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century, the resistance to change is great. The elimination of waste in a methodical way is in all practical purposes stagnant. However, the results of true process improvement have teams doing less work while being more effective. AFSO21 takes common sense and makes it common practice by empowering Airmen to improve their daily operations. Ironically, this is exactly what our changing environment is demanding us to do.

So, will you change?

SPECIAL

From Page 10

geant Waugh.

Members of the 1st were invaluable to downed pilots in need of rescue behind enemy lines.

“We were the only guys there, so we did the job,” said Sergeant Waugh.

The memories fill volumes, and are only outnumbered by the close kinships members of the historical group share, said Sergeant Waugh, which is why the reunions are regularly held. This year’s event marks the first in Tampa, and a special one in that it was in the same town as MacDill Air Force Base and SOCOM.

“We are glad we could gather here this time,” Sergeant Waugh said. “It’s a sort of coming together.”

Shoplifting down at MacDill Exchange, but cost rises

by Marianne Blair

AAFES Public Affairs

Shoplifting at the MacDill Exchange was a good news, bad news story in 2010 as the number of incidents decreased from the year before but the cost of products involved in detected cases went up.

Thanks to an abundance of shoplifting prevention measures such as eagle-eyed Closed Circuit Televisions with DVR technology, expanded use of high-tech Electronic Article Surveillance and an aggressive youth awareness campaign, theft at the MacDill Exchange decreased 11 percent last year, from 35 incidents in 2009 to 31. Thieves were more brazen, however, as the cost of mer-

chandise involved in shoplifting at MacDill increased from \$1,580.67 to \$3,347.70 in 2010.

The Army & Air Force Exchange Service, which has contributed more than \$2.4 billion to Air Force Services and Army Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command programs in the past 10 years, continues to focus on reducing theft.

If shoplifting is suspected, the MacDill Exchange's Loss Prevention office turns the issue over to local law enforcement. In addition to possible disciplinary action and/or criminal prosecution, the Federal Claims Collection Act allows the Exchange to enact a flat, administrative cost (Civil Recovery) of \$200. There may be further fees, in addition to the Civil Recovery Program, depending on the condition of the stolen merchandise.

MACDILL COMMUNITY



EVENTS

Friday

Basewide Picnic

SeaScapes/Beach Area. Everyone Welcome! Free food, music and door prizes.

Bayshore Club

"A Taste of the Southwest"

Membership Dinner from 5:30-9 p.m. Club Members: FREE Non-members: \$14.95. Reservations required call 840-2120.

Saturday-Sunday

Base Pool

Open from 11 a.m.-6 p.m.

Saturday

Arts & Crafts Center

Scrap Party! 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Cost \$5. Please register in advance; call 828-4413.

Sunday

MacDill Bowling Lanes

Scratch Tournament at noon. Entry fee is \$40. 5 games across 5 pairs of lanes.

Monday-Friday

Base Pool

Open for Free Recreational Swimming from 2-6 p.m.

Thursday

Outdoor Recreation

Kids Shoreline Fishing 9a.m.-12p.m. Meet at the Marina. Cost \$5pp. Kayak & Canoe Instruction - base beach from 2-4 p.m. Cost 5pp. (11-17yrs) Sign up required call 840-6919

Airman & Family Readiness Center

American Red Cross Babysitting Certification Course from 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

For more information please



Photo by Senior Airman Linzi Joseph

Scholarships

(Left to right) Kalyn Hoppe, Ameer Jalal, Shannon Free, Tyler Cooney, Micaela Jones, and Mathew Pesek, recipients of the 2011 Scholarships for Military Children Program, behind the visitor table at the MacDill Air Force Base Commissary, June 20. The Scholarships for Military Children Program was created to recognize the contributions by military families to the readiness of the fighting force and celebrate the role of the commissary in the military community.



Protestant services

Sunday - 9 a.m. - Praise Worship Service
Noon - Gospel Service

Islamic services

Friday - 1:30 p.m. - Prayer Service

For all other faith inquiries or to view upcoming event information, call the Chapel at 828-3621 or visit the Web site at www.macdill.af.mil/macdillchapel

Catholic services

Saturday - 4:30 p.m. - Confession
5:30 p.m. - Mass

Sunday - 10:30 a.m. - Mass

Monday to Thursday: 12:10 p.m. - Mass



AT THE MOVIES

\$4 for adults / \$2 for children 828-2780

Friday - 7 p.m.

Saturday - 3 p.m.

Saturday - 7 p.m.

Jumping the Broom (PG-13)

FREE screening of Cars 2 (PG)

Priest (PG-13)

CAF

From Page 4

tation is to spirituality and brain activity, what training is to an athlete. Essentially, you can do a spiritual workout by taking time to sit in a quiet place, focus on your breathing, and patiently learn to clear and “settle” your mind.

There are far too many aspects of spirituality to cover in one small article, meditation and prayer, as well as seeking counsel are only a few of the options available. CAF encourages you to do your own research to find what works for you, while reminding you there are people all over the base who are willing to help you find what spirituality means to you.

If you take anything away from this though, realize your beliefs are important, they shape the person you are. Whether you are religious or just want to embark on a spiritual path to find a way to be your best, take the appropriate time and means to do so – you will be a much happier, healthier, more rounded person for doing so.

As the American writer and spiritual teacher Ernest Holmes puts it, “We can no more do without spirituality than we can do without food, shelter, or clothing.”

As human beings, we have to believe in something, it’s just a matter of finding what we believe in, learning to live it, and training ourselves everyday to be better than the day before. This requires commitment, but there is a payoff.

“Individuals can find keen insights within scriptures or other religious or holy literature on how tough it is to live by core values, but also how rewarding it can be to live without compromising those firmly held values,” said Chaplain (Maj.) David Buttrick, 6th Air Mobility Wing chaplain. “If we take time daily to delve into uplifting, spiritual readings it will have a direct impact on our desire to live according to our value systems that we espouse in the Air Force and for ourselves - those of integrity, service and excellence.”