

THUNDERBOLT

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Remembering 9/11 - page 12

Photo by Senior Airman Melissa Paradise

Carol Radlein, Bayshore Patriots member, smiles and waves to passing vehicles on Bayshore Boulevard in Tampa, Sept. 11, in honor of the 12th anniversary of 9/11. The Bayshore Patriots are a group of former military members, parents of military members, and those simply wishing to show their patriotism.

COMMANDER'S CORNER



Take advantage of opportunities

by Col. Pete Santa Ana

6th Mission Support Group commander

Life presents many challenges and places seemingly daunting obstacles in our paths.

As I experienced each of these gifts in the crucible of my life, reflection has helped me realize the many opportunities that lay waiting in the numerous, but brief, gloomy events.

I have found it takes patience, understanding, knowledge and a lot of humility to weed through the tough times and find the waiting opportunities. We can perceive tough times as devastating events, such as strategic issues like sequestration impacts, civilian furloughs and airman on airman sexual assaults, to the tactical day-to-day challenges of completing quick suspense tasks and balancing family and work life. My wife describes me as an “insufferable optimist,” but I truly believe opportunities exist everywhere, especially in the complex challenges life brings.

I'm blessed to take command of the 6th Mission Support Group with my wife Monica and seven children (yes, seven): Jacqueline, 15, Peter, 14, Nicholas, 13, Michael, 10, Meredith, 8, Jessica, 7, and Sophia, 16 months. It may seem like command at beautiful MacDill Air Force Base brings nothing but opportunity, but asking our three teenagers to move for the third consecutive summer presents crazy chal-

lenges. Fortunately, the beaches, Sea World, Disney World, Busch Gardens, magnet school choices, professional sports, the incredible MacDill/Tampa community and other endless opportunities made this transition easier. We very much look forward to integrating with the community and working to make MacDill AFB an even better assignment for our Airmen—talk about a daunting challenge.

Strategically the Air Force faces historic challenges placed upon us by sequestration, civilian furloughs and eliminating sexual assaults. Finding opportunity in the midst of this chaos seemed impossible, but our Airmen met each of these challenges and made the most of them. Sequestration has forced all Airmen to focus on economic stewardship, efficiency and continuous process improvement in order to execute the drastic budget cuts. In order to spend less, our Airmen found smarter ways to do business. Led by the vice chief of staff of the Air Force's “Make Every Dollar Count” initiative, the Air Force collected more than 1,500 ideas and implemented hundreds...that's taking advantage of opportunity. Initially all of the Department of Defense planned to implement 22 days of furlough to all our civilian teammates in order to absorb the sequestration cuts. The opportunity I realized, I believe I can speak for most Airmen, was the utmost appreciation we have for all our civilian col-



Col. Pete Santa Ana

leagues and the jobs they perform daily. The Air Force stopped flying operations, practically eliminated temporary duties, used more online technologies to communicate worldwide, and numerous other strategies to buy back the furlough days and slashed the days without pay from 22 to six. What a tremendous effort to band together as a service and directly impact an almost impossible task.

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COMMANDER'S ACTION LINE

The Action Line provides 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 email macdillwing-commander@us.af.mil.

MacDill on the web



Website: www.macdill.af.mil



Facebook: www.facebook.com/MacDillAirForceBase

MacDill Thunderbolt

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Every article and photograph is edited for accuracy, clarity, brevity, conformance with the “Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual” and Air Force Instruction 35-101.



'There I was...'



by Senior Airman Joville Adams
6th Security Forces Squadron

When the alert phone rang for the mission, it was time to grab my bags and head outside to the van waiting to take us to C-17 Globemaster operations.

Upon our arrival, we received a short briefing about the upcoming mission and retrieved our gear, bags and weapons from the van. Next, we drove out to the Cold Grab and Go to pick up some food for the long flight awaiting us. When we arrived to the airplane, we loaded all of our bags and weapons, and strapped them down. Then we waited for the aircrew to complete their pre-flight checks and prepare the aircraft for the anticipated passengers at the next destination.

Prior to landing, the loadmasters gave us the signal that we were 30 minutes out. We then began to prepare our gear and weapons for the stop. When the plane landed, we exited and secured the area. The Jordanians looked rather excited to see the C-17 on the runway, because to them it was one step closer to returning home. As the cargo was being loaded, we awaited the loadmaster's signal to re-enter the plane so that we could return to Kuwait to switch crews for the next leg of the flight to Jordan.

See **'THERE I WAS'**, Page 18

A long time coming; medals well deserved

by Senior Airman Shandresha Mitchell
6th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs photojournalist

Sixty-seven years after his honorable discharge from the U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class McPherson Plecker finally received the nine military decorations he earned for his service during World War II, defending Wake Island and enduring four years as a prisoner-of-war in Japanese war camps.

Plecker was born in Dayton, Ohio on Nov. 2, 1921, and entered the Navy on April 16, 1940. He completed boot camp at Great Lakes, Ill., and was assigned to the Pacific Fleet aboard the destroyer, USS Schley DD103.

In mid-1940, Plecker was stationed at Pearl Harbor until being reassigned to Wake Island. He arrived at Wake Island in late November, 1941, aboard the USS Wright CVL-49.

During an attack on Wake Island on Dec. 8, 1941, Plecker was wounded when a Japanese bomb blew him off the back of a truck; he still retains the shrapnel scars on his chest and left arm.

While defending Wake Island on Dec. 23, 1941, Plecker was captured by the Japanese and endured four years of numerous beatings and bodily injuries in Japanese and Chinese war camps (Fukuoka POW Camp #1 and Kashii Pine Tree Camp, respectively) until he was repatriated in September 1945.

Plecker's honorable discharge, dated April 19, 1946, failed to mention portions of his service, wounds received during combat, his ex-POW status, and the nine medals to which he is entitled.

When asked why he never spoke up about his missing medals Plecker responded, "I'm quiet."

Since last year, Plecker, close friend Carlton L. Weidemeyer, Congressman Gus M. Bilirakis' office and Lisa Jones, a licensed mental health counselor with Suncoast Hospice in Pinellas County, have worked diligently to obtain and submit all the required documentation to request his naval records reflect his ex-POW status and medals earned.

"He is a simple man who successfully forged ahead after being liberated and honorably discharged," said Jones. "Mr. Plecker is also a self-made man that has always provided for his family, financially and emotionally."

During the past week, the inaccuracies in



Photo by Senior Airman Shandresha Mitchell

Retired Senior Chief Petty Officer Paul J. Rizzo pins on Petty Officer 2nd Class McPherson Plecker, a World War II veteran and prisoner of war, nine military decorations during a tribute honoring Plecker at The Palms of Largo, Sept. 14. During WWII, Plecker defended Wake Island and endured four years as a POW in Japanese and Chinese war camps.

Plecker's naval records has finally been rectified and he has received confirmation of his eligibility to receive the medals.

Plecker stated, "I'm surprised at what's going on, and I think it's wonderful they put up their time for it."

Plecker's records will now reflect the nine medals he has earned:

- American Defense Service Medal (for service between 1939 and 1941 aboard USS Schley in Hawaii & Wake Island)
- American Campaign Medal WWII (for service between 1941 and 1946)
- Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal WWII (with one battle star for the defense of Wake Island, Dec. 8-23, 1941)
- Purple Heart (for two wounds received during invasion on Wake Island)
- Prisoner of War Medal (for imprisonment 1941-1945 in China and Japan)
- Navy Good Conduct Medal for WWII (for service between 1941 and 1946)
- WWII Victory Medal
- Combat Service Action Ribbon
- Presidential Unit Citation (for the Defend-

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Photo by Senior Airman Shandresha Mitchell

(Above) Chief Master Sgt. Timothy Blake, 6th Security Forces Squadron manager, shakes hands with Petty Officer 2nd Class McPherson Plecker, a World War II veteran and prisoner of war, during a tribute honoring Plecker at The Palms of Largo, Sept. 14. Several of MacDill's senior leaders attended the ceremony honoring Plecker, who was awarded nine medals for his service during WWII.



Photo by Senior Airman Shandresha Mitchell

Capt. Christina Ortiz, 6th Medical Operations Squadron family health element chief, administers a flu shot to Lt. Sean Cantwell, United States Central Command, at the Short Fitness Center at MacDill Air Force Base, Sept. 12.



Photo by Senior Airman Melanie Bulow-Kelly

Members from the 6th Air Mobility Wing and the Joint Communications Support Element run along Bayshore Boulevard during the 4th annual Lieutenant Helton Haul Memorial Run at MacDill Air Force Base, Sept. 13. Helton was a 6th Security Forces Squadron Airman who was killed in action Sept. 8, 2009.

Military spouse 'pays it forward'

by Staff Sgt. Brandon Shapiro

6th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs

Working embassy duty in some of the most remote areas of the world, with top brass relying on your assertiveness, may be thrilling and career broadening, but with the increased responsibility comes increased stress.

For Jane Kordish, former U.S. Army interpreter and translator, this fact was oh-so prominent. That's when, after seeing her coworkers day-after-day resort to unhealthy behaviors as stressor fix-all, she decided to figure out a way to help others positively combat their tensions.

"A lot of us were using unhealthy coping mechanisms such as smoking,

overeating or eating a poor diet, and consuming more than a moderate amount of alcohol," said Kordish. "This made me think that a focus on exercise and healthier behaviors could make our community stronger and happier."

Upon returning to the U.S., and with the ever-pressing thought of helping her former comrades weighing heavily on her mind, she broke the seal on her Montgomery G.I. Bill and went back to school to become a clinical massage therapist and "bodyworker."

Now, with degree in hand, Kordish "pays it forward," by lending her expertise, sound advice and soothing hands to military and civilian employees on MacDill Air Force base.

MacDill welcomes new friends to the team

story and photo by Senior Airman Brittany Dowdle

6th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs

Leaders in the Tampa community congregated at the Davis Conference Center to meet with commanders from across MacDill Air Force Base, as they prepared to be inducted as honorary commanders.

“We introduced some new friends to the team,” said Col. Scott DeThomas, 6th Air Mobility Wing commander. “We look forward to the new honorary commanders participating and becoming part of the family.”

Thirty-eight community leaders were inducted on Sept. 6, as MacDill’s third class of honorary commanders for units in the 6th AMW and 927th Air Refueling Wing.

An honorary commander is selected based upon military commander recommendations, participation with and contribution to the base and their willingness to further relationships with MacDill. An honorary commander typically serves a two-year term, with some continuing their service as members of the Commanders Advisory Council.

“This institution has opened my eyes to a world that I didn’t know existed,” said Henry Gonzalez, former honorary commander. “I have a greater appreciation of what it means to serve.”

Honorary commanders are invited to quarterly immersion days, in which one group hosts them for a mission brief, tour and interaction with leadership and members of the group. Additionally, honorary commanders are invited to various functions at MacDill, to include special observances, heritage month events, orientation flights, awards programs and more.



Photo by Airman 1st Class Ned T. Johnston

Attendees of the Honorary Commander Induction Ceremony listen as the opening remarks of the ceremony are given at the Davis Conference Center, MacDill Air Force Base, Sept. 6.

“As an honorary commander, you will have the opportunity to see what the typical airman does every day,” Gonzalez said. “They are committed to their work, families and country.”

The program is a method to foster a supportive relationship between the base and the community, increase military involvement in civic endeavors and organizations and make the members of our local community part of our Team MacDill family.

“On behalf of the men and women of the 6th AMW, a hearty thank you for past and present honorary commanders,” DeThomas said. “Welcome and we look forward to the next couple years.”

NEWS/FEATURES



A 'home away from home' celebrates

by Airman 1st Class Sarah R. Hall-Kirchner

6th Air Mobility Wing public affairs photojournalist

Senior Master Sgt. (ret.) Walter Lamerton, USO Tampa Bay CEO and founder, was walking through Tampa International Airport with his wife a few years ago when he saw something which broke his heart.

On the floor, beneath a row of pay phones, a service member was asleep, with his backpack under his head.

He turned to his wife and told her that things like that could not happen anymore. He immediately started the push to open the USO Tampa Bay Welcome Center.

Approximately 300,000 military travelers and their families pass through TIA each year, according to Michael Rovinell, USO Tampa Bay executive director.

About a year ago, a USO was opened on the second floor of TIA to cater to the needs of those travelers.

The welcome center hopes to be a "home away from home" for military members and their families as they travel, "until everyone comes home."

At TIA, the USO is also a headquarters for all of the services it offers to service members and their families at MacDill Air Force Base, reservists, retirees and more.

On Sept. 6, the USO celebrated its first anniversary. Approximately 70

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Photo by Airman 1st Class Sarah Hall-Kirchner

Volunteers from the USO, MacDill teammates, and family and friends of deployed 6th Security Forces Squadron members wait to welcome them home. The USO is manned mostly by volunteers who wish to ensure that service members and their families are taken care of in many ways, such as welcome home greetings, the United Through Reading program, the Families of the Fallen program, No Dough Dinners, With You All the Way Deployment Kits and USO photo books.

PAY IT FORWARD

From Page 4



Photo by Senior Airman Melanie Bulow-Kelly

Stephanie McAllister receives a massage from Jane Kordish, licensed massage therapist, during Military Spouse Appreciation day, at MacDill. Kordish lends her services to dozens of MacDill patrons each and every Tuesday at the local Health and Wellness Center—free of charge.

“We are coming to realize that a holistic approach to caring for ourselves must include all aspects of health—that means body, mind, and spirit,” said Kordish. “There is no greater reward for me than helping others feel better, sleep better, train and work harder.”

Currently, Kordish lends her services to dozens of MacDill patrons each and every Tuesday at the local Health and Wellness Center, free of charge.

“Jane’s services are phenomenal and very convenient,” said Dean Parrott, an aircraft engineer working on MacDill. “What a great way to help out MacDill and promote stress relief, all while reducing muscle aches.”

To Kordish, the weekly showing of people for a quick relief is very warming. “It’s amazing how much of a benefit just 10 minutes on a massage chair can give,” she said.



Bayshore Patriots honor first responders

story and photos by Airman 1st Class Sarah Hall-Kirchner

6th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs

The early evening sky threatened rain, but still, approximately 11 smiling people stood by a 9/11 memorial, waving American flags as vehicles passed.

The Bayshore Patriots, which formed just one week after the infamous terrorist attacks, stand at the corner of Bay to Bay Avenue and Bayshore Boulevard in Tampa every Friday, regardless of the conditions.

“I was brought up when patriotism was taught during history in school,” said G.W. Bill Hamblin, Bayshore Patriots’ president and co-founder. “Then I joined the military during Vietnam, where patriotism seemed to vanish. I lived through being literally spit on and kicked. I was called a ‘baby killer.’”

Tears shone in Hamblin’s eyes as he remembered being beaten up in a New York airport, simply for wearing his uniform. He was treated with disrespect and he does not want this generation of first responders to be treated the same way.

“We want to show our appreciation to all first responders because they do so much for us,” said Hamblin. “It does not matter what we think of the wars and operations going on half way around the world, we want those who protect us to know that we support them.”

As commuters pass, the bay sounds and engine noise are joined by honking horns and the occasional shout of encouragement.

“God Bless the U.S.A.,” shouted one passer-by.

Sometimes they wonder if they are making a difference, said Hamblin.

“A colonel came walking up to me just last week,” Hamblin remembers. “He shook my hand and thanked me for what we do out here, and then burst out in tears. That showed me that we are still making an impact on the Tampa community.”

The Bayshore Patriots are made up of members from across the community, from military veterans and those simply wanting to show their patriotism to parents of

military members currently serving.

“The attacks affected everyone, even if you didn’t have someone,” said Patricia Chaplain, Bayshore Patriots member of about four years. “I can’t even begin to stand the sacrifice our service members make, but then my daughter was killed. Now I truly understand and realize how much we need to support our service members.”

Standing as a testament to what happened during the terrorist attacks 11 years ago, are two scaled-down towers, a sundial, and five lights.

The two towers represent the north and south towers which crashed on Sept. 11. The structure of the north tower contains a steel beam from the original tower, and the wreckage of the building.

“The huge black beam, marked with a number denoting where it was hit, is aged, but is still standing strong, just as America was after the Sept. 11 attacks,” said Hamblin.

The lawn surrounding the sundial has, what appears to be a path leading to its base. This path isn’t so random – it is the face of the sundial. The shadow from about 8:46 a.m. to around 10:03 a.m., symbolizing the time the towers were hit until the time of the crash of Flight 93.

Five lights shine upon the memorial at night, representing the five states of the Pentagon.

Gathered around the memorial again on Sept. 11, the Bayshore Patriots wave American flags from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. They stood, as they do every Friday, at the corner, waving their flags.

All day various individuals, from joggers and dog walkers to a young girl, thank the Bayshore Patriots for what they do for the community.

“What we want,” said Hamblin, “is for every citizen of Tampa Bay to know there are first responders out there, protecting us, and that we appreciate them.”



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Sue Ellen Smith and G.W. Bill Hamblin, Bayshore Patriots' members, wave at passing vehicles Sept. 11, at the 9/11 memorial on Bayshore Boulevard in Tampa. Hamblin is the president and co-founder of the group and takes great pride in showing first responders that citizens are grateful for the services they provide.



Members of the Bayshore Patriots wave American flags as vehicles drive by Sept. 11, at the 9/11 memorial on Bayshore Boulevard in Tampa.



On the morning of Sept. 11, the sun shines on the Bayshore Boulevard 9/11 memorial in Tampa. The north tower, containing a steel beam from the original tower, and south tower of the World Trade Center are represented by the memorial.

Chapel combined worship musician

The MacDill Air Force Base Chapel is taking bids for a part-time Combined Worship Musician, paid by the Chapel Tithes and Offerings Fund.

The musician must be proficient in playing piano and guitar, and must be well-versed in a variety of Christian (Protestant and Catholic) music styles. The job starts Oct. 5. A copy of the statement of work and bid schedule are available at the Base Chapel from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Resumes and sealed bids will be accepted through Sept. 27. Interviews and auditions are Sept. 30 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Chapel. Bids will be opened at noon Oct. 1, in the Chapel conference room. Anyone may attend. Applicants must be able to secure permission to enter a military installation (no felony convictions or arrests, be drug free and etc.). Contract award is contingent upon receiving favorable results from a criminal history background check for positions involving contact with children below 18 years of age as directed by DoDI 1402.5. Contact Tech. Sgt. Anthony DeVoile at 828-8658.

Seeking children's church coordinator

The MacDill AFB Chapel is accepting bids for a part-time Protestant children's church coordinator to be paid by the Chapel Tithes and Offerings Fund.

Applicants must be at least 18 years of age and should have at least two years of recent experience in children's ministry. A bachelor's degree with a concentration in youth ministry is desired. A copy of the statement of work and bid schedule are available at the Base Chapel, building 355, weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Resumes and sealed bids will be accepted through Sept. 27. Interviews will be conducted Sept. 30 from 3 to 5 p.m. Bids will be opened at 1 p.m. on Oct. 1. The Protestant children's church coordinator is expected to start work on Oct. 6. Applicants must be able to secure permission to enter a military installation (no felony convictions or arrests, be drug free, etc.).

Contract award is contingent upon receiving favorable results from a criminal history background check for positions involving contact with children below 18 years of age as directed by DoDI 1402.5. For additional information, or to place a bid, contact Tech. Sgt. Anthony DeVoile at 828-8658.

MEDALS

From Page 3

ers of Wake Island).

“I have had the honor of providing support to Mr. McPherson Plecker,” Jones said. “It was my hope that Mr. Plecker experiences the honor of having these medals presented to him instead of to his family, posthumously.”

An award presentation ceremony was held at The Plaza at The Palms of Largo on Sept. 14, to present McPherson Plecker with his medals.

CORNER

From Page 2

The Air Force again faces another challenge to eliminate sexual assaults within our service and again our Airmen find opportunity in that necessary objective. For example, the Air Force did not ignore or conceal the crimes committed by Airmen at Lackland Air Force Base or deny the arrest of the officer assigned as the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator for the Air Force. Rather, the CSAF directed efforts to establish a Sexual Assault Office chartered to eliminate the crime from our service, assigned a battle-tested major general to direct the operation, and educated all senior leaders and senior commanders about the importance of instilling the characteristics of dignity, trust and respect in all our Airmen. If every Airman lived exhibiting these character traits, I believe we would eliminate sexual assault from the Air Force overnight. I'm very optimistic we will achieve that objective.

Living these traits begins with individuals and expands to their families, so balancing family and service remains not only critical to a healthy work and home life, but also essential to overcoming family adversity. My dad passed away while I was a squadron commander at Minot Air Force Base. At the time my dad suffered most, I experienced command difficulties that brought me into conference with my wing commander. It was, to say the least, not a good time in my life and I could not see any opportunity in the situation. Only on reflection years later, did I come to appreciate the events.

My father, a strong, intelligent retired Army officer who served two tours in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War, suffered from cancer and finally succumbed to it in 2005. Stubbornly, I denied his impending death, focused on my command and worried my wife. As my father, whom I loved very much, entered the final days of his life, I struggled to cope with a difficult squadron situation. While briefing the wing commander, my group commander entered the office and whispered something to the boss. He turned to me and stated very calmly, “Your father is dying?” I finally had to admit, “Apparently, sir.” He then said something I'll never forget, “Go take care of your family, we'll take care of this.” You see Monica, who had kept in contact with my family, knew the dire situation Dad faced and called the wing exec to notify the boss I needed to go home; quite the bold move on her part! She booked my flight and I arrived at my dad's bedside in Texas the next day. He died two days later, but those two days, as difficult as they were, rank as the best time of my life. I remain forever grateful to Monica for her incredible action to get me home...and I believe my father was as well.

We must embrace the challenges we face everyday knowing we're not alone, then later reflect to find the opportunities gained, then pass it on.

THERE I WAS

From Page 3

After a long five-hour wait for the crew swap, we noticed the bus approaching the plane with the new crew. It took approximately 30 minutes to complete the pre-flight checks and before we knew it, we were up in the air enroute to Jordan. When the commander gave the troops the signal that they were 10 minutes out, there was a loud shout of joy and a look of happiness on each soldier's face. As the wheels touched the runway, they all rejoiced to finally be home again; they could not wait to exit the plane.

As the door closed and the C-17 began taxing on the runway, I couldn't help but reminisce on the past 23 hours of work. This is just one of the many missions we, as Ravens, go on while staged in austere environments. Force protection of Air Mobility Command assets, and protection of personnel and property, is what we as Phoenix Ravens do day to day.

MACDILL COMMUNITY



EVENTS

Friday

Seascapes Beach House

Friday Bash from 4-8 p.m. Free bar snacks, DJ, drink specials, and bar bingo (\$2 a card/cash). Guaranteed \$100 weekly Club card winner.

Airman & Family Readiness Center

LinkedIn 101, 9 a.m.- noon and LinkedIn102, 1-4 p.m. Build and maximize your professional profile and learn networking techniques. Don't forget your laptop. Reservations required for all classes. Call 828-0145.

Saturday

MacDill Lanes & Family Fun Center

Famarama Bowling fun starts at 5 p.m. Kids bowl for \$1.50 a game from 5-8 p.m. Call 828-4005 to reserve a lane.

Wednesday

Information, Tickets & Travel

Universal's Halloween Horror Nights prizes—visit from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Drawing every 30 minutes for Universal prizes, grand prize drawing at 2 p.m. for two Halloween Horror Nights tickets and an overnight stay at the Coco Key Resort. Call 828-2478 for more information.

Thursday

Airman & Family Readiness Center/Starship Cruise, Channelside

Relationship GPS-Singles Event. 6:30-9:30 p.m. Fun, interactive evening designed to help active duty singles learn to communicate more effectively in all relationships (dating, work, friends, etc.). Relaxed learning environment. Must RSVP. Call A&FRC at 828-0145. Space is limited,



Photo by Capt. Sara Greco

MacDill Air Force Base honor guard members, along with members of the Tampa Bay community, pay their respects to fallen heroes during an honorary "hat ceremony," Sept. 11, at the Veterans Memorial Park in Tampa. The event, the Patriots Day Remembrance, was to mourn those whose lives were lost and those whose lives were forever altered.



CHAPEL SCHEDULE

Protestant service

Sunday - 11 a.m. - Contemporary Service

Islamic service

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

Catholic services

Saturday - 5:30 p.m. - Mass

Sunday - 9:30 a.m. - Mass

Monday-Wednesday - 12:10 p.m. Mass

Call the chapel at 828-3621 for more information or visit the chapel web site at <http://www.macdill.af.mil/macdillchapel>.



EXCHANGE
ARMY & AIR FORCE EXCHANGE SERVICE

USO

From Page 8

people gathered to recognize all it has done over the past year.

“The best part of running the USO is knowing that we are meeting our mission,” said Rovinell. “Our mission is to lift the spirits of America’s troops and their families. The thanks we receive from those who pass through our doors makes it all worth it.”

Over the past year, the USO at TIA has served more than 13,000 visitors.

“We are averaging over 1,000 per month,” said Rovinell. “As more people learn about us, those numbers are increasing.”

The USO is manned mostly by volunteers who wish to ensure that service members and their families are taken care of in many ways, such as Welcome Home Greetings, the United Through Reading program, the Families of the Fallen program, No Dough Dinners, With You All the Way Deployment Kits, and USO Photo Books.

“Remember,” said Rovinell, with tears in his eyes, “just remember who we serve.”

Volunteers then went upstairs to a gate to welcome approximately 15 members of the 6th Security Forces Squadron home from a 180-day deployment to Southwest Asia.

Staff Sgt. Daniel Iannarelli, 6th Security Forces Squadron technician, was greeted and hugged by Trina, his wife, and boys Preston, 2, and Blake, 3, after returning from his third and most recent deployment.

Iannarelli said, “I gained valuable experience through this deployment and met people from across the Air Force.”

Both boys wore shirts that read, “Mission Essential Personnel: Operation Finding DADDY” and smiled as they hugged their daddy’s legs.

A USO volunteer gave Iannarelli a bag of goodies to welcome him home as he enjoyed his first moments with his family.

The USO does many things for service members, and more information about its programs can be found at www.usotampabay.org.