

February 10, 2006
Volume 3

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Annual Awards
brings out the best



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Operation Julemand
spreads holiday spirit

weather forecast

Maximum Temperature:

- 8 degrees Fahrenheit

Minimum Temperature:

- 47 degrees Fahrenheit

Maximum Wind Speed:

- 110 knots

Average Wind Chill:

- 30 degrees Fahrenheit

Team rescues Airmen during Arctic storm



Photo by 1Lt. Justin Herman

Capt. Brint Woodruff, 821 Security Forces Squadron commander, coordinates a weather forecast from the Storm Operation Center here recently. The SOC, located in the officers' dormitory, is a command and control center for use during hazardous conditions that lets Airmen communicate with emergency response units, the weather station and other locations around the base.

■ *Story by*
1st Lt. Justin Herman
821st Air Base Group Public Affairs

With sub-zero temperatures, snow and winds exceeding 100 miles per hour, an unexpected Arctic storm struck here Jan. 24, trapping two Airmen without a heat source on the frigid tundra.

Airmen 1st Class John Wood and Marc Chavis were rescued from their stranded patrol truck after U.S. and Danish personnel located them and transported them to the medical facility here. They were treated for first-degree frostbite. The Airmen are assigned to the 821st Security Forces Squadron.

When the two patrolmen first set out across base to inves-

tigate an alarm, they had little idea what was in store for them.

"We were responding to an alarm on base when the blinding snow hit, and the visibility quickly dropped to zero," Airman Wood said. "It was a Storm Condition Charlie, but soon we couldn't even see the front end of the truck."

Storm Condition Charlie, the fourth most hazardous of five weather classifications here, is declared when sustained winds reach above 35 knots and visibility is less than one-half mile.

In the sunless Arctic winter, however, conditions can deteriorate in minutes.

"We started hitting snow drifts and radioed to the security forces control desk that we'd gotten stuck, but we couldn't see through the snow to tell them exactly where we were," Airman

Wood said. "We stayed calm, and I thought, at least we have music to listen to. Then the power died on the truck and I thought, great, now we have nothing."

During a Storm Condition Charlie the commander activates the Storm Operation Center, or SOC, a command and control room that coordinates action on base while all non-mission essential personnel are restricted to their living quarters.

From the SOC, which has large maps of base, telephones, radios and weather-monitoring screens, Airmen can communicate with emergency response units and contractors across base.

"From the moment we stood up the SOC and began the recall roster, we realized that two of our

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African-American Heritage Month Banquet

The African-American Heritage Month Banquet will take place February 23 at the Top of the World Club ballroom. Lt. Gen. Russell Davis will be guest speaker. The menu includes baked fish, chicken, candied yams, corn bread and apple pie. Participants must RSVP by Feb. 17. For more information, please contact Master Sgt. Byron Grant at x2782 or Staff Sgt. Aubrey Buhr at x2209.

9-pin bowling tournament

A 9-pin bowling tournament sponsored by the African-American Heritage Committee will be held 2 pm Feb. 11 at the Thule Bowling Center. The cost is 40 dollars per team of five, including bowling, shoe rental and food. The winning team receives a trophy. To sign up please contact Master Sgt. Byron Grant at x2782 or Staff Sgt. Aubrey Buhr at x2209 by Feb. 8.

Talent and fashion show

A talent and fashion show hosted by the African-American Heritage Committee will be held 7pm to 11pm Feb. 18 at the Top of the World Club ballroom. Talents may include but are not limited to singing, poetry, dancing and music, and fashion areas may be evening, casual, athletic or outdoor. Donations will be accepted at the door. Please RSVP by Feb. 13 by contacting Senior Airman Brian Commodore at x2615.



Col. David J. Buck, 821st Air Base Group commander
1st Lt. Justin T. Herman, 821st Air Base Group Public Affairs chief

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Golf snapshot named an Air Force Times Image of the Year



Photo by 1Lt. Justin Herman

The Air Force Times recently selected a photo from Thule as one of their Images of the Year, alongside photographs of deployment, hurricane rescues and Saddam Hussein on trial. No word yet on whether Airmen will be improving their scores for next year's coverage.

Commander's Team Thule Action Line

■ Answered by
Col. David Buck
821st Air Base Group commander

Question: Sir, will we be able to walk out onto the frozen North Star Bay ice any time soon?

Answer: Good question. Right now any travel on the North Star Bay ice is prohibited for everyone's safety.

Drill testing of the ice is scheduled for Feb. 26, though. If the conditions are deemed safe then flags will be placed to identify authorized areas where you can walk.

If and when conditions are determined to be safe enough, personnel are reminded that they must follow these safety precautions:



Courtesy photo

- File an off base travel itinerary with Hilltop prior to departure.
- Use the Buddy System.
- Carry a radio and have contact with Hilltop prior to entering the ice.
- Stay a minimum of 50 meters from De Long pier.
- Stay within the authorized areas.

African-American heritage is American heritage

■ Story by

1st Lt. Justin Herman
821st Air Base Group Public Affairs

Editor's note: This article is taken from a speech by Lt. Gen. Frank G. Klotz, Vice Commander of Air Force Space Command, delivered during African-American Heritage Month observances at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont., last year.

In the 1920's, Dr. Carter G. Woodson concluded that if African Americans were to take their rightful place in society, young Americans of all races needed to learn about African-American contributions to our history and culture. In 1926, he launched the first Black History Week; and, today a movement that originally began in churches and schoolrooms is observed all across America as African-American Heritage Month.

As Dr. Woodson rightly stated, African-American heritage should not be remembered and celebrated by just one segment of the American population.

Rather, African-American history is America's history, shared by and affecting all citizens of our great country regardless of background or individual experiences.

The accomplishments and contributions of African Americans to our society, to our culture, to our identity as a nation are numerous and varied.

We'd be hard pressed to find any facet of American life that has not been shaped and immeasurably enriched by their knowledge, wisdom, and talents.

In literature, for example, you'll find Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* and James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain* on the Modern Library's list of the best novels in the English language.

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* won the 1988 Pulitzer Prize in Fiction and, five years later, she was awarded the Nobel Prize as one "who gives life to an essential aspect of American reality."

In music, African Americans like the late Ray Charles, who was honored with eight Grammy Awards last year, have pioneered sounds and styles that have influenced virtually every aspect of the Ameri-



Courtesy photo

Lt. Gen. Frank G. Klotz, Vice Commander of Air Force Space Command

can music scene.

Theater and film have also been greatly influenced by powerful performances by African Americans like the late Ossie Davis, who received Kennedy Center Honors in 2004 for a lifetime of achievement in the arts.

And, beyond the arts, African-American scientists, inventors, and engineers like George Washington Carver, Elijah McCoy, and Benjamin Banneker have helped unleash the tremendous resources of our country.

Yet, the most important contributions of famous African Americans, in my mind, have been in the realm of political ideals and moral values.

Perhaps I feel this way because my own academic training is in political history and philosophy.

Perhaps it's also because my generation witnessed first hand the vision, courage, and persistence that the great civil rights leaders displayed in confronting the evils of segregation and racial inequality, and in redirecting an entire nation toward the goals upon which it was originally founded.

In pursuit of this noble and historic mission, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and

others laid out the tenets of a moral philosophy that will no doubt inspire and inform Americans of all races on how to conduct themselves as citizens for generations to come.

The list is long; but, let me suggest a few examples particularly relevant to those of us who serve in our nation's Armed Forces.

In his famous 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech, Dr. King said, "We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force."

I think the example of Benjamin O. Davis Jr.'s experience at West Point in the 1930s illustrates this point beautifully.

Davis was the only African-American cadet in his class, and he entered the academy mindful that no other African American had graduated since Charles Young, nearly 50 years earlier.

From the outset, Davis' classmates actively shunned him. Yet he remained resolute in his determination and did not falter.

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He ultimately graduated in the top 15 percent of his West Point class; was commissioned a second lieutenant in the infantry; became the first African-American officer to solo in an Army Air Corps aircraft; commanded the famous Tuskegee Airmen who, flying fighters in the European Theater during World War Two, never lost an American bomber to an enemy aircraft in over 200 escort missions; and, became the first African American to wear an Air Force star.

His life and service so powerfully demonstrate that whatever challenge we may personally or professionally confront, if we maintain our dignity and discipline, we can achieve truly magnificent things.

Dr. King also talked about how every job was important, and everyone should do his or her particular job to the absolute best of his or her ability. He said, "Whatever your life's work is, do it well."

His point speaks directly to us in the profession of arms. Everyone in a military organization is vitally important to the success of the mission.

No job is any more or less important than any other job in our outfit. No matter what your assigned task, you should do it as if someone else's life or welfare depended on it – because it probably does!

Finally, in all times and places, African Americans have demonstrated that they were willing to fight for what they knew to be true, even at the cost of their personal safety and even their lives.

Through courage and self-sacrifice, they advanced the cause for equality, individually and en masse.

During the Battle of the Bulge in World War II, when front-line troops were thinning under the German assault, a call went out to African-American units for volunteers to reinforce the lines. More than four thousand men answered the call. Their performance in battle won the respect of all and drove another wedge into the barrier of segregation.

Dr. King, again, perhaps said it best when he remarked "there are some things so dear, some things so precious, some things so eternally true, that they're worth dying for...if a man has not discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live." This is the same kind of courage each of us in the military must possess; the same kind of self-sacrifice that we must also be prepared to make.

We can take pride that many of these ideals are an integral part of the profession of arms. And we can take pride that the military has long been a leader in recognizing and advancing the concept of equality advocated by our great civil rights leaders.

It has in fact led the way in correcting injustices, and today can rightly claim to practice the highest standards of equality and opportunity found anywhere in the land.

But, we'd be less than honest if we did not admit that even in today's military we still have work to do to ensure that all our people – regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or religion – are treated fairly, and equally, and with dignity. One of the most important keys to success in the military is mentoring – that is, teaching our young Airmen how to perform their jobs and how to meet the unique standards we expect of them in the profession of arms.

But, unfortunately experience shows that it is often difficult for individuals to mentor people who have different backgrounds and interests than their own.

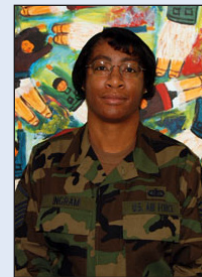
Commanders and supervisors at every level must be aware of this often unrecognized barrier to full equality and through sheer force of will ensure that all our Airmen receive the mentoring they need to reach their full potential. For, as military professionals, we are in fact alike in more ways than we are different.

And with that realization will come, at least in part, the fulfillment of the dreams of generations of courageous individuals who struggled and sometimes died to ensure that one day all Americans would have an equal opportunity to share in the benefits and blessings of our great land.

THULE TIMES asks the Newcomers' Briefing**What's your first impression of the northernmost base in the DoD?****Lt. Col. Erik Eliassen**

"Where's the sun?"

(Editor's note: There is no sun at Thule for more than 3 months each year.)

**Master Sgt. Deloici Ingram**

"It's not so cold."

(Editor's note 2: It was -55 fahrenheit today. She is being brave for her family.)

**Master Sgt. Brad King**

"I'm just waiting to hunt musk ox."

(Editor's note 3: Airmen don't hunt musk ox, we run from them.)

**Tech. Sgt. Duane Moore**

"Good people...I'm still figuring out the rest."

**Capt. Robert Buchanan**

"I've always wanted to live next to the ocean."

(Editor's note 4: The ocean is frozen 9 months each year.)

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Airmen were en route to respond to an alarm," said Capt. Brint Woodruff, 821st SFS. "The storm happened so quickly that by the time we had an opportunity to turn them around it was too late."

SOC personnel immediately began coordinating with the fire department's emergency response team to find and retrieve the Airmen.

But the weather deteriorated further, and the fifth and most hazardous weather condition was declared: Storm Condition Delta.

Storm Condition Delta is called when sustained winds rise above 50 knots and visibility is less than 100 yards. Wind gusts eventually clocked in Jan. 24 at nearly 100 knots on some parts of base, with zero visibility and a chill factor hovering near -40 degrees Fahrenheit.

The fire department dispatched four Danish emergency rescuers in two Caterpillar-tracked vehicles, called "Snow Cats," to follow the estimated path the Airmen had taken.

"Over the radio they said that their toes were beginning to go cold, and then they said they hurt. That's when we really became nervous," said Maj. Steve LaCasse, commander of the 821st Support Squadron. "When the power had shut off in the truck we knew there was no heat. We knew how slow the Snow Cats were moving, too, and the fact that they were basically driving blind into the storm."

Inside the stranded patrol truck the snow drifts were beginning to rise above the window. As the temperature continued to plummet, Airmen Wood and Chavis attempted to stay calm and remember their Arctic survival training.

The SOC attempted to guide the rescue crew toward the one landmark the security forces troops could make out in the blizzard: a distant pair of orange lights.

"They needed to keep their wits about them," said Capt. John Altevers, 821st SPTS and an Air Force medic for 18 years. "Their toes had gone numb, and they needed to use their body temperature to keep their extremities warm."

More bad news was on the way, though, when one of the two Snow Cats broke down, forcing all four rescuers to take refuge in one vehicle. Despite the challenges, SOC personnel continued to work diligently on grids deducing which roads the Airmen likely traveled on and the origin of the orange lights.

Using guidance radioed from Captain Woodruff and information from commander's call the week before, the lost Airmen emptied their Arctic survival gear bags and put on the extra gear, including insulated boots, pants and extra blankets.

"We lost feeling from the ankles down, so the medic told us to take off the boots and put each other's feet in each other's parka," Airman Wood said. "It never crossed my mind to panic, though, since I knew they were out looking for us, and they'd get us."

Finally, there was a breakthrough in the search.

"We were able to narrow our search grid down to one road," Major LaCasse said. "We finally figured out where the two orange lights were coming from, and sent the last remaining Snow Cat out to find them."

The stranded Airmen and truck were soon discovered; they were immediately transported to the hospital for emergency care.

Medical personnel released the Airmen from the hospital the next morning with no permanent injuries.

Through a base-wide effort combining U.S. and Danish personnel, what could have been a grave situation instead became a real-world lesson in polar survival no one will soon forget.

"The professionalism of the SOC Wednesday allowed its role of personnel accountability and the rescue operation to occur simultaneously," Captain Woodruff said. "I personally talked to the Airmen when they got back. Even with the lethal conditions never did they panic because of their confidence in the U.S. and Danish members of Team Thule out there looking for them."

"And considering everything they had going against them," he said, "that's a lot of confidence."



Staff Sgt. Matthew Sturos
NCOIC Command Section

Nickname:

Triple X, a bowling nickname not applicable in any other situation

Hometown:

Detroit, MI

Time at Thule:

4.22 months, 126.49 days or 3,035 hours... however you want to count it

Job Description:

Computer Monitor monitor, aka the information manager

Favorite Activities:

Bowling with the Bowler Bears, watching movies and webcam

Hobbies:

Studying for promotion and sleeping when time permits

Goals:

To make Tech. Sgt. at Thule. Yes, I am that old, and I will sew it on!

Words of Wisdom:

Listen to your elders. They know because they've been there, done that

Most Memorable Day here:

First Night was a great event with friends, and I saw family on the webcam

Annual Awards ceremony honors **Thule's finest**

■ Photos by

1st Lt. Justin Herman
821st Air Base Group Public Affairs



Staff Sgt. Sarah McDonald
821st Air Base Group Airman of the Year



Tech. Sgt. Gerald Dion
821st Air Base Group NCO of the Year



Captain Jeremy Colvin
821st Air Base Group CGO of the Year



Senior Airman Winifred Thompson
12th SWS Airman of the Year

2nd Lt. Corey Trusty
12th SWS CGO of the Year

Staff Sgt. Michael Wheeler
12th SWS NCO of the Year

Master Sgt. Michael Williams
821st Air Base Group First Sgt. of the Year



Senior Master Sgt. Scott Baggett
821st Air Base Group SNCO of the Year

Congratulations!

Thule NCO wins 2005 AFSPC Logistics Readiness Award

■ Story by

**Senior Airman Shawn Clemens
21st Space Wing Public Affairs**

Two 21st Space Wing members won 2005 Air Force Space Command Logistics Readiness awards.

Ronald Perron, 21st Logistics Readiness Squadron readiness flight chief and installation deployment officer at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, won the George F. Ruestow Logistics Readiness Senior Civilian Manager of the Year.

One of Mr. Perron's top duties was to ensure all members who were tasked to deploy were properly trained, equipped to deploy and made it to their deployment destination on time.

"My job is to get Airmen into the war zone," Mr Perron said. "My main goal was to never allow anyone to deploy who wasn't properly trained and equipped for their deployment."

Mister Perron and his crew have accomplished that goal by not having any chargeable discrepancies in 18 months.

Although Mr. Perron has been put in for this award before, he still appreciates it.

"It's always gratifying to be recognized



Photo by 1Lt. Justin Herman

Master Sgt. Scott Chandler, 821st Support Squadron

for the work that you do and I appreciate even being put up for an award like this," Mr. Perron said.

Master Sgt. Scott Chandler, 821st Support Squadron fuels quality assurance evaluator, won the Fuels Senior NCO of the Year.

Sergeant Chandler stressed the importance of being focused on the job at hand.

"I believe that to be the best at what you do, you need to be focused on the job

at hand and you must manage your time wisely," Sergeant Chandler said. "When I receive a task, I get all the information I need and then I complete it. I like to keep my inbox empty."

Sergeant Chandler also emphasized seeing the whole scope of things.

"Make sure you see the whole picture and what's going on around you and how it will affect other organizations," he said. "Don't make your job hard. Keep it simple."

Hear ye, hear ye!



Courtesy photo

Master Sgt. Leanne Ray, 821st Air Base Group, is proud to announce the birthday of her daughter Katie Feb. 18. The birthday girl also recently made straight A's for the second semester in a row.

Operation Julemand brings gifts to local village



Photo by 1Lt. Justin Herman

Col. David Buck, 821st Air Base Group commander, presents a gift donation to the village of Qaanaaq, Greenland, during the Operation Julemand festival Dec. 22. The Thule community raised more than 18,000 dollars for the village, with proceeds going to holiday gifts for children and funding for the preschool, elderly home and trade tools.