

## Armed Forces Voter's Week Begins Today

Armed Forces Voter's Week begins today and runs until Saturday, September 11. Base voting representatives will run a voter registration drive in front the commissary on Tuesday and Wednesday beginning at 10:30 and running until 2 p.m. On Thursday, the representatives will be located in front of the Consolidated Support Squadron building at the same time. The voting representatives are prepared to answer voting needs and concerns for all base personnel whether military, civilian, dependent or contractor. See unit voter representatives for additional details.

## Heart Link Spouses Program

Heart Link Spouses Program is an informative orientation on military life that will be offered Sept. 30 in room 120 in the Consolidated Support Building for spouses new (five years or less) to the military way of life.

The orientation will cover information on military etiquette and protocol, explain military acronyms and introduce the spouses to some of the support services available to help them adjust to the military lifestyle.

The program will be from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and will include lunch, door prizes (four gift certificates to local business and base services) and presentations from various agencies on the base.

This program is funded by the Air Force Aid Society and hosted by the Family Support Center.

Call the FSC at 846-0741 or 846-0751 for more information or to register.

**RSVP before Sept. 28.**

# AFMC commander earns sergeants association award

BY 1ST LT. ELIZABETH BENN  
AFMC Public Affairs

Advocating for improved quality of life for enlisted members and their families earned the Air Force Materiel Command's top officer the Air Force Sergeants Association's annual Award for Excellence in Military Leadership.

Gen. Gregory S. Martin received the award during the association's annual award banquet here, Aug. 25.

"This award is so meaningful to me because it comes from the people who, day in and day out, complete the nation's work and the work of our military," General Martin said after accepting the award.

He also thanked the enlisted force for their continuing, distinguished dedication to service and the association for its support for the enlisted force.

Dubbed an enlisted member's general during a brief tribute before the award presentation, General Martin has maintained what association officials called an incredibly humane focus on Airmen throughout his career. They applauded him for enhancing work environments and expanding military construction funding for all types of housing and community centers, including playgrounds, libraries and temporary living facilities, among others.

The non-profit Air Force Sergeants Association was founded in 1961 and currently has 135,000 members from active duty, retired, reserve, guard and auxiliary armed forces.

Previous Excellence in Military Leadership award winners include current Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John Jumper, retired Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Ronald Fogleman and former Secretary of Defense William Perry.

Officials also recognized the winners of other association awards, including Master Sgt. Dale Berryhill of Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., who received the William H. Pitsenbarger Heroism Award for actions aboard an MC-130E in Iraq May 19, 2003, and Staff Sgt. Jason Lerma from Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., who was given the USO Spirit of Hope Medallion Award for his work with the CV-22 program.



Photo by 1st Lt. Elizabeth Benn

Gen. Gregory S. Martin, Air Force Materiel Command commander, speaks to Air Force Sergeants Association members during a banquet where he received their annual Award for Excellence in Military Leadership.



Photo by Todd Berenger

## Early, late, Kirtland Café ready to serve

Airman 1st Class Adam Smetak and Senior Airman Chris Dente, 58th Maintenance Squadron, are getting a bite to eat at the Kirtland Café, a new Army and Air Force Exchange Service concession, which is open on the west side of Kirtland AFB. Owned by retired Navy Senior Chief Stephen Cotta and managed by retired Army Chief Warrant Officer Richard Pichette, the eatery employs family members of the 58th Special Operations Wing personnel. The Kirtland Café is next to Building 1018 at the Pyett Pavillion near the 58th Special Operations Wing Headquarters. Service is 24-hours weekdays, from 6 a.m. Mondays-10 p.m. Fridays. Discount pricing is offered for E-4 and below and their dependents, averaging an overall 15 percent discount. The menu includes hamburgers, hotdogs, burritos, a large variety of deli sandwiches, soup and snacks. Mr. Cotta said the café motto is "We serve those who serve."

# Sergeant receives Airman's Medal for saving life

BY SENIOR AIRMAN ERIN SMITH

Nucleus assistant editor

On a summer evening, July 2003, Staff Sgt. David Biddinger and his wife, Teresa, were driving home when they saw a police officer on the street attempting to make an arrest. Suddenly, the assailant spun around and punched Albuquerque police Sgt. Carol Oleksak, in the head. The Biddingers swung their car around and headed back to the scene. Sergeant Biddinger did not realize that he was on his way to earning the Airman's Medal.

As they pulled up, they heard gunshots. The officer had been wounded twice. The gunman spotted the Biddingers and fired the gun into the ground. He then fled the scene, and Sergeant Biddinger jumped out of the car to assist the fallen officer while his wife called 911.

Sergeant Biddinger, a pararescueman at Kirtland AFB, ran up to the officer who was motionless on the ground face-down. He quickly assessed her injuries, checking her vital signs and ensuring her airway remained open.

"It wasn't a question of whether I should help, but how I should help," said the sergeant.

For his heroic actions that night, Sergeant Biddinger was awarded the Airman's Medal on Aug. 31. Maj. Gen. Felix Dupre, commander of the Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center at Kirtland AFB, presented the award.

"We are proud of your actions that day, and we are proud to have you as part of the Air Force team," said the general as he pinned the medal on the sergeant's chest.

Sergeant Biddinger thanked his wife for her willingness to aid in rescuing Sergeant Oleksak, adding that her prayers did as much as his first aid. He also stated that he was grateful to receive the medal and he was neither the first nor the last pararescueman to receive it but was honored to be in such good company.

Sergeant Biddinger now joins the ranks of the 90 other pararescuemen who proudly wear the Airman's Medal. This award is given to members of the U.S. Air Force who distinguish themselves by a heroic act, usually at the voluntary risk of

their lives but not involving combat. Members of other branches of the armed forces are eligible for the award when serving in any capacity of the Air Force.

The Air Force puts a lot of time, money and work into preparing its Airmen. When the training becomes ingrained in a war fighter it benefits the Air Force, the mission and the community.

Sergeant Biddinger explained that the Pararescue Creed states: It is the duty as a

pararescueman to save lives and aid the injured. They will be prepared at all times to perform their assigned duties quickly and efficiently, placing these duties before personal desires and comforts. These things they do so that others may live.

Sergeant Biddinger said, "I never thought that when I went into that situation, I would get a medal and I would like to think that everyone would have done the same. I am certain any PJ would have done what I did."



Photo by Todd Berenger

Maj. Gen. Felix Dupre, Air Force Test and Evaluation Center commander, pins the Airman's Medal on Staff Sgt. David Biddinger during an award presentation ceremony Aug. 31.

## Ceremony, vigil honor POWs, MIAs

BY JENNIFER E. WEST

Nucleus staff writer

On Sept. 17, we remember American Prisoners of War and Missing in Action servicemembers with a ceremony at 3 p.m. at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial Park, 1100 Louisiana Boulevard Southeast.

On Sept. 17, we also think about the American mothers, fathers, children, grandparents and spouses whose loved ones who are still missing in action. We also honor the sacrifice of the men and women of past and the current conflicts who suffered the indignities of being prisoners of war so America can live freely.

The 2004 remembrance ceremony includes instrumental music by the 44th Army Band, performance by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency Multi-Service Color guard and musical selections by Senior Airman Keith Loudermill, a static display of an H-60 helicopter and a helicopter flyover provided by the 58th Special Operations Wing. American Legion Post 49 provides a 21-gun salute.

Shuttle service from Kirtland AFB to the memorial park will be available and details will be announced.

A flag carried by teams of runners in a 24-hour vigil arrives at the ceremony, concluding the vigil. Runners or walkers will participate in the vigil Sept. 16-17. For information, send an e-mail to POWMIA@afotec.af.mil and indicate your desired time to run or walk or other volunteer tasks as part of the vigil. Or, contact Capt. Shay B. Lingerfelt at 846-9761.

## Clear thinking, ORM key to long-weekend safety

Labor Day marks the last long weekend of the 2004 "101 Critical Days of Summer" safety campaign.

The campaign focuses on activities that historically have claimed lives during the summer months. This year's results rank second - among the last three years - in numbers of Air Force members who lost their lives.

Even though extra emphasis has been placed at all levels, the Air Force still lost 26 Air Force people to both on and off-duty mishaps through August 23. A senior airman at Robins AFB, Ga., is the most recent casualty.

These tragedies show the need for Air Force people to diligently apply Operational Risk Management principles to all our activities. Three Air Force people - one an AFMC Airman - were lost in on-duty ground mishaps this summer.

Commanders and supervisors at every level being involved is the key to preventing these mishaps. Every individual must accept responsibility for his or her activities and be held accountable. It's essential for each individual to apply ORM principles and be committed to safe conduct both on and off the job.

During the past three years, the Air Force has lost 227 active duty military

and on-duty Air Force civilian workers. That is an average of 76 fatalities per year, with approximately half of those fatalities occurring during the "101 Critical Days of Summer." Most all of these fatalities were preventable if people would use ORM principles and take more time to assess their actions and potential hazards.

One last hurdle remains in this campaign: the three-day Labor Day weekend. Many of our activities this holiday pose hazards to our people and their families who will be joining in Labor Day celebrations.

We need to stress that they use all appropriate safety equipment while participating in events or traveling, and to use ORM before traveling or participating in off-duty events as well as on-duty tasks.

Safety principles and guidelines are not something we should be aware of just some of the time. We must embrace them all of the time, internalize them and make applying ORM second nature.

Our goal is to preserve the lives and resources of our AFMC family by preventing mishaps.

(Courtesy Air Force Materiel Command safety directorate)

