



Thule Times



VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2003

Commanders Action Line

Call ext 3400 if you have questions or comments about Thule.

Reminder

Your Base Notary:

Capt Elizabeth Ferrill
x2411

For all powers of attorney and other documents requiring notarization.

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AFN Sports

Channel Relocated

Due to broken equipment, the AFN Sports Channel has been temporarily moved from channel 15 to channel 13. The AFN Guide will return when the new equipment arrives on island.



Santa's First Mission

By Capt Elizabeth Ferrill
821 SPTS/SC

As the Greenland Air helicopter rose over Mt. Dundas, I had my first view of Thule Air Base from the air during the dark season. As we passed the far side of Mt Dundas, I could see that moon's glow was dulled, reflecting off the newly formed ice sheet in the North Star Bay. There was excitement in the air for MSgt Timothy Crews, 821 ABG/CCF, and myself; after more than six and eight months on island respectively, we were finally going to see another town in Greenland: Qaanaaq.

Qaanaaq is the world's northernmost municipality. The municipality's crest is a silver narwhal (called the

unicorn of the north because of its single tusk) with the North Star on a blue background. In Qaanaaq, most residents earn their living from hunting for seals, narwhales, walrus and polar bears; hunting trips lasting several weeks are common. The town also has a town hall, a large variety store, an airport, a post office, a school and a sports center. Qaanaaq is also the base of Ultima Thule, a company that collects high quality crafts made throughout the region and exports them for sale to other Greenlandic towns.

(Please turn to page 12)

The author is joined by three children from Qaanaaq. Base outreach programs such as Operation Julemand help foster friendships both on and off base.

Commander's Corner

By Col Louis Christensen 821 ABG/CC

Close the books on 2002 and get ready for a hectic and heady 2003. This time of year always causes me to be reflective on where I've been and where I'm going, both personally and professionally. I encourage each of you to do the same. The only way to improve is to take stock of your life and determine if you are where you want to be, personally and professionally.

Personally, I had a daughter get married, a son graduate from high school and I took command of the 821st Air Base Group, all within two weeks time.

Professionally, we've made great strides here at Thule. The establishment of the Air Base Group has allowed the 12th Space Warning Squadron to concentrate on the day to day operations of the Ballistic Missile Early Warning System Radar; the 821st Support Squadron to focus on the daily operation of the base and interaction with our contractor teams; and the 821st Security Forces Squadron to center on improving security for our facilities and missions and keep track of the shifting politics and evolving security scenarios here at Thule. We now have five commanders on the base (with UCMJ authority), where in the past we had two (12 SWS and Det 3). I am convinced the leadership at Thule is better than at any time previously, partly due to our new organizational structure and partly due to my good fortune to have such great squadron CCs working with me.

We have a small military community but a very active quarterly awards program and soon we will announce the best of the best at our annual awards banquet. We have a very active and competitive intramural program. We do our tasks well and with pride as we continue our personal and professional growth.

In 2003, we can all look forward to moving on. Life at Thule can be harsh and isolated, but it can be fun; it is an opportunity yet we all move on.... some to retirement, the rest to our next assignment. And we'll leave behind an improving Thule. A new medical clinic will be built near the Dundas Dining Hall; a lot of construction will take place on the airfield repairing drainage and taxiways. We'll con-

Thule Tidbits

Thule Bakery to Close — The bakery will be closing this month until May for renovation. But don't worry, the dining hall has arranged for a selection of frozen breads and desserts...
Sunday Movies — Recently, the Community Activity Center began showing movies on Sundays as well as Thursday. Check out the Services calendar or the Dining Hall tri-folds for film schedules...
Thule Air Base Annual Awards Ceremony—On 23 January, join the base at the TOW Club for a evening of fun and celebration to honor Thule's best! The evening will include a number of special Distinguished Visitors...
W-2 Available 6 Through MyPay Website — All military members will be able to download their W-2 statements for filing income tax on [http://emss.dfas.mil/...](http://emss.dfas.mil/)
Weekly Yoga — During the winter, yoga is offered on Tuesday at that Hospital. Call Ingrid at the Hospital for more information...

tinue moving forward re-defining the role of Quality Assurance Evaluators and working with our contractor teammates to improve processes and procedures, preparing for the next generation of the Thule Operations and Maintenance contract.

Let's resolve to make 2003 the best year of our lives. Together, we can make this the best remote assignment in the Air Force. I'll see you around the base, but especially at the Fitness Center (personally, I weigh more than I would like and my 10K times truly stink.)

Happy New Year!!

Commander's Trophy Points Update

ABG:	165
SFS:	90
OPS:	75
SPTS:	85

Standings as 1 Jan 2003

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Numbering Our Days

By Ch, Capt Joel Hampton
821 ABG/HC

Even before I had official orders to Thule, people who'd been stationed here before began to give me advice about my tour here. One of the first things most of them said was, "Don't cross off the days on the calendar—it makes the year go by more slowly!" When I arrived here in June of 2002, everyone told me the same thing, "Don't count down the days—it only makes it seem longer!"

What I found out, though, as I began to get to know people here, was that virtually everyone had some method of marking the time of their tour. Some people have regular G. I. calendars with circled dates and/or big X's across days completed. Other people have a sketch of a DC-8 where they color in each arrival/departure of the beloved old bird. I've seen clothespins on a string, Q-Tips in a jar, thumbtacks on a bulletin board, and just about everything else you could imagine used to count the days of our tours at Thule. My personal favorite is the countdown cross that dates back many years in the Chaplain service and has probably been used at every remote tour the Air Force has ever had. There are 52 sections, one for each Sunday of the year, which make up the cross. When all are colored in, the cross is complete, and you are ready to go home.

Let's face it, we humans can't help ourselves; we have to keep track of time. Even without the normal cycles of sunrise and sunset, we manage to know what day it is. We also know how many there are left in our tours here, or until our next trip home, "not that we're counting..." We count because we are finite and we know it. Faith teaches us that our lives, though limited, are of tremendous value and have the potential for unlimited good or evil. What we need is to have the proper perspective on our lives and the days we spend living them. In the Hebrew Scriptures, Psalm 90:12, Moses prays that God would "Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom". As the New Year is upon us (there we go marking time again), may we all number our days properly and wisely use the time we have here for good.

January Birthdays

MSgt Dave Craig	821 SPTS/SG	5 Jan
TSgt John Parra	821 SFS	5 Jan
MSgt Milton Cornelius	821 SPTS/LG	9 Jan
SSgt Drayton Denson	821 SFS/SFOD	12 Jan
SrA Don McCants	821 SFS/IM	13 Jan
2d Lt Trevor Nolan	12 SWS/DOT	15 Jan
TSgt Joel Brown	12 SWS/DOO	19 Jan
SSgt Jason Horst	821 SFS/AT	25 Jan
1st Lt Gary Durst	821 SPTS/LG	28 Jan
MSgt Corey Hewitt	821 ABG/FM	30 Jan

Polar airmen earn an "A"

By 1st Lt. Brandon Lingle
AFPC Public Affairs

Airmen with service time in the Arctic Circle are now eligible for a new Overseas Short Tour Ribbon device.

A bronze-colored letter "A" device will recognize active-duty, Reserve and Guard members who complete a short tour at latitudes higher than 66 and one-half degrees north. Located 950 miles north of the Arctic Circle, Thule is currently the only Air Force base within the Arctic Circle boundary.

Airmen on active duty Feb. 10, 2002 and after can wear the "A" device, regardless of when they served in the Arctic.

The new award recognizes the isolation, harsh climate and limited services airmen deal with at extreme northern latitudes. Temperatures around minus 30 degrees Fahrenheit are common at Thule and the nearest "town" is the village of Qaanaaq, 65 miles away.

A morale visit to Thule in 2000 by the former commander of Air Force Space Command led to the rekindling of an idea for Arctic recognition, which was submitted in 1999, by former Thule airman, TSgt. Edward Crowson, now a Master Sergeant at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, officials said.

Sergeant Crowson proposed an Air Force Arctic service award after hearing about the Navy's Arctic Service Ribbon from some visiting Navy divers.

"I never expected anything to come of it and quite frankly, I'm floored," said Sergeant Crowson who had all but given up on his idea since he'd originally been informed that it had been rejected.

"Thule was something totally different than anything I've ever experienced. I'm really glad that this got approved, especially for everybody there now," he said.

An Antarctic Service Medal has



The "A" device is centered on the Air Force Short Tour Ribbon. Although currently authorized, the device is not expected to be in military clothing sales until Summer 2003.

The Navy, Marines and Coast Guard already offer Arctic service decorations that people can earn without being stationed there.

The "A" device needs to be centered on the Overseas Short Tour Ribbon officials said. If the wearer has oak leaf clusters, the "A" goes to the wearer's right of them. Only one "A" can be worn.

The "A" devices are expected to arrive at clothing sales stores and military personnel flights by next summer, said Lt.Col. Mike Goolsby, chief of recognition programs at the Pentagon.

"The Arctic service device is part of an ongoing strategic plan to ensure Air Force people get the recognition they deserve," he said.

been given to members of all branches who served there since 1946 but there is no universal award denoting Arctic service.



A group of carols welcomed in the Holiday Season around the base on 20 Dec. The carolers were small in number, but mighty in spirit! Who invited the Grinch?

Nobody Wants to Hear About Safety

By TSgt Christopher Davis
821 ABG/SE

How many times have you had to either sit through a boring safety briefing or have to read the same material to satisfy a requirement? Did you ever think that there really is a valid purpose for disseminating the information? Since I'm in the safety business, I understand the position the majority of people maintain. You truly believe that there's no reason for you to be subjected to more information aimed at keeping you from being injured or becoming ill from failure to use proper protective equipment. You believe this because it's always someone else getting hurt or ill, never you.

For those of you that fall into the 'it will never be me' category, let me pass something on for you to think about. Have you ever had the chance to ask someone who was seriously injured why they picked that particular time and day to get hurt? Sounds pretty stupid, doesn't it? I've never met anyone that 'planned' to get hurt. As a matter of fact, I would bet that the majority of those injured folks were in the 'it will never be me' club, prior to their accident. Think their attitude changes? You bet it does.

Let me tell you about a couple of accidents the safety office investigated at my last base. This first one involved a MSgt from the carpentry shop who was cutting door shims. He had been in the carpentry shop his entire career without even so much as a scratch. The normal procedure to cut shims was to use the band saw, but on this day he decided to use a table saw because it would be faster. During the course of cutting the door shims, the carpenter ran his right index

finger into the blade, which pulled his hand forward, partially severing his thumb also. Needless to say the required push stick was not being used. He ended up losing his right index finger and had to have several surgeries to re-attach his thumb. Do you think it was worth it to save a little time?

This next one involved a young, not too bright, female Air Force troop. Bear with me on the 'not too bright' comment until you've read this. Against the recommendations of her commanding officer and supervisor, this young lady proceeded to buy a fairly large motorcycle, even though she had never ridden one before. A short time after purchasing this bike, she and a friend drove to Bike Week in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. After spending about 9 hours enjoying all the activities, they began the trip home. Unfortunately, at one point in the road there was some loose gravel. Again, she just happened to be on a curve and she lost control of the bike, sliding face down across the gravel. Being naive and thinking that wearing all the required personnel protective equipment wasn't cool, these young ladies were wearing shorts and tank tops, which obviously offer little protection from "road rash". The driver spent 21 days in the hospital being treated for the injuries to her face, chest and legs. When we interviewed her, one of the questions asked was if she had consumed any alcohol that day. Her reply was - "one beer". When I reviewed her medical records, her blood alcohol level was .19. That was one BIG beer!

This next one really brings home the 'it will never be me'

syndrome. Four young men went to a party about 20 miles from base. Before they left, they identified who was going to be the designated driver. After arriving at the festivities, they really started to have fun and made enough noise, along with the other participants, that someone called the local sheriff. After the law arrived, things quieted down somewhat, but were shortly in full swing again. The second time when the law arrived everyone tried to get away. Unfortunately, the guy that ended up behind the wheel was not the designated driver. Having passed the first turn-off they needed, the driver attempted to exit the highway at the next exit ramp. Speed, alcohol and fatigue are not compatible when you're driving. He drove the vehicle off the left side of the ramp, over-corrected and drove off of the right side of the ramp, over-corrected once again causing the vehicle to rollover four times. The vehicle was a 4-wheel drive with a soft-top and no seats in the back. The one person wearing a seatbelt was in the front passengers seat. When the vehicle started to roll it was passenger side first. Even though confined by the seatbelt, the young man never had a chance. Two young people died that night and the driver was not one of them. His life was forever changed in an instant. In talking to his parents, they told us one of the first things he said after he was able to speak was, "I NEVER THOUGHT SOMETHING LIKE THIS WOULD HAPPEN TO ME!" Take my word for it, it can happen to anyone. As the numbers throughout the Air Force continue to climb, it's hard not to think about the lives that are forever being changed because someone didn't want to hear about safety.



Thule Memories From 1966-67 & 1980

By Mr. Ron Altman, Former Thule Resident

There have been so many changes made to Thule living since I left there in 1980! I was only there for the summer (it was my second tour) working for FELEC Services as a DR Technician at J-Site (BMEWS). I remember what a shock it was to see women at Thule. Judging by the pictures on this site, I'd *really* enjoy my time there now!

My first tour at Thule was 2/66 to 9/67 when I worked at J-Site as an RCA Tracking Radar Technician. At that time there was only AFRTS TV (one channel) and one radio station. We in RCA *did* operate a 10-Watt FM station, however, which had been designed and built by one of the early RCA troops. I also did anchorman duties on the AFRTS TV news for most of my first tour. The equipment was crude by today's standards, but they put out a good signal!

A friend and I converted it to stereo so all the guys with their new stereo gear would have a source to listen to. I understand that was taken over by the Danes at some point and moved out of Bldg. 100 to more appropriate quarters.

Thule was one of the most enjoyable experiences of my life. I found Thule to be one of the most beautiful places on God's earth! But very rugged and unforgiving. I was there when the base gym burned down during a Storm 3.

I also remember that Thule legend, Max Gullotte, who began believing the legends surrounding himself. Thinking himself invincible, he decided to walk home from the club one night. He tripped over a steam pipe and laid in near-zero weather until morning. He was lucky and survived, but went home on the next plane.

Cops Corner

By Maj Robert Winters 821 SFS/CC

We are fortunate to have a Danish Police Inspector (DPI) as a partner in our important work protecting the base. Although the Inspector's home and principle office is located here he has much greater responsibilities than just Thule Air Base, he's also responsible for the surrounding villages in northeast Greenland. In his duties, the DPI closely works with our Danish Liaison Officer and Greenland's Chief Constable in the capital city of Nuuk.

While the Air Force has jurisdiction over military members for violations of military law, others may have to first answer to the DPI for violations of local law. For example, if an Air Force member steals something, they could be punished under Greenlandic and Danish law by the police inspector who has a different role than the American police. Here, the DPI not only investigates crimes, but also prosecutes cases in court if necessary. Finally, he also serves as a judge by dispensing fines in less serious cases such as theft or violations of the Thule Rules.

When matters arise that require police attention, the Security Forces Control Center usually receives first notification and the DPI is immediately informed. Air Force Security Forces do not have jurisdiction over civilians on base unless a direct threat to mission-resources or life is involved. Typically, we arrive at the scene, ascertain what is going on, and ensure public safety. Then working with the DPI, facts are gathered and the matter resolved. If necessary, Security Forces can detain offenders and hold them until released for disposition in the jail cells located in the Security Forces office building.

As a team, Security Forces and the DPI work hard to make Thule Air Base the best place possible for all of its residents to live.



Fun Events at Your Bowling Center!

12 Jan @ 1400 Scotch Doubles
19 Jan @ 1400 King/Queen of the Hill
25 Jan @ 1600 Cosmic Bowling



Trackin' Santa

From the Air Force Print Network

The North Pole and North American Aerospace Defense Command once again teamed up to track Santa Claus's journey around the world Christmas Eve. Officials conducted a sleigh test-flight Dec. 18 to ensure the satellite systems can track the infrared signature of Rudolph's bright nose. On 24 Dec., people tracked Santa's journey using a special Web site at <http://www.noradsanta.org>. Children could also call a toll-free number Christmas Eve to find out exactly where Santa is so they knew when to get to bed.

NORAD uses four high-tech systems to track Santa - radar, satellites, Santa Cams and jet fighter aircraft.

It all starts with the NORAD radar system called the North Warning System. This powerful radar

This screen shot is a sample of what the noradsanta.org website looked like on Christmas Eve.



system has 47 installations strung across Canada's North and Alaska. NORAD makes a point of checking the radar closely for indications of Santa Claus leaving the North Pole on Christmas Eve.

The moment the radar tells NORAD that Santa has lifted off, they begin to use the same satellites and radars that are used in providing warning of possible missile launches aimed at North America.

FREEZE FRAME!



On 13 Dec, the members of the 12th Space Warning Squadron hosted a Christmas Party at the Pavilion. They also invited members of the 821st Security Forces Squadron and ARCTEC Services to thank them for their support of the BMEWS mission all year long. A good time was had by all!

When a rocket or missile is launched, it produces enough heat and moves fast enough for satellites and radar systems to detect it. Rudolph's nose gives off an infrared signature similar to a missile launch. The satellites can detect Rudolph's bright red nose with practically no problem. It is important to note, however, that our scientists have tried to calculate the heat that is generated by Rudolph's nose but they have not been able to thus far.

"I can neither confirm nor deny the existence of Santa Claus," said Lt Col Shawn Barnes, 12 SWS/CC, "Nor can I confirm or deny the radars' ability to track Santa, regardless of whether or not he exists." However, a well informed source at BMEWS told the Thule Times "Yeah, we tracked him all right—him AND his eight tiny reindeer."

Rockin' New Year's Eve



By SSgt Joseph Andreasen
821 SFS/SFOI

Thule Air base was in for quite a shock when the Debra Bradshaw Band arrived here December 27th with more than country music to play. Many people here at Thule were under the assumption that the band would only play a certain genre of music, that being country. "We play a variety of music that we either choose to play that night or from request of the people that are there to listen to us." says Debra Bradshaw, lead singer

and founder of the band. "Each band member has a few favorite songs that they like to play."

The band performed many different songs from various artist such as; Van Morrison, Jimmy Buffett, Lynard Skynyrd, Faith Hill, Madonna, Santana, Bruce Springsteen, Elvis, Patty Loveless, and Shania Twain just to name a few. When asked if there are any songs that the band will not play from request, I was told there are always three: *Freebird*, *Stairway to Heaven* and *Cocaine*. "We do not know the lyrics and cords to

Lead guitarist and vocalist, Matt McAttee jams on his guitar during the New Year's Eve performance.

Capt Brady Vaira, 821 SPTS/OS, wishes his information manager, SrA Lori Cantu, a happy new year at midnight.



these songs and have no inclination to want to know these songs, although they are the ones we get request for the most," said bassist Dave Murphy.

Although the band has only played together for two years now, the sound they produce seems like they have known each other and played together for longer than that. Kaye Pryor who plays keyboard and is the backup vocals for Debra is the newest member of the band. She said, "I feel very comfortable with this group and we all get along very well. There is some kidding around and joking amongst the group, so we always have a good time when we get together, whether we are practicing or going out together."

Matt McAttee, lead guitar/vocals, is the youngest member of the band, but does not let that slow him down, especially

SrA Lauren Burn, 821 SFS/SF, and Stan Childress, Det 3, cut a rug on the dance floor just after midnight.



Lead singer, Debra Bradshaw entertained the Thule crowd during three performances at the TOW club.

when it comes to his rendition of Chris Isaak, *Wicked Game*. McAttee said, "I love music and have been playing and singing since I was a little kid."

All the band members live in Nashville, TN, even though most grew up in other places in the South. "Nashville is where the music is; it's where the money is; it's where we are," said Jeff Bradshaw, drummer and Debra's husband. Jeff, Debra and Matt all have solo albums that they have recorded.

The band has played all over the United States in various clubs and casinos, each band member has played at different spots all over the world, but are especially happy to be here at Thule. "This is our first USO tour together," said Debra. "We are having such a great time here and feel welcomed by the people that are here to hear us play."

The Debra Bradshaw Band played the Top of the World Club on the 26th and 27th of December as well as New Years Eve. "We are hoping to come back to Thule and play again sometime in the

summer, so we can see this place in the sun!"



MSgt Timothy Crews, 821 ABG/CCF, and Lt Col Shawn Barnes, 12 SWS/CC, greet the new year with a big smiles and a really flashy (some might call it tacky) headgear.

A Poetic Christmas Party

By Ann Samantha Chatham
821 SPTS/MSA

As the Christmas season ends and the wine has not yet finished flowing, we want to remember the Thule Christmas Party.

As the night began with beer, it soon revolved with wine courtesy of Capt Ryan. Yet there was so much more fun once the food had arrived.

The room echoed of casual talk of golf (TSgt Davis, MSgt Koziara, SMSgt Posey) and rumors of bets, until they announced the winners at best.

For Santa was TSgt Davis and his Elves were Capt. Ferrill, Capt. Gondol, and SSgt Sherman.

Many of our Thule family all crowded in that room, opening presents that our newly appointed Santa and Elves passed out.

On with the singing our family



Organizers, TSgt Chris Davis and TSgt Terri Hartmann, greeted party goers at the front door, asking for their tickets to use for the raffle.

did try, with Christmas carols ringing all through the night.

With TSgt Hartmann at the podium (she was oh so pleasant) and Airman, Sergeants, and Officers wondrously watching.



(Above) A few lucky folks got to participate in a game during the party that was a cross between musical chairs and racing.

TSgt Daniel Hall and Lt Col Robert Orwig talk to Capt Dan Ryan about which of the free wines they should consider trying. Capt Ryan worked with a winery to get the complimentary spirits.

We had so much fun running to the bathroom for a piece of tissue paper and grabbing the nearest "Robert."

The giving up again and again of the digital camera, till it got to an Airman who could finally use it.

The singing, dancing, and presents, the games, food, and beverages and Santa and his Elves, it was a wonderful night and a great memory for our Thule Family.

Now I end my not-so-well-written rhyme with a big thank you to the TOW Club for a wonderful evening. Thank you again to those who made it

possible for this Thule Family to have another wonderful Christmas season here in Greenland.



SrA Don McCants shows off his new digital camera — the big prize in the raffle. SrA McCants finally won the prize after many others decided that they didn't need another digital camera.

Cold Ca\$h Tip

By SSgt Kyle Blumberg
821 ABG/FM

Some important reminders to all military members:

- If you go on Funded Environmental Morale Leave (FEML) you must come to finance within 5 working days to file your TDY Voucher.

- Cut-Off for changes to January Mid-Month paycheck is 3 Jan 2003.
- To change your End of Month (EOM) paycheck in Jan 03 turn them into Finance by 23 Jan 2003.

As always, your Finance POCs are:

MSgt Corey Hewitt — Comp-

troller & Budget Issue's

TSgt Marlin Fjordbak — Accounting Liason

TSgt Julie Gionet — Disbursing

SSgt Kyle Blumberg — Travel & Military Pay

Thule Channel Guide

Television

Ch.2	Danish Information
Ch.3	Greenlandic TV - KNR
Ch.4	Commander's Information
Ch.5	Thule Discovery
Ch.6	WDIV – Detroit (NBC)
Ch.7	WXYZ – Detroit (ABC)
Ch.8	WBZ – Boston (CBS)
Ch.9	WGBH – Boston (PBS)
Ch.10	WUHF – Rochester (FOX)
Ch.11	KARE – Minneapolis (NBC)
Ch.12	FOX - Wild feed
Ch.13	AFN Guide/Contingency
Ch.14	WCCO – Minneapolis (CBS)
Ch.15	AFN Sports
Ch.16	Services Info
Ch.17	Services Movie Guide
Ch.18	Services Movies
Ch.19	Services Movies
Ch.20	Services Movies
Ch.21	Services Movies
Ch.22	Services Movies
Ch.23	Services Movies
Ch.24	Services Music Videos
Ch.25	Danish Movies
Ch.26	Base Weather
Ch.27	AFN Pacific
Ch.28	AFN Spectrum
Ch.29	AFN Atlantic
Ch.30	AFN News
Ch.31	Wild feed

Radio

Ch.40	Radio - Z Rock
Ch.42	Radio - Hot AC
Ch.44	Radio - Pure Gold
Ch.46	Radio - Country
Ch.48	Radio - The Touch
Ch.50	Radio - Bright AC
Ch.52	Radio - NPR
Ch.54	Radio - Adult Rock

Internet Schedules

Greenlandic TV:

<http://www.knr.gl/program/tv/dansk.htm>

Armed Forces Network (TV)

<http://www.myafn.net/tv/schedule/>

Armed Forces Network (Radio)

<http://www.myafn.net/radio/>

National Public Radio

<http://www.npr.org/worldwide/afrtsschedule.html>

(Continued from page 1)

But this trip was much more than just a sightseeing adventure. The whole team from Thule has a very special mission. Ms. Mette Linnemann, Thule Recreation Services Director, CPO C.V. Frederiksen, Danish Liaison Office, MSgt Crews and I were going to play Santa Claus for the afternoon.

Throughout the year, the residents of Thule supported a fund-raising campaign nicknamed Operation Julemand. Julemand means "Christmas Man" in Danish. This year's campaign has already raised over \$10,000 to support children throughout Greenland. The base held events from Pancake Breakfasts to a day-long festival that included Pie-in-the-Face contests and an auction. Much of the money raised has been used to support

Those who participated in the wrapping party at the hospital will recognize this pile of gifts. All the gifts were brought by helicopter to Qaanaaq throughout November.



Once he gets the wrapping off, this little boy is going to find himself the proud owner of a knock-the-ball-in-the-whole-using-a-hammer toy. But isn't the process of getting the paper off part of the fun too?

the establishment of a children's center in Qaanaaq. The center is intended to be a "home-away-from-home" for the local kids and activities at the house will include movies, games, snacks and access to computers. It will be open after school and on the weekends. Past contributions from Operation Julemand have been used to purchase furniture, computers and TVs for the center.

But there is also a more immediate goal to the effort. Each year a portion of the proceeds are saved and used the following year to buy Christmas gifts for children across northern Greenland.

The Danish Liaison Office at Thule Air Base spearheads purchasing of more than 600 gifts and collecting of names and ages of the children. Then in early November, volunteers from the base wrap all the gifts and label then with the gender, age and town of the recipient. The wrapped packages are bundled into yellow Greenland Post Office mailbags. Over the next six weeks, the bags are distributed on a space available basis all across Greenland. In most towns, the gifts are placed around a community Christmas tree and distributed just before the holiday in a ceremony. However, since Qaanaaq is close

enough to Thule, a small group can go to personally distribute the gifts.

The 45-minute flight seemed longer than I had thought, considering we were only going one town over. About half way, I could see the lights of Qaanaaq come over the horizon. There was a lot of pointing and motioning in the helicopter as our communal excitement grew. We landed in Qaanaaq shortly after lunch. The modern, well lit terminal was more crowded than I had expected. I immediately noticed that the building had a very European feel. (At Thule, almost everything has an American feel, which sometimes deceives you into forgetting that you are actually in a country that is more European influenced.) The town administrator met us personally and we were all rushed into a waiting Police vehicle.

As we bumped along the five-minute ride to the town sports center, the entire adventure had an air of celebrity. The town was beautiful. Unlike Thule Air Base that is fairly flat, Qaanaaq is set right next to the coast in rolling hills. The houses are brightly colored and the snow cover made the town look like a winter wonderland. Along the shore, boats were dry-docked with packs of dogs napping between them to hide from the wind. Many of the houses has a lighted star in the window that Mette told me was a Danish tradition for Christmas. Qaanaaq is truly a town with a mixture of modern and ancient with ATMs next to dog sleds and people talking on cell phones next to drying racks for animal hides.

As we pulled up to the Sports Center, people were streaming into the building. For me, the strangest thing was to see kids bicycles and strollers lined up out front. On Thule there are very few children (visiting their par-

ents) and only one dog – a police dog. So for the past eight months, I hadn't seen kids or any

CPO CV Frederiksen calls out another child's name as they all wait patiently (with the appropriate amount of nail biting) to see if the next name might be theirs.



real pets and now I was surrounded by them and their accessories.

We entered the building and I was amazed to see two things. First, there was an enormous Christmas tree in the middle of the gym floor surrounded by hundreds of brightly wrapped packages. Second and probably more amazing, the tree was encircled by children, from toddlers to teenagers, dressed in Christmas outfits and NOT TOUCHING any of the presents. Both Mette and I commented how this was never a sight that we would see back home in either the United States or Denmark. Next, there were speeches from local organizers, MSgt Crews, Mette and CPO Frederiksen. Then, the children sang and danced around the tree. Finally, we split into teams to pass out the gifts. Mette and MSgt Crews



MSgt Crews calls out a name while Mette passes out a gift. The entire gift distribution process took about a half hour to complete.

(Please turn to page 14)

This little boy and his grandmother both seemed to enjoy the little singing bear, although the boy's favorite activity seemed to be staring at the folks in uniform.

Just like this girl, many of the children were wearing Christmas hats and dresses. Some children even had Santa hats with batteries which blinked as they walked around.



(Continued from page 13)

went to one side of the tree with a microphone and CV and I to the other side. Each team picked up a gift, read a name and then passed the package to its new owner. Eventually, the building was filled with the sounds of ripping and crunching of paper, the giggles of new toys and smiles all around. Grandmothers were helping the little ones open their gifts and some of the older children just stared at the toy's box, perhaps wanting to delay the opening until later.

The children were all very polite. Many asked my name and hugged me. I've never been tapped on the shoulder that many times to turn around and

me. I'm not sure if it was the uniform (I was in my Battle Dress) or the fact that we were passing out gifts, but I sure felt popular. MSgt Crews also mentioned that how grateful the parents were. Even with a significant language barrier, there was no mistaking the generosity and warmth of spirit from the residents of Qaanaaq.

After the gift ceremony, the administrator and the mayor invited us to the Town Hall for coffee and pastry. The walls of the conference room were covered with the fruits of the town's hunting tradition. On one wall was a large polar hide; another had Arctic fox tails, hare skins and narwhal tusks. In each corner, there

see the most precious little face staring back at

was a bronze bust of a town resident who accompanied RADM Robert Peary, USN, on his exploration of the North Pole. Like many members of the ill-fated expedition, the four died on the trail, but their bodies were returned to Qaanaaq for burial. Soon, the conversation turned to the plans to drill a well for the town's water supply. Currently, Qaanaaq employs someone who takes a bulldozer out to the local beach to get icebergs a few times a day. Then he brings the iceberg back to the town's power plant building. Heat from the plant melts the ice and the water flows into the water distribution system. The planned well would save money and result in a more consistent water supply.

After our snack, we headed across the street to the chil-

dren's center to see the progress. Last year, the town purchased the building and with help from Operation Julemand 2002, the building was almost renovated and ready to open. We saw the new furniture and the newly upgraded computer room. Donations will also allow the center to hire a full time attendant.

The rest of our trip was a blur. We visited the Ultima Thule craft store, where I spent too much money and then to the local variety store so that Mette could get some traditional Danish Christmas treats. We also stopped by the Knud Rasmussen museum. The museum is actually the original house that Rasmussen built near Dundas in the early 1900s. He lived in the house and launched many of his Arctic expeditions from it. The house was moved to Qaanaaq when the residents of Dundas relocated in the early 1950s.

Soon it was time for us to leave Qaanaaq and return home to Thule. As we flew back, I reflected on the past few hours—the eyes filled with wonderment, the children's laughter and the smiles from parents. While my tree back at Thule was filled with gifts from my family and friends back in the U.S., I thought about how much just one gift had meant to a disadvantaged child in Qaanaaq.

This trip reminded me of the true meaning of Christmas this year and I know that I will think of it in years to come as well.

I hope this article has given everyone at Thule a glimpse of the



difference that Operation Julemand makes in the lives of these children both at Christmas and throughout the year.

This little girl opens her gift as her mother looks on. Most of the parents let the children open the gifts themselves (even the little ones).

In the Children's Center, Mette Linne-mann shows MSgt Crews the computers that have been bought with Julemand money.

Mmmm...Cookie Drive!

By Ch, Capt Joel Hampton
821 ABG/HC

On Friday, December 20, 2002, airmen (AB-SrA) at Thule Air Base found a brown bag in front of their dorm room doors. No, it wasn't carry out from Dundas Dining Hall! Each Thule airman received a bag filled with cookies, some home-made, some store-bought, but all delicious and accompanied with plenty of Christmas spirit and well wishes for the New Year.

Morale events aimed specifically at our junior enlisted members are nothing new in the Air Force. As long as we've been a branch of the service, we've had dinners, banquets, parties, burger burns, steak nights, etc. for airmen away from home during the holidays. This takes place at nearly every installation, CONUS and overseas. It is especially important here at Thule, where we

are not just away from home; we're away from everything.

"I love cookies myself so I was diggin' it. However, I don't really remember the individual cookies, because I gobbled them down pretty fast," said Amn Eric Forrester, 821 SPTS/MSA.

The Chapel took the lead on the Cookie Drive this year, in hopes that it will become an annual tradition here at Thule like it is at many AF installations around the world. While the Cookie Drive had a big impact on holiday morale at Thule, it was really pretty simple. The Chapel announced the dates for the Cookie Drive, provided plastic baggies and brown paper sacks and Team Thule did the



Ch, Capt Jim Parrish shows off the goodies just before distribution. This activity allowed bakers and eaters alike to enjoy sweetness of the holiday season.

rest. Officers, NCOs, civilians, Americans, Danes, and Greenlandics all contributed cookies.

No one received anything in return for their time and effort except the satisfaction of knowing they were helping spread a little holiday cheer and bringing a taste of home to Thule airmen over the holidays.



By MSgt Laura Velasquez
21 SW/CAA

EXPEDITED MILITARY CITIZENSHIP

Active Duty military members may now apply for their American Citizenship immediately versus the 3-year waiting period that had been required. The principle applied is that those willing to put themselves in harm's way for the nation have earned special privilege for early citizenship. Contact the

Career Assistance Advisor's CHATTER BOX

MPF Customer Service (834-7377) for more information.

LEAVE TRANSFERS OKAYED

The fiscal '03 authorization act directs service secretaries to establish programs for a service member to voluntarily transfer accrued leave to another member of the same service who needs additional leave because of a qualifying emergency.

The act describes a qualifying emergency as a circumstance that is likely to require the prolonged absence of the member

from duty; and is due to either a medical condition of a member of the immediate family of the individual; or any other hardship that the secretary concerned determines appropriate. Leave transfers would be made upon written application of the member whose leave is to be transferred, if approved by the commanding officer of both the donor and the recipient.

Effective date of the program will be within six months of the date the President signs the act, which occurred 2 Dec 02.

SATELLITES HELP RESCUE MAN AT SEA

By Lt. Col. K.E. Warren
920th Rescue Group

A medical emergency at sea turned into a dramatic humanitarian mission for the 920th Rescue Group; providing the unit its first chance to use a new satellite-based tracking and communications system during a rescue.

Crews from Air Force Reserve Command's 920th RQG here dispatched Dec. 8 on two HH-60 helicopters and one HC-130 airplane to locate, recover, treat and transport an ailing man on a commercial fishing vessel approximately 500 miles off Florida's east coast.

Pararescue specialists jumped from a helicopter into the ocean, swam to the ship and boarded it. They stabilized the captain, Mike Swann, who was suffering from kidney stones, put him on a hoist

and lifted him up into the helicopter.

This was the first rescue conducted anywhere using a new, state-of-the-art system called the Global Personnel Recovery System. This system was installed in 920th RQG helicopters last week. It's a quantum technology leap for combat rescue capabilities and also has applications for other types of military missions.

Using satellites to transmit data back to command centers where the mission can be visually monitored on a screen, GPRS provides near real-time tracking globally. GPRS also provides two-way instant messaging between personnel at the home base and the crews flying the mission.

"We can maintain constant communication with our crews and actually watch them operate through every phase of a rescue mission from right here. It doesn't matter if they're off the coast of Florida or in Korea," said Maj. Marc DiPaolo, an HH-60 pilot with the 920th.

"Being able to watch this mission evolve and communicate instantly with the aircrew from start to finish was the ultimate

warm fuzzy," said Col. Tim Tarchick, commander of the 920th RQG. "We're ushering in new technology here at the 920th Rescue Group that will provide a true advantage for our war fighters, as well as enhance our humanitarian and space support operations."

The system was certainly key in providing aid to the ailing captain.

"The patient was in extreme distress and ran the risk of infection due to the kidney stones. He needed to be evacuated," said Master Sgt. Doug Kestranek, one of the pararescuers who boarded the 75-foot ship.

Swann was flown to Melbourne, Fla., where he was treated and released later that night. "The Air Force really came through for us. I can't thank them enough. They put so much effort into this, it was like a military operation," Anna Maria Swann, his wife, said. "I don't think people realize what our Air Force can do for us. It's not just going to war. It's helping citizens in need ... in cases like this with search and rescue."



ARCTIC SPOTLIGHT



SrA Tyrone Jackson

Last Base: Goodfellow AFB, TX

Next Base: Bellows AFB, HI

Originally From: Oceanside, CA

My Job Title: Installation Patrolman

What I like most about my job: Deploying for TDY's

Hobbies Interests: Playing Basketball, and Football

Thule Goals: Finish my degree

Interesting Fact: I speak and understand Samoan

Favorite Superhero: Spiderman

If you could be commander for one day what would you change about the Air Force? : I'd make it easier for COPS to cross train

Favorite Music/Sports Team/ Actor/Actress: I like Motown R&B music, the Steelers and of course, Halle Berry

Hero: My Father

The Last Word

Col Griswald Strikes Thule

Has anyone noticed the pretty lights on the top of the 821 ABG headquarter's building? Those lights are compliments of a Colonel-who-shall-not-be-named.

Colonel "Griswald" (who has short black hair and works in bldg 461) climbed to the top of the building shortly before Christmas to add a little color to the Thule sky line.

Never fear, his enlightening project was supervised by our safety dude, TSgt Chris Davis.



Top Ten Excuses

Why Your Christmas Gift from Thule Was Late

Dear Mom, Dad, Sister, Brother, Wife, Husband, Girlfriend, Boyfriend, Son, Daughter, Grandma, Grandpa, Best Friend, Neighbor, Dog, Cat, Goldfish, Bird, and/or Snake,

I'm really sorry that your gift from Thule was late. Please see # [FILL IN THE BLANK] below.

10. Stuck in Storm 3.
9. Needed cash. Still looking for the ATM.
8. All the crystals looked so shiny...I just couldn't decide which one to buy...
7. Stuck in Storm 2 (*not that anyone will know the difference*)
6. By the time the taxi came, the BX was closed.
5. Zipper on my parka got stuck.
4. The BX was out of wrapping paper.
3. "Running a little low on cash...you see, I was at the club and well, umm, I was just trying to ring the bell to get everyone's attention..."
2. Spent all my money on dry cleaning. (Gotta look sharp in the military...even on a remote!)
1. Christmas time already? Gee, I guess my sundial must be broken...

Disclaimer

Opinions expressed herein are those of the contributors to this paper and are not to be considered an official expression by the 821st Air Base Group, 12th Space Warning Squadron, Department of the Air Force, Department of the Army, Department of the Navy, or the Department of Defense.

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