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# The Eagle

U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/U.S. Army Forces Strategic Command

Volume 14, Number 11, December 2007

## Fort Greely Army Family Covenant signed

By Capt. Timothy Brower, 49th Missile Defense Battalion Unit Reporter

**FORT GREELY, Alaska** — Both a symbol of commitment and the actual contract cementing that commitment, the Army Family Covenant was signed here Nov. 17 by the commander of the U.S. Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command, Lt. Gen. Kevin T. Campbell. Prior to signing the covenant, Campbell met with Soldiers and Families at Fort Greely, pledging to take care of those living at this remote location.

The covenant, which is reprinted at the end of this article, represents a \$1.4 billion commitment to improve the quality of life for Army Families. It formally recognizes the sacrifices made on the home front while the Army is at war, and pledges to standardize funding for existing Family programs and services; increase the accessibility and quality of health care;

improve Soldier and Family housing; youth services and child care; and expand education and employment opportunities for Family members.

Campbell shared Secretary of the Army Pete Geren's and Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey's commitment to Army Families with those gathered at the covenant signing ceremony. In his remarks, Campbell commented, "I am personally committed to ensuring that the Soldiers and Families at Fort Greely live under the

See *Covenant* on page 3



Photo by Sgt. Jack W. Carlson III

Happy Family members stand by as Lt. Gen. Kevin T. Campbell signs a contract formally committing the Department of the Army to better care for Family members stationed at Fort Greely with their Servicemember spouses. The covenant covers a variety of needs and services.

## Winter snow fun: calculated risks call for extreme safety preparations

By 1st Lt. Erin Tower  
53rd Signal Battalion

**COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.** — With the winter months approaching, there is going to be plenty of snow on the Colorado Mountains. The ski resorts are busy preparing for the first big snowfall of the year, and most people will be planning weekend trips this winter to head up to Keystone, Breckenridge and Vail Ski resorts. No matter where any members of the SMDC/ARSTRAT family live on this globe, when any one of them plans to ski or snowboard, it is important to keep safety a priority and plan the trip accordingly. Members of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 53rd Signal Battalion use the Mountain Safety plan when preparing for trips to the mountains to ski or snowboard. There are six tips in the plan that can help ensure everyone's safety:

**Stay Warm:** Check the weather report for the weekend, and determine what type of clothing will be necessary for the trip. Make sure you are properly dressed when heading up the mountain; the temperature and wind chill is much lower

the higher you go.

**Equipment Check:** Prior to departing for a ski weekend, make sure your ski or snowboard equipment is operational. Careless accidents occur when people do not take the proper precautions before engaging in winter sports. Along with sports equipment, ensure that a safety inspection is done on the POV being utilized for the trip. Packing extra items such as bottled water, blankets,

flashlight and warning triangles can be extremely helpful in the case of a vehicle breakdown.

**Check Traffic:** Regrettably there are only a few ways to get to the resorts, so traffic can get backed up on the weekends. Consider alternate routes and less busy times to travel, to avoid unwanted traffic and accidents.

**Don't Drink and Ski/Snowboard:** Alcohol mixed with any sport can be extremely

dangerous. Alcohol impairs better judgment and depth perception; you cannot only hurt yourself but others around you. If you are going to drink alcohol, plan to drink after the skiing or snowboarding activities are done for the day, and make sure there is always a designated driver to take you home.

**Follow Rules:** Pay attention to resort rules and regulations. Do not ski down restricted trails, or in areas that are prohibited. They are blocked off for a reason, and failing to follow these rules can result in a serious accident.

**Use the Buddy System:** When traveling or participating in winter sports, it is always better to have a "Battle Buddy." Just as in every activity the Army plans, there should be a second person there, in case you get hurt or stranded. When making your weekend ski trip plans, ensure to include your friends, and let your first line supervisor know your plans as well.

By following these few safety guidelines, you will minimize your chances of being involved in any safety incidents or accidents.

Next time you are planning a ski/snowboard trip, remember to include Mountain Safety!



Photo by Master Sgt. Dennis E. Beebe

Members of U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/U.S. Army Forces Strategic Command take to the slopes during a unit ski day last February.

# The Command Corner



**Lt. Gen. Kevin T. Campbell**  
Commanding General



**CSM Ralph C. Borja**  
Command Sergeant Major

**D**ecember is the time of year when our thoughts start to turn to holidays and to spending time with family and friends. It is amazing at how quickly time flies; it seems like just yesterday that I was taking command of SMDC/ARSTRAT. In that short span of time there have been many changes: changes in DOD leadership, changes in Army leadership, changes in SMDC/ARSTRAT leadership, and changes in headquarters' location. Yet, with all the changes that have occurred, what remains constant is the commitment by our Soldiers, our civilian workforce and our Families.

## Soldiers

Today, about 259,000 of America's Soldiers are deployed worldwide; more than 148,000, including Soldiers and civilians from SMDC/ARSTRAT, are in harms way supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. The courage, competence, and commitment of our Soldiers to the ideals that continue to make this country great are making a difference in our world. The morale of our deployed Soldiers remains high.

President Woodrow Wilson once said, "you cannot tear up ancient rootages and safely plant the tree of liberty in soil that is not native to it." I believe the tree of liberty grows where there are those willing to fight for freedom. Our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines continue to stay true to their mission and we are seeing those positive results take root.

Our young Soldiers and their leaders are making a difference not just in the Middle East but also around the globe and here at home.

## Civilians

The great success and reputation that the Army enjoys is based in large part because of the team of civilians who support our Warfighters.

The bedrock of SMDC/ARSTRAT is without a doubt our civilian workforce. They provide the long-term expertise and stability that is vital to maintaining our ability to support the warfighter. The efforts of our civilian workforce are providing improvements to the equipment today that can save Soldiers' lives. Our engineers and scientists are working tirelessly to develop new technologies that will make significant impacts on the modern battlefield. These new technologies and methodologies being developed will someday help defeat improvised explosive devices (IEDs), help harness the vast capabilities of space, and help integrate our missile defense systems.

Our workforce is no stranger to military service, many civilians, to include our dedicated contractors, have served in uniform. A common motto heard locally certainly applies, "Still serving." Thank you for your continued service.

## Family Members

"Still serving" also applies to our Family members. There is an old saying that goes, "the Army recruits a Soldier but re-enlists a Family." That saying is more true today than it ever was. The Army Family has been an integral part of our nation's defense

See **CG's column** on page 3

**T**he holiday season is now upon us, and I'd like to begin by wishing all our SMDC/ARSTRAT Soldiers, DOD civilians, contractors and their Families an enjoyable and safe holiday. My wife Nguyet and I sincerely hope that all of you will get the opportunity to spend time with friends and family, and that each of you return safely to bring in the new year.

It may seem that I'm stressing safety a bit much during this time of celebration, but it's precisely because of the upcoming festivities that I'm doing so. For many of us, the holiday season means extended trips to visit loved ones. Long road trips, even during normal periods, can be dangerous and require constant vigilance to assure safe arrival at the desired destination. Add in pre-occupation caused by holiday activities, potentially bad weather, and the millions of other people who are trying to reach their holiday destinations in as short a time as possible, and suddenly you are in an environment which can rapidly change the holidays from a time of love and joy into a period of grief and sorrow.

I urge all of you to take the time while making arrangements for the holidays to conduct preliminary checks to ensure you and your love ones cover all bases during adverse weather conditions and other unforeseen issues that may arise. Make sure you're well rested before beginning your holiday journey, and please give yourself enough time to reach your final destination without having to drive long periods without rest or at high speeds. Keep in mind the fact that you are sharing the road with other travelers who, like you, want to reach their destinations safely and happily. Be courteous to other drivers and keep the meaning of the season in your heart in order to avoid unnecessary stress and confrontation on the roadways.

I'd also like to remind each of you that you are members of a proud and professional organization and that your actions reflect not only upon yourself, but upon SMDC/ARSTRAT and ultimately upon the United States Army. As we participate in socials and gatherings during the holidays, we must remain mindful of the consequences resulting from imbibing too much alcohol. It's crucial that each of you remain responsible and in control when drinking alcohol, and that you resist the urge to have "just one more" in order to fit in or to socialize. That one extra drink, can result in you taking actions that embarrass or discredit yourself and SMDC/ARSTRAT, a career ending DWI, or ultimately in the tragic loss of life by yourself, a loved one, or an innocent bystander. Finally, I want to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the commanders, NCOs, Soldiers, civilian work force and Families during my recent command visit to Kwajalein Atoll, the JTAGS detachments in Osan, Air Force Base (Korea) and Misawa, Japan, and finally Echo Company, 53rd Signal Battalion, in Okinawa, Japan. Your overall professionalism, commitment and dedication is greatly commended. I challenge you all to continue staying vigilant and focus on your mission as well as taking care of your warriors and their Families while abroad.

Please enjoy a safe and enjoyable holiday season. Remember that you are a valued member of the SMDC/ARSTRAT team, and that we very much look forward to your return in the new year. On behalf of my Family, and the rest of the command team, we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

**ON POINT!**

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# What We Think

## The Eagle asks:

**If you could have anything for Christmas, what would it be?**



Giselle Bodin  
Public Affairs Specialist  
Public Affairs Office  
Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

I was lucky enough to go on a cruise with my family this year, and I'd love the opportunity to spend more time traveling with my family and my friends. And I'm still holding out for the pet dolphin I didn't get when I was eight.



James Ross  
Command Sgt Major  
1st Space Battalion  
Colorado Springs, Colo.

I'd be home a lot more. My current position requires me to travel quite a bit which is hard on my family ... I'd also like to win the lottery.



1st Lt. Marvell Hawkins  
Physical Security Officer,  
49th Missile Defense Battalion  
Fort Greely, Alaska

Well, since the temperature here is forecasted to drop to around 25 below zero; I wish I was spending Christmas relaxing in the sun on a warm beach in Hawaii.



John Lendeborg  
Administrative Assistant  
Small Business Office  
Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

Good health and to spend time with my family. We're spread across the South and it would be very joyful to me if we could be together.

## Covenant

continued from page 1

same standards for quality of life as I do in Huntsville."

Following Campbell's remarks, Lt. Col. Gregory McClinton, the Greely Garrison commander, described what major changes have occurred at the post [since June 2002]. The post was put into mothballs as part of Base Realignment and Closure in 1995. Highlights included a new post exchange, a renovated commissary, and a post theater. McClinton also described what Fort Greely residents can expect in the future. Funds have been programmed for items such as a community activity center and an indoor running track. He also said that Soldiers and Families could expect a subway cart added to the AAFES troop store.

### The Army Family Covenant states:

We recognize the commitment and increasing sacrifices that our Families are making every day.

We recognize the strength of our Soldiers comes from the strength of their Families.

We are committed to providing Soldiers and Families a Quality of Life that is commensurate with their service.

We are committed to providing our Families a strong, supportive environment where they can thrive.

We are committed to building a partnership with Army Families that enhances their strength and resilience.

We are committed to improving Family readiness by:

- Standardizing and funding existing Family programs and services
- Increasing accessibility and quality of healthcare
- Improving Soldier and Family housing
- Ensuring excellence in schools, youth services, and child care
- Expanding education and employment opportunities for Family members

*(Some information was obtained from Army News Service.)*

## CG's Column

continued from page 2

since Margaret Cochran Corbin fought in place of her husband when he was wounded during the battle at Fort Washington, New York, Nov. 16, 1776 — 231 years ago. She was recognized by Gen. George Washington for her bravery. Molly Pitcher, as she came

to be known, is at the forefront of a long line of Army Families that stretches from the American Revolution to the war in Iraq that endure hardships as they stand by their Soldier.

The Army leadership recognizes the tremendous burden thrust upon our Families and last month signed a covenant with Army Families at each installation to improve

the quality of life for our Soldiers and for our Families. The covenant is a commitment to provide a Quality of Life that matches the sacrifice and the service of our Soldiers and our Families.

### Holiday Safety

The three pillars of the SMDC/ARSTRAT team: the Soldier, the civilian, and the Family member are all vital to the

continued security of our nation. Your safety is a priority ... 365 days a year. However, the holidays introduce additional hazards as Families travel significant distances to visit loved ones. I want to reinforce what CSM Borja states in his column about the importance of safety during the holidays. If traveling long distances, ensure your vehicle is in good working order,

get plenty of rest, and take appropriate precautions for wintery weather conditions. By all means enjoy the holidays, but let's start the new year with everyone back safe!

On behalf of my Family, and the rest of the command team, we wish you all a very Happy and Healthy Holiday Season!

**SECURE THE HIGH GROUND!**

## Chaplain comes to arctic tundra from sunny Guam

By Maj. Laura Kenney, 100<sup>th</sup>  
Missile Defense Brigade (GMD)  
Public Affairs Office

**FORT GREELY, Alaska** — Like many other Alaska National Guardsman now serving in the 49th Missile Defense Battalion (Ground-based Midcourse Defense), Chaplain (Capt.) Vicente Cepeda is neither a native Alaskan nor a long-time resident of the chilly far-northern state. Soldiers from 36 states have gone into the make-up of this completely Active Guard Reserve unit, and they became Alaska Guardsmen and women when they signed up for the federal mission of defending the homeland against ballistic missile attack.

But the 49<sup>th</sup>'s new chaplain has perhaps traveled the farthest, in terms of climatic and geographic aspects if not distance. Guam has a median temperature of 71 in January and February, the coldest months ... and this post at the same time period has recordings of 60 degrees below, without even *thinking* about the wind chill factor. Hot and humid vs. bone-chilling cold — an island with an area of 216 square miles next to a state that is larger than all but 18 sovereign nations, with an area of 570,380 square miles, much of it wilderness.

None of this fazes the "sunny" nature of the 45-year old minister. He and his family love their adopted home, and Cepeda actually feels that the relative remoteness of Guam helped prepare him for the isolation that is often felt by newcomers to Alaska's starkness and grandeur.

"Guam is a beautiful place, but because it is a small island, we don't miss the connections to large cities and other states that some of our Soldiers do," said Cepeda.

The isolation is perhaps one of the biggest factors he finds himself counseling Soldiers and their Family members for. A common joke here is that of course the Soldiers have access to Burger Kings and McDonalds — just turn right at the gate and travel two hours!

"People usually either love it here or hate it. Sometimes Family members can't adapt, and they return home, or move to Anchorage, making the Soldier a

***"The whole Morale, Welfare and Recreation piece is a huge part of keeping the Soldiers and their Families happy and content. Opportunities to do once-in-a-lifetime kind of things abound here."***

Vicente Cepeda  
Chaplain (Capt.) 49th Missile Defense  
Battalion, GMD

geographic bachelor. But for those who embrace it, Alaska is an incredible experience."

Cepeda, a Baptist, is available to minister to all members of the small and closely knit unit and garrison. The 49<sup>th</sup>, with approximately 200 Soldiers plus family members, makes up the bulk of his ministry, but the small garrison contingent and the civilian contractors who work with the highly technical and still developing missile system are also his "parishioners." Retired military that live in the nearby



Chaplain (Capt.) Vicente Cepeda

tiny Delta Junction also add to his congregation. Catholic priests offer mass twice monthly as they often have long distances to travel to take care of wide-spread flocks.

Bible studies in addition to a weekly Protestant church service help bring the Soldiers and others together. A weekly brunch/Bible study is led by a Boeing contractor. A Korean Bible study group meets in the garrison church, and the women in the Ladies Bible study are a dynamic force on post. Sunday school brings in the youngsters.

"I feel it is a tremendous opportunity for me, to minister to these Soldiers and their families. I have been in the National Guard since 2000, serving in Guam, but this full-time position allows me to more effectively help Soldiers, which is a blessing."

Cepeda came to Greely in March. His wife Audrey and their four children (three boys, one girl) promptly fell in love with "the great outdoors," and are enthusiastically involved in Scouting and sports.

"The whole Morale, Welfare and Recreation piece is a huge part of keeping the Soldiers and their Families happy and content. Opportunities to do once-in-a-lifetime kind of things abound here. During the winter months, I'm probably busiest counseling, because people do react to the lack of sunlight at this time. But I see a real pride in the importance of the mission among our Soldiers here,

and that, coupled with their professionalism, keeps them strong," said Cepeda.

Battalion commander Lt. Col. Edward Hildreth is happy with the new chaplain, and commented that he "is the best chaplain I've probably ever worked with."

Having served during Hurricane Katrina, Cepeda is no stranger to hardship. But that word doesn't even

come to mind when he ponders his current assignment.

"No hardship, only joy," he said, smiling broadly.

## Future Combat System Demonstrator visits SMDC/ARSTRAT headquarters



Phot by Dottie White

Col. John C. Hamilton, SMDC/ARSTRAT chief of staff, and Maj. Roderic Spencer (background), SMDC/ARSTRAT secretary of the general staff, participate in a demonstration of the FCS.

The Future Combat Systems Demonstrator visited Headquarters SMDC/ARSTRAT on Dec. 13 providing visitors with the opportunity for a close look of the FCS program's 21<sup>st</sup> century technology. Visitors had the opportunity to "drive" the system through a simulated battlefield situation, engage targets, control an unmanned aerial vehicle and see the benefits of improved situational awareness.

The 53-foot-long trailer houses three mock motion-based mounted combat systems with touch screens that provide detailed mission data and simulations. The FCS program is a joint networked system of systems. FCS enables ground combat forces to be highly agile and versatile, capable of conducting a variety of missions. Over time, the Army plans to equip several Brigade Combat Teams with FCS capabilities. FCS is a revolutionary approach to warfighting, and revolutionary in its approach to developing this networked systems of systems.

# Fabled Shelter #1 pulls mission again

By Sgt. Christopher R. Crook  
JTAGS Japan, 1st Space  
Company

**MISAWA Air Base, Japan** — It was like a scene right out of the latest action-adventure movie. *Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to set up a Joint Tactical Ground Station (JTAGS) site. Your equipment: A C-17 Globemaster aircraft, a JTAGS shelter with all its equipment, and nine determined Soldiers from the 1st Space Company, 1st Space Battalion (two officers, six JTAGS operators, and one acting supply noncommissioned officer.) Your final destination is Misawa Air Base, Japan. As author Clive Cussler would say, "Now make like an egg and scramble!"*

Dissolve to: It all began on a quiet September evening in Colorado Springs. The set-up crew of nine hand-selected JTAGS personnel anxiously waited on the flight line, at Peterson Air Force Base, with almost 90,000 pounds of equipment standing by. Shortly after 7 p.m., the high-pitched howl of a C-17 on approach broke the silence.

Soldiers lined up at the fence to watch their chariot taxi in off the runway. She was a big, ugly beast, but an impressive one. The flight crew was certainly not the least bit reserved about bragging on her behalf. She had just rolled off the assembly line less than two years ago and was referred to as the "latest model." Very fitting for what was about to take place.

As the JTAGS crew began the equipment upload, they realized right away that the task at hand looked a lot easier on paper. However, with a few minor deviations, the help of a 60K loader (aka, the Optimus Prime of forklifts), and some guidance from the loadmasters, everything fell right into place, and their precious cargo was securely stowed for the next day's flight. The upload had been a success.

Cut to: Next day in the afternoon.

The JTAGS crews bid their goodbyes to Families, co-workers, and other members of the 1st Space Battalion and 1st Space Brigade before loading onto the aircraft for what would hopefully be an adventure worthy of another "Iron Eagle" movie sequel.

The engines fired up, the ground crew gave a "thumbs up," and the tower cleared the aircraft for takeoff. Much to the surprise of the Soldiers on board, however, the plane didn't takeoff with the nice and easy acceleration of most commercial flights, carefully calculated and executed to keep passengers from spilling their lattes. Instead, the pilots performed the good ole "Top

Gun" take-off that snatched the JTAGS crews' collective heads sideways and sent books and iPods sailing into the back of the plane.

If they weren't awake before, they definitely were now. Luckily for the crew, the chains holding down the MTV (Medium Tactical Vehicle) held tight. Other than the rocky take-off, the flight went pretty smooth. A refuel in Washington state, an overnighter at Elmendorf Air Force Base (home of the F-22's), and an 8-hour flight over the Pacific pretty much summed it all up.

Scene and country change: Upon landing at Misawa, the JTAGS crews stepped off the huge cargo aircraft to see a very familiar face. It was Capt. Stephen K. Jennison, the JTAGS Detachment Commander - Japan, who had been waiting with as much eager anticipation as the Soldiers had.

So, what does all this mean? It means that a JTAGS unit from the U.S. to Japan is the culmination of a four-year cooperative effort between U.S. Pacific Command, U.S. Space Command, U.S. Forces Japan, U.S. Strategic Command and U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/U.S. Army Forces Strategic Command.

Misawa was selected for its ability to support operations, Soldiers and their families.

The presence of JTAGS in Japan provides a more robust Theater Ballistic Missile Defense and Ballistic Missile Warning Capability. Its mission is to receive and process in-theater direct down-linked data from Defense Support Program (DSP) sensors in order to disseminate warning, alerting and cueing information on ballistic missiles throughout the theater using existing communication networks.

What the Soldiers from the 1st Space Company were about to accomplish was historical. Not just because it was a new site, or due to the fact that they would be the first newly deployed JTAGS in more than five years, but because what was offloaded at Misawa Air Base on this incredible afternoon was the legendary (and what was once thought to be lost) "Shelter #1."

It was the original JTAGS Tactical System. The fabled "Shelter #1" was built for U.S. European Command, pulled mission in U.S. Central Command, and eventually became the test system and fielding shelter for Northrop Grumman, at Fort Carson, Colo. Now, after months of reconstruction, she had ventured halfway around the world, to what should become her final site, to once again assume her vital mission.

"I must say, she certainly



Photo by DJ Montoya

Chief Warrant Officer Santiago Gonzales carefully inspects the loading of the JTAGS shelter onto a C-17 Globemaster aircraft at Peterson Air Force Base for a trip to its new home at Misawa Air Base, Japan, in early September.

turned heads as we drove across Misawa Air Base (due mostly in part to the fact that an enormous MTV towing a 10-ton shelter, driven by Army soldiers, is not a common sight around these parts,)" said Jennison.

Cut to the happy ending ... or is it the beginning: Once the JTAGS Soldiers arrived, they could see that the new compound was quite impressive. The shelter fit perfectly in its new bay, the antennas had an eight-foot mound carved perfectly out of earth and grass to sit atop, and the offices looked pretty sharp after a few weeks of nearly round-the-clock construction.

Setting up the site was no easy task, but then again every new initiative has some growing pains to endure. They now had their home, shelter and only two weeks to make her gleam like a rock star.

The next two months were just a matter of training the JTAGS Soldiers who had come

to take the place of the original set-up crews who had ingested massive amounts of caffeine for their 12-hour shifts.

There were laughs and heartaches and more than enough long hours. Some of the original JTAGS personnel returned home early after the initial job was done, but a few stayed behind to ensure that the mission could continue and that the new crews were fully capable of doing the job. But for all of them it had been an experience.

End credits: The original nine included 1st Lt. Corey Ruckdeschel, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Santiago Gonzales, Staff Sgt. Jonas Moody, Staff Sgt. Jared English, Sgt. Christopher Crook, Sgt. Patrick Contreras, Sgt. Michael Scott, Sgt. Ivan Virruet, and Spc. Robert Parshall.

It was 5,600 miles, a month of construction, 24-hour operations between two crews, and enough issues to start a new magazine line.



Photo courtesy JTAGS Japan

JTAGS Japan 1st Crew, along with their Commander, Capt. Stephen Jennison (far left, back row) celebrate after a successful set up of the facility on Misawa Air Base, Japan.

# Safety

The holidays should be a magical time for children. Yet each year, hospital emergency rooms treat about 8,700 people for injuries, such as falls, cuts and shocks, related to holiday lights, decorations and Christmas trees.

In addition, Christmas trees are involved in about 400 fires annually, resulting in 40 deaths, 90 injuries and an average of more than \$17 million in property loss and damage. Young children are particularly at risk for injury from sharp objects, such as glass ornaments, or from well-intentioned gifts of toys that are not appropriate to their age.

Keep the season merry by implementing the following safety tips you will decrease your chances of turning a joyful season into a nightmare.

## Trees

- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant." Although this label does not mean the tree won't catch fire, it does indicate the tree will resist burning and should extinguish quickly.
- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green; needles are hard to pull from branches and when bent between your fingers, needles do not break. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.
- When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces and radiators. Because heated rooms dry live trees out rapidly, be sure to keep the stand filled with water. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.

## Lights

- Indoors or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory, which indicates conformance with safety standards.
- Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections, and throw out damaged sets. Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord.
- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.
- Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, house walls, or other firm supports to protect the lights from wind damage. Use only insulated staples, not nails or tacks, to hold strings in place. Or, run strings of lights through hooks (available at hardware stores).
- Turn off all lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.
- For added electric-shock protection, plug outdoor electric lights and decorations into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Portable outdoor GFCIs can be purchased where electrical supplies are sold. GFCIs can be installed permanently to household circuits by a qualified electrician.

## Decorations

- Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if ingested by children.
- Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles where they will not be knocked down.
- In homes with small children, take special care to avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children to avoid the child swallowing or inhaling small pieces, and avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a child to eat them.
- Wear gloves to avoid eye and skin irritation while decorating with spun glass "angel hair."
- Follow container directions carefully to avoid lung irritation while decorating with artificial snow sprays.

## Fireplace Safety

- Don't use your fireplace to burn wrapping materials – which can create toxic gasses and flash fires.

- Use kindling and wooden matches to light fires – not flammable liquids.
- Always use a fire screen.
- Don't wear loose or flowing clothes when tending the fire.
- Keep flammable decorations (ensure Christmas stockings are not flammable) away from the fireplace.
- Don't close the chimney flue until you're sure the fire is completely out. Make sure the fire is out before leaving the house or going to bed.
- Use care with "fire salts," which produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires. They contain heavy metals that can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation and vomiting if eaten. Keep them away from children.
- Do not burn wrapping papers in the fireplace. A flash fire may result as wrappings ignite suddenly and burn intensely.
- Dispose of ashes in a metal container. Never store them in or near your house.

## "Safety" gift ideas

Can't think of just the right gift? Try putting together a gift basket containing one or more of the following items:

- Three smoke detectors and batteries.
- A quality fire extinguisher.
- A flashlight and batteries or light sticks.
- A first-aid kit.
- A carbon Monoxide detector.
- A mobile phone.
- A second floor escape ladder.
- "Emergency kit" — energy bars, water, battery radio, flashlight/light sticks and a first-aid kit packed in a small travel bag.

**Have an enjoyable and safe Holiday Season.**

## AAA and Budweiser are helping you to help yourself through "TOW for LIFE"

**Throughout this Holiday Season, AAA and Budweiser have partnered to provide free rides to guests who have too much to drink.**

Throughout the United States a number of programs offer free rides to individuals who have had too much to drink. Various taxi services, wrecker companies, and other businesses may offer such services to keep impaired drivers from getting behind the wheel. AAA and Budweiser offer a service called "Tow to Go" that provides private party goers and licensed establishments a way to get people home safely. Adults in need of a ride can call 1-800-AAA-HELP. AAA will dispatch a tow truck and will take both the driver and the vehicle home, free of charge. This service is available throughout the United States — to both AAA members and non-members. Tow to Go removes the number one excuse for drunk driving — the intoxicated motorist not wanting to leave their car — by not only taking the driver home safely, but also their vehicle home safely too.

**1-800-AAA-HELP Gets you AND your car home safely.**

## Traffic accidents are our #1 threat.

There are many causes for traffic accidents. Stress, fatigue, poor weather, distractions, and consumption of alcohol before or during driving. Know the chance of accident increase when alcohol is involved. Chances of being in a fatal accident increase with blood alcohol concentration (BAC):

0.15 = 380 times  
 0.10 = 48 times  
 0.08 = "DUI"  
 0.05 = 11 times  
 0.02 = 1.4 times

# Avalanches, backcountry beauty/danger and warm house tips for the 100<sup>th</sup> MDB (GMD)

By Maj. Laura Kenney, 100th Missile Defense Brigade (GMD) Public Affairs Office

**COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.** — The “change of seasons” Safety Day at the headquarters of the 100th Missile Defense Brigade (Ground-based Midcourse Defense) located here was a hit as usual, with dramatic guests, plenty of visual aids, and free advice.

An expert in skiing safety displayed the newest in ski apparel and safety gear, including avalanche beacons and a collapsible shovel to locate and dig your buddy out with. A quiz followed his presentation, with correct answers on hypothermia and safety issues earning surprise free ski rentals.

Two backcountry park rangers demonstrated survival equipment and told their own sad tales of avalanches... one tallying the numbers he'd pulled out alive, 5, and comparing them to the number he'd pulled out dead, 12.

“I'd never stop anyone from experiencing the incredible

**“I've snowboarded in the backcountry ... the rangers really brought it home to me how dangerous it can be.”**

Staff Sgt. Kristine Bombard, Unit Supply NCO

beauty of our back country — but you have to do it safely. That means with at least one buddy — more is better, as you have more shovels to dig you out with. The avalanche beacon is only a lifesaver if it's used by a buddy team. Other than that, it's just a body locator. If you're skiing or traveling backcountry with a friend and the worst happens to him, it's up to you to get him out. If you need to come get us to help, we'll just be... doing body recovery. The max time you have once you're under is twenty minutes... by the time we come back with the dog, it's just ... body recovery.”

Fire safety was given heavy emphasis by a member of a local firefighters group. She detailed the dangers of old smoke alarms, common household fire hazards and winter heating woes.

A local policeman had the roomful of Soldiers laughing as he told them ridiculous drunk driver stories, but faces sobered quickly when he followed with talk of deaths, and a stern promise that he'd be manning sobriety checks this holiday season. He commented on the great job his wife does as his regular designated driver, and recommended care when picking one. (The designated driver, not the wife, though he'd probably recommend care in the choosing of that too.)

Last but far from least, two handy gentlemen from a local Home Depot brought all kinds of fix-it goodies to the table, demonstrating the best ways to keep your home safe and warm during the winter season.

Staff Sgt. Kristine Bombard,

Supply NCO for the unit, said, “All the classes were interesting, but the avalanche stories were the most compelling. I've snowboarded in the back-

country with my husband, and the rangers really brought it home to me how dangerous it can be. Now I know what to look out for.”



Photo by Maj. Laura Kenney

A skiing expert from a local sporting goods store describes the proper equipment to wear while skiing. With his backcountry skiing experience, the rep taught about avalanche and cold weather safety during the 100th Missile Defense Brigade's (GMD) seasonal Safety Day.

## Army launching online pay system

By Lisa Burgess  
Stars and Stripes

**ARLINGTON, Va.** — The Army is planning to launch an online pay and personnel system in October that will bring all three components into a single database. The Army Defense Integrated Military Human Resources DIMHRS, represents the Army's first efforts to pull the reserves and active Army under one pay system, the program's director, Army Col. Patrick Devine, told Stripes on Tuesday.

The system, the result of a Defense Department

mandate to streamline all the service's record-keeping capabilities, is also the first time the Army has merged payroll and personnel data, Devine said.

Once DIMHRS (“pronounced dimers”) goes online Oct. 1, 2008, personnel actions will automatically trigger associated pay events, starting the cash flowing to the Soldier's paycheck without delay, Devine said.

For example, when a Soldier is mobilized to deploy to a designated combat zone, DIMHRS will automatically update the payroll

section of the Soldier's records, so he starts receiving entitlements such as Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay.

Another change will be to eliminate the choice of being on a monthly or biweekly pay cycle.

Instead, all Soldiers will now receive two paychecks each month, Devine said.

Under the new system, the Leave and Earning Statement (LES), will be renamed a “Pay Slip.”

“It will have the same data as the old LES, but the information will be displayed on different areas of the page,”

Devine said. (For a sample, go to stripes.com).

The Army is sending strategic communications teams that will provide an overview of the program, Army spokesman Lt. Col. Kevin Curry said.

Curry said these “change management” teams are briefing senior leaders, brigade and battalion-level leaders, human resource professionals and Soldiers.

Most Soldiers will be trained via distance-learning, Curry said.

Supervisors will use the program to process

leave requests, awards and evaluations.

Individual Soldiers can access their records and make some changes, such as address updates, he said.

The DIMHRS Web site, at armydimhrs.army.mil, also will have all the training materials available, he said.

The Air Force, meanwhile, is set to launch DIMHRS in February 2009.

The Navy, which also oversees pay and personnel for the Marines, has yet to set a date for launching the system.

# HQ SMDC/ARSTRAT holds holiday s

By Diane Schumacher, SMDC/ARSTRAT Public Affairs Office

**REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala.** — The U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command isn't different from any other American military agency when it comes to celebrating American holidays — we like to do it!

So on Dec. 7, SMDC/ARSTRAT headquarters held its annual holiday social in the headquarters building.

In the morning hours a small group from the SMDC/ARSTRAT Holiday Choir found time to walk around the building, stopping at various offices to sing melodious Christmas carols. The headquarters has some very talented singers in its mix.

Later in the morning, Santa stopped by for a couple of hours to meet with younger children to let them know he had received their letters and to listen to their requests. Of course, that was for those who weren't afraid of his beard. Those who managed to sit with Santa also had their photographs taken, showing off the (mostly) smiling faces of SMDC/ARSTRAT children.

After lunch time, the social continued with the choir putting on a show for those who could attend the program. Again, talented performers disguised as analysts, intelligence specialists, human resource specialists, and the like ...who would have guessed they were singers? Choir director LaJeannia Lacey also gathered a few of the children from the crowd of attendees to join her and the choir at the front of the conference room to sing light, joyful Christmas songs, which brought smiles from parents and grand-parents in attendance.

At the conclusion of the choir's program,

Laura Darnell and Sharon Crawford who were in charge of the Toys for Tots collection program this year, presented more than 500 toys, games, dolls, stuffed animals, tri-cycles, bicycles, and a red wagon to Marine Corps representatives, Gunnery Sgt. Michael A. LaMar and Cpl. Jeremy S. Ritz. Darnell also presented an additional \$160 in cash and checks to LaMar, who will pass that on to another agency who then in turn will use it to buy toys and needed items for older youth, LaMar said. Marine Lance Cpl. George T. O'Brien and Sgt. Daniel F. Shipps also attended to load all toys and bikes into a cargo van after the holiday program concluded. LaMar said the outpouring of gifts from HQ SMDC/ARSTRAT was the most he had seen from any organization in the time he had been collecting Toys for Tots in this area.

Maj. Michael Belton and Dorae Combs prepared a slide show which followed the Marines presentation. It was an emotional tribute to our Soldiers serving overseas, especially those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The slide show was one that has made the rounds on civilian and military e-mails and Web sites. It was accompanied by a recording of "Letters from Home," sung by country recording artist John Michael Montgomery. Combs added photos of SMDC/ARSTRAT employee Family members and friends to the show. The room came to a hush as the attendees looked upon the faces of strangers and loved ones and tears silently rolled down the cheeks of many.

"The primary purpose was to recognize that we have Soldiers that will not have the opportunity to be home with their Families for Christmas and we have

Families within our command that have Family members deployed," wrote Belton. "We not only want to recognize that fact, but remember them in our prayers."

The somber moments were brought to a close when Dana Henslee came to the podium and announced contest awards would be presented next. There was a contest for the best decorated cubicles, doors and Christmas trees. The decorations were divided into categories: traditional, spiritual, humorous, mission-related, and recognition of SMDC/ARSTRAT's 50th Anniversary. Winners were: for Door or cubicle, first place went to Public Affairs for their traditional door decorated in a theme of Candyland, second place went to Future Warefare Center (Dr. Linda Beach) for her cubicle decorated in a traditional Christmas theme.

All other winners decorated Christmas trees. Carla Jones in the space division of the Technical Center took first place in the traditional category for tree decorations.

Carlyne Willis in the directed energy division of the Technical Center took first place for the spiritual category.

Sylvia Martin, JoAnna Brunson, and Carlyne Willis shared first place for decorating a Christmas tree with a mission-related theme for Dr. Rodney Robertson's office in the Technical Center.

Deb Rice and Carolyn Warren received first place in the humorous category in decorating their Christmas tree for the G8.

Theresa Morris and Jan Sigman took first place for their tree's theme of recognizing SMDC/ARSTRAT's 50th Anniversary.

There were a lot of happy winners, judging by the smiles on their faces.

Col. David Cox, closed the event with a few words of wisdom: keep safety in mind with everything we do.



Photos by Diane Schumacher

The choir changes the tempo of tunes and invites children in the audience to come up and sing with them.



Army Sgt. 1st Class Erika White (SMDC/ARSTRAT), background, helps Marine Sgt. Daniel Shipps and Lance Cpl. George O'Brien transfer toys from one box to another.



U.S. Marine Gunnery Sgt. Michael A. LaMar receives \$160 in cash and checks from SMDC/ARSTRAT's Laura Darnell on Dec. 7. The money was donated by SMDC/ARSTRAT employees in addition to a myriad of toys and bicycles for the annual Toys for Tots Christmas donations program.



SMDC/ARSTRAT before the Ma



No Grandma! No! He's t

# Social, Santa stops in to visit children



Photo by Diane Schumacher

GRAT Christmas tree in the lobby of the headquarters building, surrounded by Toys for Tots donations arrive to pick up the treasures.



Santa photos by Dottie White and John Cummings

Well Santa, what I would really like ...



I'm a little shy right now, but I might smile.



Daughter and mother tell Santa their Christmas wishes.



Too scary! I can't see his face ...



Okay, I'll go with Miss Dottie because she knows karate, and she can protect me!



Pretty smile, perfectly posed — looks like she's had experience in taking pictures with Santa.

# Alpha Company feasts on home cooked dinner

By Spc. Jason Sachinger  
A Co., 53rd Signal Battalion

**FORT DETRICK, Md.** — The Alpha Company 53rd Signal Battalion 2007 Thanksgiving dinner was sponsored in part by the Family Readiness Group and was once again a very successful event.

Many of the Soldiers and spouses from within the company contributed their fair share of Thanksgiving "fixings" in support of the event.

All of the traditional foods such as turkey, ham, stuffing, green bean casserole, macaroni and cheese, home-style mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, pumpkin pie, apple pie, and more were enjoyed by all as Soldiers and their Families gathered together to kickoff the holiday weekend. There was absolutely no shortage of food, and shift workers who were unable to attend were also able to enjoy the all-to-customary leftovers upon

returning to work, as well as for the remainder of the holiday weekend.

Although the food was of the highest quality for the holiday, the best part was seeing the Families interacting together. Soldiers and their children chased basketballs and tossed footballs around. Soldiers who work various shifts rarely have the opportunity to come together during their off-duty hours, so it was a very welcomed opportunity for them to do so.

Capt. Daniel Wall and 1st Sgt. Phillip Rivera spearheaded the event and were also seen mingling with the Soldiers and their Families and taking the opportunity to wish them all a happy holiday.

For the single Soldiers who live in the barracks and do not have family in the area, it also gave them the opportunity to feast on a "home cooked" Thanksgiving dinner that they otherwise may not have had the opportunity to enjoy. Newcomer Pfc. Nicholas Savickas, whose family



Photo by Spc. Jason Sachinger

A young child prepares for Alpha Company, 53rd Signal Battalion's (SATCON) pre-dinner kickoff football game.

resides in Stevensville, Mich., was unable to return home for the holiday due to the demands of the mission.

"It was almost as sweet as being home with the Family," said Savickas.



## HHC, 53rd Signal Battalion farewells FRG group leader

During their Annual Thanksgiving Potluck, Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 53rd Signal Battalion bade an emotional farewell to the unit's Family Readiness Group Leader, Tammy Parsons.



## Soldiers fill up on food

Soldiers and family members of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 53rd Signal Battalion enjoy their annual Thanksgiving Potluck at Heritage Baptist Church November 20.

## Santa Clause is coming to town ...

Santa Clause and Ms. Elf, his helper, read the time-honored tale "Twas the night before Christmas" to children of Soldiers of the 100th Missile Defense Brigade (GMD) at the unit's family Christmas party. Each child also had the chance to tell Santa his or her individual wishes, received a small gift, and worked on holiday craft projects at the party.



Photo by Maj. Laura Kenney



Photo by Maj. Laura Kenney

Sgt. 1st Class Kenny Lewter, a staff member at the 100th Missile Defense Brigade (GMD) headquarters, tells Santa "all about it" during the unit's family Christmas party Dec. 8, proving that Santa is not just there for the children.

# Army's gain is Alpha Company's sore loss

By DJ Montoya  
1st Space Brigade  
Public Affairs Office

**FORT DETRICK, Md.** — In order to get something, sometimes you have to give up something. This is what Alpha Company, 53rd Signal Battalion, experienced recently when one of its own Soldiers decided to reenlist in the Army for four more years.

Spc. Joshua Reis, a satellite operator/maintainer for the past three years reenlisted in a small but memorable ceremony attended by his wife Rebecca, friends, and fellow Soldiers inside Alpha Company's satellite control facility located on Fort Detrick, Md.

The event, held in the afternoon prior to crew shift, was cause for celebration on two scores for Reis. One, he was continuing his support of the U.S. Army during these times of uncertainty, and second he was beginning a new journey with his wife across the Atlantic at a sister unit — Charlie Company in Landstuhl, Germany.

"I think the reenlistment came at a pretty good time,"

said Reis, a native of Fort Worth, Texas, pointing to fact that he had been in the surrounding area for quite a while.

"I've even been here long enough to get married. Rebecca and I are (now) ready to see what Europe has to offer."

Capt. Daniel Wall, commander of Alpha Company, served as the administrating official for Reis' ceremony. Wall has performed close to a dozen reenlistment ceremonies at the company since he assumed command back in May 2006.

"To me it recognizes the importance of the occasion that you have an officer there present to do the swearing in ceremony," said Wall.

"It is a public affirmation of 'I signed up to support, defend the constitution of the United States' and I think that is very important."

Wall stated that the departure of Reis would be a loss for Alpha Company but a definite gain for Charlie Company.

"He is going to our sister company (in our) battalion,



Photo by DJ Montoya  
Capt. Daniel Wall (left), commander of Alpha Company, 53rd Signal Battalion administers the oath to Spc. Joshua Reis (right) during a reenlistment ceremony.

taking his knowledge/skills and keeping it within the satellite control community. I certainly hate to lose him but we have other people that are ready to step up."

Wall went on to say that Alpha Company Soldiers have a very important mission. "They work hard at it every day, 24/7/365. We ask a lot of these young Soldiers. They've got a

very important mission and they do a great job at it."

As to the current status of Alpha Company, the commander pulled no punches by saying, "We are executing the mission. The company is doing well, but we continue to try to get better. We are always looking for better and more efficient ways to train and conduct our daily business."

## Delta Company conducts realistic OTX

By Pfc. Lucas Johnson, Delta Co., 53rd Signal Battalion

**CAMP ROBERTS, Calif.** — This year, the Delta Company Diablos were involved in their first OTX, Operational Training Exercise. The OTX was meant to bridge the gap in training between the more experienced operators and the personnel who just joined the company. The focus of the OTX was to go over detailed signal flow and to see simple troubleshooting in action.

The exercise covered three positions in all. GNC, ground mobile forces network controller, was covered by Spc. Michael Felix of second squad, ENC, Electronic Counter-Counter Measures Network Controller, was covered by Spc. David Day, and FNC, Frequency Division Multiple Access Network Controller, was covered by Spc. William Wilson.

The first class was with Wilson, who first passed out blank sheets of paper and asked that the Soldiers draw up an idea of what they thought the DSCS (Defense Satellite Communication System) Frequency Division Multiple Access Control System (DFCS) signal flow was. He then divided the

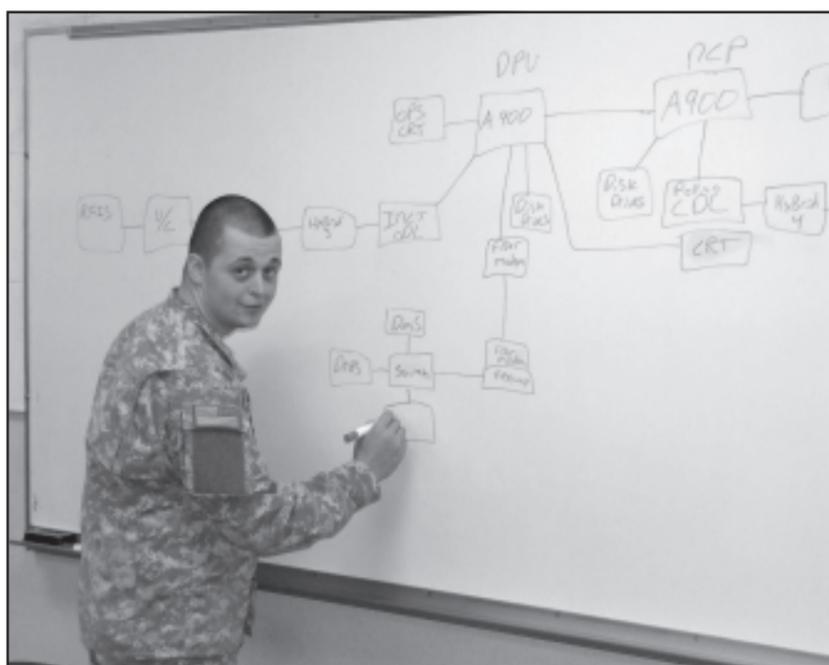


Photo by Sgt. Roy Morales  
Pfc. Lucas Johnson explains in-depth the signal flow of a subsystems.

class into equal groups based off their diagrams. With permissions granted, Wilson took down both DFCS and put in some setting changes then had two teams race to bring up the DFCS. The other two teams remained in the classroom digging through the technical manuals for answers that the instructor had left for them to do as he supervised the

the Soldiers went over during the OTX.

Breaking down the many half-drawers into their individual components and tasks was a lot of information to soak in the twelve hour block of instruction.

The OTX was useful to the unit, either providing a basis of learning or being a nice refresher to the more experienced operators.

## Civilian News

### NATCA says controller shortage hurting economy

From Federal Daily Online: As Thanksgiving air travelers kicked off the holiday travel season, the head of National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) took the opportunity to warn attendees that the nation's controllers are handling higher volumes of traffic in an overworked, understaffed environment—and that the shortage of controllers is damaging the economy. In speech at a Transportation Table luncheon at the national Press Club, NATCA President Patrick Forrey warned said that controllers are still working without a Federal Aviation Administration contract, and that the lack of a contract has contributed to the record number of controllers who have retired in the past year. Nearly 1,000 veteran controllers have left via early retirement since September 2006, Forrey said, noting that he expects another 1,500 to leave by next September [2008]. "Our labor situation is having a very negative impact, even if the media isn't paying that close attention," Forrey said. "Our labor situation is damaging the U.S. economy and hurting travelers in the form of delayed flights and decreased safety." To see more, go to: [natca.org](http://natca.org).

### Take the guesswork out of your TSP

The investment analysts at TSP Pilot ([tsppilot.com](http://tsppilot.com)) have introduced a unique new service to help account holders respond to difficult but crucial questions such as... Which TSP fund to buy and when? — Is now the right time to be in the TSP stock funds? — Do the S, I, or new L Funds have a role to play in MY TSP portfolio? — And, most of all... How much should I allocate to each Fund in my own Thrift Savings? — All these questions and more are answered in the TSP Pilot advisories—the key to dramatically reducing the risk and improving the returns in YOUR Federal Thrift Savings Plan Account. How easy is it? Virtually any Thrift Savings Plan account holder can use TSP Pilot to improve investment results. TSP Pilot will provide you with the optimum percentage allocations to plug directly into the TSP web site for your own TSP account for each of the TSP funds (including the new L Funds). Use the simple "How it works" instructions when you visit the TSP web site, click on "Account Access" then "Account Transactions" and enter the TSP Pilot allocation percentages for each of the five TSP Funds and you're off to maximizing your TSP investment returns.

### Lawmaker calls for citizenship check of all federal employees

In the wake of a security failure involving a former FBI and CIA employee, Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, is asking President Bush to order a complete re-verification of every federal employee's citizenship. King made his request on Nov. 14, the day after former FBI and CIA employee Nada Nadim Prouty pleaded guilty to conspiring to fraudulently obtain citizenship and illegally accessing the FBI computer system. According to court documents, Prouty entered the United States on a one-year, non-immigrant visa from Lebanon in 1989. She faked a marriage to an unemployed U.S. citizen and in 1999 was hired by the FBI as special agent at the bureau's field office in Washington. Prouty, who joined the CIA in 2003, resigned from the agency as part of her guilty plea. Earlier this year, King, the ranking Republican on the House immigration subcommittee, highlighted a government report showing that 11,000 local, state and federal employees did not have legal immigration status. To see more, go to website: [house.gov/list/press](http://house.gov/list/press).

### OPM finalizes retention bonus rule

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has published the final rule authorizing the use of retention bonuses to keep key federal employees from leaving agencies that are restructuring or relocating their offices. In a rule that will become effective Dec. 17, OPM approved the use of retention incentives in restructuring situations for employees who would be likely to leave for different positions in the federal service. The rule, published in the Nov. 16 *Federal Register*, also offers additional flexibilities to help agencies retain employees who perform mission-critical work at sites subject to closure and relocation. The new rule is part of OPM's implementation of the 2004 Federal Workforce Flexibility Act and broadens a 2005 interim regulation that had only allowed agencies to offer retention bonuses to those workers headed for the private sector. To see more, go to: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2007/pdf/E7-22490.pdf>.

## Military News

### TRICARE debuts new Web service

TRICARE Prime and Prime Remote beneficiaries in the United States can now manage their health care online. Prime and Prime Remote beneficiaries can log on to the TRICARE Beneficiary Enrollment website [[go through \[tricare.mil/mybenefit\]\(http://go.thru.tricare.mil/mybenefit\)\]](http://go.thru.tricare.mil/mybenefit) to enroll, disenroll, update personal information and perform other procedures. The site also allows standard beneficiaries to update personal information, add other health care information and enroll in Prime. Enrollment forms are still available at the TRICARE My Profile Web site [[tricare.mil/mybenefit](http://tricare.mil/mybenefit)] to fill out and mail to a TRICARE regional office. Beneficiaries can also visit a TRICARE Service Center to enroll and obtain assistance with other health-care needs. To learn more about TRICARE, visit [military.com/benefits/tricare](http://military.com/benefits/tricare).

### Holiday military postal deadline

According to the Military Postal Service Agency (MPSA), holiday letters and cards going first-class to military APO/FPO addresses overseas should have been sent by Dec. 10 to arrive by Dec. 25. Each country has customs regulations that apply to all incoming mail, pertaining to everything from food items to reading materials. Military units may also have additional restrictions concerning incoming mail imposed by unit commanders relative to size and weight to ensure logistics support can handle the heavy mail load. And, all packages and mail must now be addressed to individual servicemembers as required by U.S. Department of Defense regulations. For more information, visit MPSA Web site [[hqdainet.army.mil/mpsa](http://hqdainet.army.mil/mpsa)].

### Army program builds strong marriages

The Strong Bonds program is a training program run by both active-duty and reserve-component chaplains. It originated in 1999 with the 25th Infantry Division, but has taken off during the war on terrorism, as Army couples needed to maintain or rebuild their friendships and intimacy amid repeated deployment cycles. The retreat weekend includes a "date night," and couples must leave their home city and stay in a hotel in order to spend quality time together. The Army pays for everything, even the spouse's travel. Strong Bonds also often includes some kind of recommitment ceremony. For more information or to find an upcoming retreat, visit [strongbonds.org](http://strongbonds.org).

### AAFES launches redesigned Web page

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) unveiled the revamped "Mission, News & More" page at [aafes.com](http://aafes.com) to ensure authorized shoppers, and the American public, are up-to-date with policies and information concerning the Department of Defense's oldest and largest exchange service. The updated page contains the latest news, recalls and facts pertinent to AAFES, as well as a history overview, leadership bios, contact information, video clips and more. Anyone can access the new and improved "Mission, News & More" page by clicking the red box on the top right hand side of the AAFES homepage.

### Space "A" Travel

Space Available Flight, better known as Space A or military hops, is a unique privilege provided to servicemembers, retirees and their families. In this post 9/11 world, however, flight information has been removed from the public domain, making travel planning more challenging. There are increasingly fewer Space A seats, and that will become even scarcer in the near future due to planned reductions in Space A gateways. In stark contrast to civilian air travel, there is no centralized process yet for booking seats on Space A flights. Nonetheless, it's still the cheapest way to fly if you've got lots of free time. You must sign up and have the following: **Active duty uniformed servicemembers** (including National Guard and Reserve members on active duty in excess of 30 days and Cadets and Midshipmen of the U.S. Service Academies) need DD Form 2 (Green) US Armed Forces ID Card (Active), or Form 2 NOAA (Green) Uniformed Services ID and Privilege Card (Active), or PHS Form 1866-3 (Green) US Public Health Service ID Card (Active) and a valid leave authorization or evidence of pass status. **Retired uniformed servicemembers** need DD Form 2 (Blue) US Armed Forces ID Card (Retired), or DD Form 2 NOAA (Blue) Uniformed Services ID Card (Retired), or PHS Form 1866-3 (Blue) US Public Health Service ID Card (Retired). See [www.military.com](http://www.military.com).

## SMDC/ARSTRAT awards \$247.5 million shared contract to 3 Huntsville small businesses for engineering support

**SMDC/ARSTRAT**  
Public Affairs Office

**REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala.** — On Dec. 6, the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command awarded three Huntsville small businesses with a Systems Engineering and Technical Assistance Contract (SETAC) extending through 2013 and worth a maximum potential of \$247.5 million.

The three companies are Radiance Technologies Inc., Systems Studies and Simulation Inc., and DMD L.L.C.

SETAC is one of the key contracts that sustains operations for SMDC/ARSTRAT. The award of these three contracts, two to small businesses and one to a woman-owned small business, marks a departure from recurring awards to large businesses. SETAC is the first substantial award to small businesses for SMDC/ARSTRAT and demonstrates the confidence SMDC/ARSTRAT has in the small business community to provide vital services in support of its mission.

The purpose of the contract is for engineering support services including independent assessments, analyses, software verification, simulations, special studies associated with SMDC/ARSTRAT and Program Executive Office, Missiles and Space missions, and independent cost analysis.



Photo by Diane Schumacher

Melissa Mitchell, contracts administrator, SMDC/ARSTRAT, signs the final of three contracts awarding three Huntsville small businesses with a Systems Engineering and Technical Assistance Contract (SETAC) worth \$247.5 million. (Standing, from left) Dennis H. Vaughn, senior systems manager with System Studies and Simulation Inc. (S3); Victor D. Balch, director of contracts for Radiance Technologies; and Jane Northrop, contract manager with DMD, L.L.C., each signed acceptance for their companies.

## Culinary Olympic champion brings skills to RSA

By Dottie White  
SMDC/ARSTRAT Public Affairs Office

**REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala.** — A small white replica of the SMDC/ARSTRAT commanding general's quarters, brightly lit from within, sits on a round table surrounded by holiday greenery in a room off the entrance of his quarters here. When looking at this masterpiece of artwork, one might think it is made of crystal or marble. In fact, it is made of a sugar-based dough called pastillage, which is made of powdered sugar, gelatin and water.

"This was a fairly simple piece," said Sgt. 1st Class Felix Green, who created the model in about a week.

He said first he had to cut out a cardboard template like a puzzle and make sure all the pieces fit. Once that was complete, he could start rolling out and cutting out the pastillage pieces. Then he had to let it dry for about a day and half.

"The pieces are really fragile, and you break pieces as you go," Green said. "It's better if you cut more than one piece out for each section in case this happens."

"Then you start pasting pieces together with icing," he added. "Each piece has to sit and dry before you can put the next piece on, then the next piece on. Then you put the top on, and it just builds up like that. After it's done, you take your icing and you start decorating it like a cake. You put the windows on and shutters and so on."

In some of his past assignments in Washington D.C., Green created pieces such as the Pentagon and the entire National Mall.

Green began his duties as the enlisted aide assigned to

the government quarters of Lt. Gen. Kevin T. Campbell, commanding general, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/U.S. Army Forces Strategic Command, here Nov. 4.

Most three-star generals are authorized one enlisted aide; most four-star generals are authorized two enlisted aides. General officers in special command positions such as the chief of staff of the Army are authorized up to four enlisted aides. There are one- and two-star generals who are authorized enlisted aides based on the positions they hold.

The duties of an enlisted aide generally vary as they are tailored to the needs of each general officer; however, most include maintaining the general officer's uniforms; arranging social events; meal preparation, to include menu planning and shopping; administrative duties and record keeping; quarters maintenance to include daily routine tasks and seasonal requirements; and performing tasks that aid the officer in accomplishing military

and official responsibilities.

Green made the pastillage house for the Campbell's holiday party, which was Dec. 8. In addition to creating this piece, he also planned, shopped, set up and decorated for the party. Then, he put his chef hat on and started cooking.

He said it took him about a week to prepare for the event. Two days of that was for food preparation. He spent one day on pastries and one day on meats.

Green had two women from the Redstone Officer's and Civilian's Club assist him with serving on the day of the party.

The commanding general's wife Kathy said Green was very relaxed and not at all uptight. "He is so independent and professional. He was so kind to the two ladies who worked with him and really mentored them throughout the day. He was wonderful."

Lt. Gen. Campbell said "We could learn something from Sergeant First Class Green when it comes to multi-tasking ... he produces what you would expect from

three people. [He is] a great NCO who forms the backbone of our Army [and] the strength of our nation!"

Green has been in the Army 21 years. The Army has paid his way to some of the top culinary schools such as Le Cordon Bleu School in Frankfort, Germany; Advanced Culinary School in Fort Lee, Va.; Johnson & Wales at Norfolk, Va.; and Stratford Culinary School of Arts in Alexandria, Va.

In 1992, the Army had a Culinary Olympic team which was comprised of its top chefs competing against civilians around the world. Green's five-man team won



Sgt. 1st Clas Felix Green and his handcrafted house of sugar.

Photo by Dottie White

See *Culinary* on page 14

## Training after the Schoolhouse

By Delta Company, 53<sup>rd</sup> Signal Battalion

**CAMP ROBERTS, Calif.** — Selected Soldiers of Delta Company recently received training on DSCS (Defense Satellite Communication System) FDMA (Frequency Division Multiple Access) Control Subsystem Network Terminal (DFCS NT) and DSCS FDMA Control Subsystem Network Control Terminal (DFCS NCT) in a series of classes taught by IIT. Over the two weeks of training, Soldiers were given the opportunity to improve their knowledge about specific details regarding the subsystems and enhance their skills. In addition, Soldiers were given the opportunity to perform various network terminal-related tasks. The selected Delta Company Soldiers also gained a new appreciation of the relationship between a Satellite Control Test and Evaluation Program site and an Operations Center (OC), an example being transmit power calibrations. Pfc. Steven Miller said, "Being that I left the school house only a few months ago, I found this course very informative."

Any opportunity to see how the other side of the same team works is a good opportunity, and this training certainly brought to light the various and important specific functions of Satellite Communication as a team. Learning about one's own job as well as how it relates to a bigger picture helps the Soldiers on the floor when striving to efficiently and quickly perform tasks. The Soldiers from Delta Company enjoyed the opportunity to receive invaluable knowledge from the DFCS NT and DFCS NCT courses. The experience was a good chance to improve troubleshooting skills and work on detail-oriented tasks.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Justin Brook

**Spc. Steven Burson** receives extra training on the DSCS (Defense Satellite Communication System) FDMA (Frequency Division Multiple Access) Control Subsystem.

### 2008 TSP contribution limits set

The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board announced that 2008's elective deferral limit for regular Thrift Savings Plan contributions will be \$15,500. In addition, contributions for the TSP catch-up plan will remain \$5,000. TSP catch-up contributions are additional tax-deferred contributions and are separate from regular TSP contributions. For those who are eligible, catch-up contributions provide a way for individuals to secure their retirement if they began investing later in their careers. Additional information about TSP, both regular and catch-up, is available on the web site: [tsp.gov](http://tsp.gov).

## CSM Wayne P. Strohm April 10, 1947 - April 27, 2007



Official Army photo

Wayne P. Strohm

**W**ayne Paul Strohm, SMDC/ARSTRAT's first Command Sergeant Major, passed away at his home in Tyrone, Pa., April 27. He had just reached his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Strohm was born in Maryland and enlisted in the Army on May 4, 1966. He received his Basic and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Gordon, Ga.

He attended the Advanced Noncommissioned Office Course at Fort Gordon and graduated from Army

Sergeant Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas. Strohm served five overseas tours at posts in Thailand, Italy and Korea. Before coming to the command, he served as the command sergeant major for the 6<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion and 3/22 Field Artillery at Fort Sill, Okla.; the 69<sup>th</sup> Transportation Battalion at Camp Carroll, Korea; the 20<sup>th</sup> Support Group at Camp Henry, Korea and as the Garrison CSM at Fort Campbell, Ky.

Strohm began his association with the command in 1991 when he was made the Command Sergeant Major for the Army Space Command in Colorado Springs, Colo. When the Army Space Command was combined with the U.S. Army Space and Strategic Defense Command the following year, he became the CSM for the entire organization and served in that capacity for four years. Strohm's long tenure provided stability during the growing pains associated with reorganizing the command. He was the first and only command sergeant major for the organization to serve in Colorado Springs. All of his successors have been posted to the SMDC/ARSTRAT headquarters, first in Arlington and then in Huntsville, Ala.

Lt. Gen. Jay Garner, commander of the U.S. Army Space and Strategic Defense Command, said of Strohm during his Feb. 9, 1996, retirement ceremony, "He has significantly changed for the better every organization he ever served."

Strohm retired to Tyrone, Pa., where much of his extended family resided. He became an avid hunter and fisherman at his rural Pennsylvania home. He is survived by his wife Sun Cha, two sons, one daughter and eight grandchildren. He was interred among his fellow soldiers at the Fort Sill National Cemetery, Okla.



U.S. Army photo

Command Sgt. Maj. Wayne P. Strohm and Command Sgt. Maj. William "Bill" Morgan

## Culinary

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two gold medals.

Individually, Green won a silver medal in cake decorating. He also made the 1996 Culinary Olympics Army team in which he won a gold and a silver medal in individual competition.

Green has also competed in the Culinary Nationals in Chicago seven times and has won various medals there.

In 1994, he started at the White House and the Blair House (the official state guest house for the president of the United States) cooking for the president's guests. He has cooked for dignitaries such as U.S. presidents, Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, former Chairman of the Joints Chief of Staff Gen. Hugh Shelton, members of the Kuwaiti government, and many more.

Green also catered on the side during his personal time when he lived in Washington. He said most people in D.C. don't

cook. "They just don't have time. They would rather cater it in."

Green has a wife and two daughters — a 10 year old and a 17 year old — who have stuck by him through all the years of various competitions and assignments.

His older daughter, he said, would sometimes go with him when he catered on the side to assist as she is interested in learning the planning and culinary skills in which her father is so talented and gifted.

Green said he would like to stay in the business after retirement from the Army. Not necessarily the cooking, but more of the managerial, protocol and human resources aspects of the job. Cooking is just a small part of his duties.

"Sergeant First Class Green is the quintessential aide — a non-commissioned officer chock full of initiative, with extraordinary culinary skill, an eye for what 'right' looks like, and absolute dedication to the mission," said Campbell.

## 1957-2007 — SMDC/ARSTRAT Celebrates

# Who was Stanley R?

## By SMDC/ARSTRAT Historical Office

On Oct. 1, 1974, the Safeguard program achieved a significant milestone – the Equipment Readiness Date – the U.S. Army accepted and dedicated the Stanley R. Mickelsen Safeguard Complex in N.D.

Affectionately known as Stanley R., the Safeguard Complex was the first new military installation in the United States since World War II.

Recognized specifically for this support of the ballistic missile defense program, Lt. Gen. Stanley Raymond Mickelsen (1895-1966) enjoyed a successful 40-year Army career which spanned World War I, World War II and the Korean Conflict. As the Fort Bliss community observed during a 1997 dedication, Lt. Gen. Mickelsen was “a visionary leader who brought the Army’s Air Defense Artillery from the era of guns into the age of missiles.”

A native of Minnesota, Mickelsen began his career

as a second lieutenant in the Coast Artillery Corps Reserve in August 1917. Within two months, he received a regular commission and an assignment to the Anti-Aircraft Artillery Board at Fort Monroe, Va., followed by assignments with anti-aircraft units in Panama.

After serving as an instructor to the Connecticut National Guard, Mickelsen returned to school. He graduated from the Coast Artillery School in 1928 and remained there as an



U.S. Army photo  
Lt. Gen. Stanley R. Mickelsen

instructor for several years. Following a tour with the 59th Coast Artillery at Fort Mills in the Philippine Islands, Mickelsen graduated from the Command and General Staff School in 1936 and the Army War College in 1938.

With the approach of World War II, Mickelsen assumed command of the 74th Coast Artillery at Camp Pendleton, Va. in October 1941.

He transferred to the 47th Artillery Brigade at Camp Davis, N.C., in March 1942, and took that unit to Iceland in April.

In November 1943, Mickelsen was appointed commander of the Artillery Training Center at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Within the year he was assigned to the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe, where he served as chief of the Displaced Persons Branch. He remained in Europe as the assistant chief of staff for Military Government (1945-1947) and later the director of the Civil Affairs Division of the European Command (1947).

Mickelsen returned to the United States in 1947 as the

assistant commandant of the Artillery School at Fort Sill, Ok.

Two years later he was appointed chief of the Guided Missiles Group at Army Headquarters. With the 1950 reorganization of Army Headquarters, this position was redesignated the deputy chief of staff for operations (Guided Missiles).

While retaining responsibility for Guided Missiles, Mickelsen became the deputy for Special Weapons to the assistant chief of staff for Logistics in January 1951.

At this next assignment, Mickelsen remained dual-hatted. He was appointed commandant to the Anti-Aircraft and Guided Missile Center at Fort Bliss with the additional duty as assistant commandant of the Artillery School.

In 1954, Mickelsen was appointed commanding general of the Headquarters Anti-Aircraft Command, a predecessor of the Army Air Defense Command, at Ent Air Force Base, Colorado.

Lt. Gen. Stanley R. Mickelsen retired Oct. 31, 1957.

## Safeguard's fate linked to the ABM treaty

### SMDC/ARSTRAT Historical Office

Even as the Senate debated the deployment of Safeguard during the summer of 1969, officials observed the system's potential use in arms negotiations.

Sen. Henry Jackson (D-WA) stated that “anyone who wants a successful negotiation with the Soviets to halt the further evolution of dangerous strategic armaments should be a strong proponent of the Safeguard ABM.” He added, “the chance is promising that we could come to an agreement with the Soviet Union for a limited ABM defense on both sides ... provided that we do not foolishly throw that chance away by now scuttling our own program.”

Negotiations with the Soviets soon began. In November 1969, the United States and the Soviet Union initiated the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I) to place limits on both ABM defensive systems and strategic nuclear offensive systems.

Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird opposed cuts to the Safeguard program or a halt to the deployment plans arguing that these would damage the American position in these talks.

A new role was thus attributed to the Safeguard System – that of “bargaining chip” in the SALT talks.

Following 2 1/2 years of meetings and back channel discussions, the two nations came to an agreement on anti-ballistic missile systems. On May 26, 1972 U.S.

President Richard M. Nixon and Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev signed the Anti-ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. Ratified by the U.S. Senate on Aug. 3, 1972, the treaty went into effect on Oct. 3, 1972.

The ABM Treaty limited both nations to two ABM sites – one near the national command authority and the other near an ICBM complex. Each site could be equipped with 100 interceptors and launchers, with an additional 15 launchers located at test sites.

The treaty also specified the number and type of radars that could be constructed at the different sites. While deployed systems could be upgraded and modernized, both nations, however, agreed “not to develop, test, or deploy ABM systems or components which are sea-based, air-based, space-based, or mobile land-based.”

Further restrictions were placed on the ABM program on July 3, 1974, when Nixon and General Secretary Brezhnev signed a protocol to the 1972 ABM Treaty. The protocol limited each country to one

ABM site located at either the National Command Authority or an ICBM complex.

With the reduction in sites, the number of interceptors and launchers permitted was also reduced from 200 to 100. This agreement went into force on May 24, 1976.

For almost 30 years the Stanley R. Mickelsen Safeguard Complex (SRMSC) in North Dakota was viewed by the Russians as the single ABM site allowed under the treaty, even though it had been deactivated and the weapons systems removed in 1976.

During planning for deployment of a new ABM system, the SRMSC was considered as a site for deployment.

A study was also conducted to determine the costs of dismantling the radars and launch facilities at the SRMSC in accordance with the 1972 ABM Treaty.

Due to the nuclear hardening of the concrete structures and the hazardous materials and wastes associated with the tactical buildings, destruction of the facilities was expected to cost almost \$50 million. Neither option was deemed feasible to develop an effective system to address the modern threat.

On Dec. 13, 2001, President George W. Bush formally notified Russia and three former Soviet republics that it had invoked Article 15 of the ABM Treaty to withdraw from the Pact. The United States formally withdrew from the treaty on June 13, 2002. Ground breaking on a test site located at Delta Junction, Alaska for the U.S. missile defense system occurred a few days later.



U.S. Dept. of State  
President Richard M. Nixon signs a protocol to the 1972 ABM Treaty restricting the program, July 1974.

## 50 Years of Excellence in Space and Missile Defense

# Safeguard site, components 'gee whiz' facts:

By SMDC Historical Office

There were four Remote Sprint Launch Sites (RSL) in North Dakota and the crews rotated from each missile site. The RSLs were located 10-22 miles away from the Missile Site Radar. Each site covered 36-45 acres and contained 12 to 16 Sprint missiles. These sites still exist but are in caretaker status.



Courtesy photo

Remote Sprint Launch Site No. 1, completed May 1974. This site is near Hampden, N.D.



Courtesy photo

Remote Sprint Launch Site No. 2, completed May 1974. This site is near Dresden, N.D.



Courtesy photo

Aerial view of Remote Sprint Launch Site No. 4. This site is near Fairdale, N. D.



Remote Sprint Launch Site No. 3, completed May 1974. This site is near Concrete, N.D.



Courtesy photo

These two launch pictures were taken during tests at Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands in the Pacific Ocean. Both the Sprint and Spartan launches occurred on the Kwajalein Missile Range.

### The Sprint Missile

- Two-stage Guided Missile
- Shape - Conical
- Length - 26' 11"
- Weight - 7,500 pounds
- Range - Approximately 25 miles
- Max Engagement Altitude - 24 miles
- Speed - Hypersonic
- Warhead - Nuclear yield - low kiloton
- Deployed - 70 missiles
- Test summary
  - Tests conducted - 76
  - Intercepts attempted - 34
  - Intercepts completed - 32

### The Spartan Missile

- Long-range Interceptor
- Three-stage Guided Missile
- Shape - Canard
- Length - 55' 2"
- Weight - 28,700 pounds
- Range - Approximately 465 miles
- Max Engagement Altitude - 330 miles
- Speed - Mach 10 (7,418 mph)
- Warhead - Nuclear yield - 5 megatons
- Deployed - 30 missiles
- Test summary
  - Tests conducted - 35
  - Intercepts Attempted - 21
  - Intercepts Completed - 18



Courtesy photo

### Perimeter Acquisition Radar (PAR)

Perimeter Acquisition Radar Young Wheat Field, Concrete, N.D. Currently operated by the Air Force at Cavalier Air Force Station. The PAR is about 12 stories tall and measures one acre at its base.