

Commander's Call Topics



June 27, 2013

"It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership."

Nelson Mandela
Noble Laureate and former President of South Africa

June is
Outdoor Recreation Month!
Check out what's going on
at your base.

Air Force Celebrates June as Peak Outdoor Recreation Time

With warm, even hot, weather the norm for most of the country, it's no coincidence that June is Outdoor Recreation Month, and few programs are as wide and varied as the Air Force's outdoor recreation program. The program evolved from the World War II-era "rest and recreation" camps for soldiers coming off the front lines, and developed over the decades into full-service recreation centers available to all Airmen.

According to Phillip Heeg, outdoor recreation manager for the Air Force Personnel Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, outdoor recreation programs for the Air Force were actually designed to support national defense. Heeg said that organizational esprit de corps is vitally important to Air Force units and outdoor recreation programs help increase morale, strengthen group ties, and help establish cooperative behavior and interpersonal relationships through a variety of activities.

Heeg pointed to the four C's—cooperation, challenge, competition and companionship—as key elements to help support Air Force communities. Activities, such as backpacking, require each participant to share the burden and work together to achieve their goals. Heeg said that challenging activities, such as whitewater rafting or mountaineering, put Airmen in unfamiliar and stressful situations, pushing them to work beyond their normal limits and form a bond, similar to one they would experience during combat. The competitive side of outdoor recreation, such as shooting tournaments or ski races, generates healthy rivalries between individuals and groups and helps increase pride of accomplishment that carries over to the workplace.

The final "c" focuses on companionship. Fishing trips, camping or a barbeques put Airmen in group settings that provide opportunities to get to know one another.

The family unit is also a big winner with outdoor recreation programs. Picnics and camping involve family interaction, while activities like canoeing require teamwork and communication, and many outdoor activities require parent-child bonding. Even a weekend ski trip can give couples a way to reconnect and strengthen their relationships.

Today, Airmen have even greater opportunities to take advantage of outdoor programs in their area. The Single Airman Initiative is an Air Force-wide program that provides free or low cost programs, classes and equipment for outdoor recreation programs on their base.

A program developed for deploying Airmen is the PLAYpass discount pass card pre-printed with a defined dollar value that can be applied to designated program. This benefit, which is for the Airman and his family is for those with deployment orders as well as those who are returning..

RecOn is a relatively new outdoor recreation program, developed for active duty and active Reserve Airmen, and their dependents. It reduces the cost of many activities. For example, a \$200 day of skydiving in the Rockies would cost Airmen only \$75 under the program and a \$200 day of whitewater rafting might cost an Airman only \$60.

Whatever the activity or the motivation the Air Force outdoor recreation program is a great way to take advantage of the summer without breaking the bank to have fun..

► TRENDING ...

[Today's ruling helps ensure that all men and women who serve this country can be treated fairly and equally, with the full dignity and respect they so richly deserve. -- Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel speaking about the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to strike down the Defense of Marriage Act](#)

► RESOURCES

AF.mil

<http://www.af.mil>

Airman magazine

<http://www.airmanonline.af.mil>

Air Force Outreach

<http://www.afoutreach.af.mil>

Military OneSource

<http://militaryonesource.af.mil>

Military HOMEFRONT

<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod>

Air Force Personnel Center

<https://mypers.af.mil>

<http://www.afpc.af.mil>

Air Reserve Personnel Center

<http://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil>

Department of Defense News

<http://www.defense.gov>

Department of Veteran Affairs

<http://www.va.gov>

TRICARE

<http://www.tricare.mil>

U.S. Government Website

<http://www.firstgov.gov/>

Employment Opportunities

www.usajobs.com

www.nafjobs.org

Air Force Association

Scholarships

<http://www.afa.org/afaid/scholars.asp>

Air Force Safety Center

www.afsec.af.mil

► CURRENT ISSUES

[Fanning becomes acting Air Force secretary](#)

Under Secretary of the Air Force Eric Fanning became the acting secretary of the Air Force June 21, succeeding Michael Donley, who departed the position after more than five years.

[Airmen drop 50,000 plus gallons of retardant on Colorado fires](#)

More than 50,000 gallons of fire retardant was dropped by Air Force aerial firefighting aircraft June 25 on wildland fires burning throughout Colorado's West Fork Complex.

► PERSONNEL ISSUES

[Acting SecAF recounts journey to equality](#)

During a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month event at the Pentagon today, the highest-ranking openly gay member of the Defense Department described his experiences witnessing the evolution of the law that banned openly gay service members, from its implementation to its eventual repeal.

► ENVIRONMENT, SPACE AND TECHNOLOGY

[Training helps deployed Airman save lives](#)

"I wouldn't really consider these lifesaving gestures, I was just doing what I am trained to do," said Senior Airman David Kitchen, 455th Expeditionary Aerial Port Squadron, aerial transportation journeyman.

For more information on Air Force heritage, visit <http://www.airforcehistory.af.mil>.

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► THIS WEEK IN AIR FORCE HISTORY

June 27, 1976 – Airmen at Vandenberg AFB launched the first Titan II with a Universal Space Guidance System.

June 28, 1917 - Langley Field was authorized as an experimental air station.

June 29, 1950 - KOREAN WAR. President Truman authorized General MacArthur to dispatch air forces against targets in North Korea

June 30, 1982 - Rockwell International rolled out the Space Shuttle Challenger.

July 1, 1996 - An Air Force crew flew an EA-6B Prowler off the deck of the USS Constellation for the first time.

July 2, 1943 - Lt. Charles Hall, 99th Fighter Squadron, became the first U.S. black pilot to shoot down an Axis plane, a German Focke-Wulf 190, over Sicily.

July 3, 1949 - Air Force officials gave the B-29 Enola Gay, the plane that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, to the Smithsonian Institute.